

THE
CHRISTIAN WITNESS:
CHIEFLY ON SUBJECTS
CONNECTED WITH
THE PRESENT STATE
OF
THE CHURCH.
VOL. V.

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THE
CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

[No. 1.

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Vol. V.]

MORMONISM IN AMERICA.

"And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto FABLES." (2 Tim. iv. 4.)

THERE is a world of spirits, where kingdoms and powers exist, whose character and principles are in eternal discord, and their interests at infinite variance with one another. It is a happy thought that the discord will not for ever continue but one day finally cease, and that the interests which shall survive, are those wherein glory shall redound to God, and blessing be secured to His creatures. But while things are tending towards this happy consummation it must be, from the necessity of the case, since God assigns to them a prolonged though limited existence, that beings whose principles are at essential enmity with Himself, should be ever manifesting opposition to His will, and engaging in continual attempts to thwart and defeat His purposes. Now we have been taught somewhat largely in the word, how they have sought to do this.—In the progressive development of evil from the first successful introduction of it in the garden of paradise, down through successive ages of the world ; however various the machinations of these powers of darkness, their one object has been seen to be

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the bringing the creature's happiness, (wherein God willed to show forth His glory,) through that creature's failure, into eternal and irreconcilable opposition to His character ; nay, making man diligently himself to conspire against his own blessing. We have been taught too the wondrous ways of God (in no less wondrous grace) for bringing back that creature into harmony with Himself and blessing, without impugning one jot or tittle of His own unchangeable perfections ; on the contrary, making it the occasion of exhibiting them in riches of grace that had been heretofore untraceable. We have seen the cross of Christ to have been the great instrument of His purposes in this ; and by faith, surveying its mighty achievements, we are able even to see, as Jesus did, Satan fall like lightning from heaven, and Himself ascending as a mighty victor, leading captivity captive—spoiling principalities and powers—making a shew of them openly—triumphing over them in it.

But this is true as yet only to the ear and heart of faith. Satan is still in the heavenlies, ruling supreme in the kingdom of wicked spirits, and wielding their hateful energies at his will, (Eph. vi., Rev. xii. 7. &c.) having power in this world, (Luke iv. 6., John xvi. 11., 2 Cor. iv. 4., Eph. ii. 2.) and exercising it according to the law of enmity in his heart against the woman and her seed. (compare Gen. iii. with Rev. xii.) Thus much of that primeval sentence yet awaits fulfilment—"dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." (Gen. iii. 14., compare Isaiah lxv. 25.) It is a word of comfort. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. xvi. 20.) But he is not yet thus bruised ; that word "shortly," having reference to a state of heart that owns no interval before the coming of its Lord. The consequence is just what experience, if we are the Lord's, testifies ; we are made to know the power of that enmity in every varied form and extreme of temptation and suffering. Does the world belong to Christ or Satan ? This is a question of immense practical concern, as involving our present standing and relation both to God and the world. There is no question it belongs to Christ in title as in right, "for all things were made by Him and for Him ;" and He

has further paid the price of its redemption. Hence could our Lord say after His resurrection—"all power is given unto me in heaven and earth." Hence, says the Apostle, (1 Pet. iii. 22.) Jesus Christ is "gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to Him." And we know therefore from Rev. v, that as the Lamb slain in the midst of the throne, (hid in God) He exercises even now in providence, that is, invisibly to the world, the power of controlling the events of the world, and of checking Satan and restraining evil. But in this dispensation of long suffering and forbearance, there is no open and visible assertion of that right, nor any exercise of it for the right ordering of the world. Such an assumption of direct control we learn expressly from Rev. xi. 15, 17, 18, to be yet future; "*now*" says our Lord emphatically to Pilate, "is my kingdom not from hence." (John xix. 35.) How should it be? "The sceptre of His kingdom is a *right* sceptre;" (Ps. xlv. 6.) and that is not the character of the powers of the world now.

The devil had claimed the power of this world in his approach to Christ as the tempter, (Luke iv. 6.) and our Lord was far from denying the fact. Nay, in the progress of His rejection, He could Himself own him to be the prince of this world; (John xii. 35.) though contemplating His rejection and the cross as the result of it, He could see the judgment of the world, and the moral basis of His triumph over the prince of it. The scriptures relative to these facts have been largely opened for our instruction in the "*WITNESS*," and they have no doubt by this time become familiar to us. They should prepare us for realising the whole extent of the power of Satan and his enmity now. The world is his, the course of it is ordered by him; he works in the hearts of the children of disobedience, free and uncontrolled, (Ephes. ii. 2., 2 Cor. iv. 4.) and has perilous facility of access through the flesh to the consciences and hearts of God's people. How much then in this point of view is his power to be dreaded and watched against *at all times*. The word of warning is coeval with the dispensation—"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 heavenly places :” (Eph. vi.) “your adversary the devil goeth about (comp. Job i.) as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour : him resist, stedfast in the faith.” (1 Pet. v.)

But if this is true of his enmity and power throughout the whole of the dispensation, it becomes more fearfully so towards the close of it. We are familiar with the numerous warnings in the scriptures respecting the energy of his working in the latter day ; the last times of the Church, therefore called *perilous* on this very account. The Apostle Paul in his epistles to the Thessalonians, (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, &c.) and to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv. 1., 2 Tim. iii.) and Peter in his second Epistle, (chap. ii.) and Jude, give very explicit warnings as to these times ; and it is the Church’s wisdom to study attentively their growth and budding.

Now one awful feature which pervades them all, giving a marked character to this period of Satanic energy, is its being a time of unexampled DELUSION. It is remarkable that in the account we have of the Gentile world in the 1st chapter of Romans, we find the last stage of their condition, to be introduced by a judicial bereavement of judgment—“their foolish heart was *darkened* :” (ver. 21.) “they became *fools* :” (ver. 22.) “and as they did not *like* to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind :” (a mind *void of judgment*. ver. 28.)

The same awful fact we see exemplified in the Jews. The 28th chapter of the Acts, which closes the scriptural account of the ministry of the Apostles, leaves them under a sentence of judicial infatuation, *out of which we see them not yet recovered*. The same thing, as the effect of continuing in sin, is made known to us in the form of a principle, in Heb. iii. 13 : “lest any of you be hardened through the *deceitfulness* of sin.” But elsewhere in many parts of the scriptures, it is more directly traced to Satan’s blinding, deceiving, seducing, hardening power over the heart ; in other words, to a *spirit of delusion*. And this is the prominent characteristic of the last times. Men have not *liked* to retain God in their knowledge, and therefore God will give them up to a mind

void of judgment, because they received not the love of the truth; for this cause God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they should believe a lie. (2 Thess. ii. 11.) "This know also that perilous times shall come, men having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..... these resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, (reprobate) of *no judgment* concerning the faith..... evil men and SEDUCERS shall wax worse and worse, *deceiving and being deceived*." (2 Tim. iii.) "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the truth, giving heed to *seducing spirits* and doctrines of *devils*." (1 Tim. ix. 1.) When the man of sin cometh, it is declared to be, "after the working of Satan with all signs and lying wonders," (not mere pretended wonders, but real wonders, *calculated to deceive*.) And to this agrees the description of the "unclean spirits, which are the spirits of devils working miracles" in Rev. xiv. 13, 14.

Now the question is, have these delusions *begun to work*? Surely we have ground for believing that in these our days, there is evidence of a more than ordinary operation of Satan, antagonist to that which we have manifestly seen of a more than ordinary operation of the Spirit of God. We learn a principle as to this from that passage in Isaiah lix. 19:* "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." It seems to indicate that any powerful exhibition or operation of the Holy Spirit in the Church, is ever, either that which calls out, or is itself called out by the resisting energy of Satan; and that therefore times of blessing are ever to be regarded as concomitant with times of peril. This observation acquires weight, from considering how much more the relation and intercourse subsisting between wicked spirits and ourselves, involves, than a mere *influence* exerted over our hearts, though that indeed is most pernicious.

Their active personal† interference in the concerns of the world,

* It is said to be more correctly translated—"for the enemy shall come in like a flood, and &c." but the remark is not affected, as the passage is not applied or interpreted, but referred to, as marking a principle in accordance with general experience and observation.

† It has been observed, that disbelief or very inadequate apprehensions of the personal agency and presence of the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and of the devil on the other, have gone together in the Church.

it would be most injurious for us to overlook. For assuredly it is real. It is bounded we know by the good pleasure of our Father, but that may be quite consistent with an extent of power to affect us, that to our apprehensions might seem very wide. And though the security of the saint is provided for, (John x. 28., Rom. viii. 31—ult.) yet none are ever the safer for disregarding the power of these enemies. The corrupt passions and will of man, and the perverted use of what God has given him,—knowledge, learning, wealth, power, &c. the relics of a fairer dominion (lost in but to be regained in (Gen. iii., Ps. viii. 6.) all fall readily into their hands, and they have skill to wield them with terrible effect. Full well too we know that their enmity is at the least commensurate with their power to do us evil. They see in man the creature whom God has designed to set in favour and bring back to blessing for the accomplishment of His own glory. They seek to mar that happiness therefore, that they may also mar His glory. It was that word—"Hast thou considered my servant Job?" denoting that he was the object of His favour, that brought out the malignity of Satan, and the effort to mar the happy condition in which he stood by bringing in that which would destroy it, viz.—a departure from the integrity of his allegiance and dependance upon God. David was "the man after God's own heart;" therefore it is that we find Satan tempting him to sin, in the matter of numbering the children of Israel, a thing abominable in the eyes even of the reckless Joab. (1 Chron. xxi. 1—6.)

But above all, Jesus as being "His beloved Son,"—"in whom His soul delighted," became the object of his early and special temptation. He sought to turn aside the footsteps of that immaculate One, by a deceitful handling of the word of truth; (2 Cor. iv. 2.) of which word he could say to the Father—"Thou wakenest my ear morning by morning, to hear as the learned, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back; (Isaiah i. 4, 5.) but it was presented unto Him now in deceit. The tempter was foiled, but he left him only "for a season." Here was what incessantly by its godlike bearing provoked and drew out the enmity. In these instances is exhibited so remarkably the mind of the tempter,

the secret principle of his enmity, and that which regulates its efforts. *It is always direct antagonism to what is most like God, and most directly God's work.* This an ordinary degree of attention to what has passed around us in these late years, as a season in which there has been a marked though partial revival of the Church, and recovery of truth, is well calculated to teach us. We have seen directly, that the spirit of slumber began to pass away, and the Church was called either from positive error, or truth held partially or lifelessly, into somewhat of the freshness and fulness of the written word; how quick the devil set himself to resist and oppose the progress of it, and when it could not be stopped, then straightway to raise up a counterfeit work, in which the flesh and the spirit were so blended, truth and error so mixed, that to the greater part who had not attained to any healthful, or profitable exercise of their spiritual discernment, but yet were awakened (which most were not) from slumber; there was no power of separating the precious and the vile, and therefore both were received or abandoned together. Such truths as those connected with the Lord's coming, the general fallen state and apostasy of the Church, the assertion (as a brother has expressed himself) of the rights of the indwelling Spirit of God, to guide, govern, and order supremely in the Church by and according to His own written word, and the immaculateness and sufficiency of that word, as the standard of truth in every thing that concerns the life and walk of its members, were enough to have recovered the Church from his grasp, had they been received, and felt in power, and abided in. Therefore here his working has displayed itself, in discrediting by every possible means the hope of the Church, which is the Lord's coming—the state of the Church, which is its shame;—the discovery of the Spirit's office in the absence of Christ, which is the power of its life; and the integrity and completeness of the written word, which is its perfect standard of truth; and hence one main ground of security against the devil, her deceiver. But there is often a way of subverting truth different from that of its direct denial. The human mind has nothing more common to it than a tendency to reaction. Mostly there is a defect in what is held of a proper

balance of truths, which forces them into greater or less prominence than is due ; and even truth seen out of its proper relations, may have the effect or the appearance of error ; and thus be often unwarily relinquished or hurtfully maintained. It was a great thing to have recovered the hope of the Church. A former paper of the " WITNESS," (Retrospect and present state of Prophetic Inquiry) has well shewn the important effects that resulted from it. But it did two things especially ; it opened prophecy, and *forewarned of Satan*. Therefore he has made it appear in the eyes of most, as if it were a carnal hope, and led to a carnal walk. He inspired many who received it with self-elation which led to their fall, and through them the truths themselves, are with the greater part of the Church still discredited to her own loss. But further, there are those who receive and value it ; with such it is made an instrument of delusion, by presenting it to them mixed with heresies which it accredits to their judgments. Again, it was a great thing to have discovered a sense of our fallen condition, that all had departed from the true standing of the Church of God ; blessing would have followed a real humbling on account of it. But the dissatisfaction it produced in many with their respective systems, has been by his devices, used to lead many into a liberty bordering on licentiousness as to the principles of communion ; and others, seeing the departure to have been general, argued themselves from that very circumstance, into acquiescence with their own particular evils, saying in their hearts, " we are delivered to do all these abominations." And so this truth in the hearts of many is turned aside. Again, it was most important to the welfare of the Church and conducive to its recovery, to become aware, that the believer's privilege consisted in the personal indwelling of the Spirit, and that it was *abiding* ; and also that the Church's portion was to know Him as the comforter, to supply the place of its absent Lord, and to provide for its internal ordering and government throughout the *whole* period of His absence. But what have we seen ? Even this very truth, " devil used," made in the mind of many to give currency to the notion, that the word of God is not sufficient, and thus virtually setting aside its authority ;

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by new and pretended revelations, supposed to be the living voice of the Spirit. There is no one thing which we need to watch so jealously as this ; the peculiar special form of evil in the latter days, being that of *unscriptural delusions*. While we own the word of God in its integrity, neither adding to nor detracting from it aught, we have always that which as taught by the Spirit in communion is capable of detecting Satan, even when coming as an angel of light. We have seen more than one instance in our days of successful delusions, but how have they been brought about ? has it not been when a power was owned in the midst of them, which elevated itself into an authority, independent of the word of God ? There may have been error, and much defect of scriptural apprehension before ; that we are all subject to, and surely conscious of : but in destroying the integrity and sufficiency of the word of God, *the landmark* is removed, *the chart* which in the darkness of this world indicated the Church's true course is effaced ; the *unerring beacon* which cast light on the destructive shores of error is confounded amongst the false and baleful lights of Satan's erecting, and the hapless wayfarer lured on, save as kept in the infinite mercy of God, to destruction.

Reflections like these are necessarily self-condemning to those who are conscious, like the writer, of any measure of personal failure while passing through the ordeal of the last few and eventful years, which have been times of sifting or of something worse to so very many. The acknowledgment of this suggests, even while contending for the truth and exposing error the need of much humility in speaking of these things, and the continual remembrance of its being by the grace and guidance of Jesus alone, that any either have been, or shall be restored or kept in the ways of truth. O ! if in all our enquiries after truth, there be not the spirit of mind which leads us to take every matter of doubtful import to the feet of Jesus, to examine and consider of it there ; if there be a lack of childlike subjection of soul to the word, and the Spirit's teaching in all we go to the word for ; and if, instead, we practically judge scripture by our minds and are not judged of it, who can say, in such times of extreme peril by reason of "delusions," that we shall be "kept from the paths of the destroyer ?" (Ps. xvii. 4.)

¶ The object in presenting these remarks is, to make them serve as an introduction to some notice which it has been thought desirable to take of a recent gross but fearful delusion now taking effect; somewhat extensively* it is to be feared, in parts of the United States and Canada, but principally in the back settlements. They call themselves "the Church of the latter day saints;" but the work is generally known by the name of "Mormonism," from the book of Mormon, which they have put forth as inspired. In the preface to one of their publications, which have been sent over to this country, it is stated that one edition of 1830, had not been sufficient to meet the urgent demands, and that another which was issued this year, consists of five thousand copies, from which we may judge that there is a considerable body of unhappy professors of Mormonism in that country.

The character of the publications in question, is of a very revolting description, and such as no mind alive to the interests of the Church, and desiring the free course of the word of God's truth, can peruse without pain. A very brief inspection is enough to discover that their claims or rather pretensions are of the loftiest character; being no less than fresh revelations, inspired scriptures newly given or brought to light, and a new Apostolate. We have no means of judging of this "work," but by the publications before us, which are of a very heterogeneous nature. The present notice therefore must of necessity be confined to them; but they will amply suffice to prove what the work is, and who alone could be the author of it.

Considered merely as writings, their merits are of a very low description, and they bear evident marks of fabrication; being filled with counterfeit presentations of scripture truth, sometimes in the sentiments, and often in the very language; and the tone of the political principles† avowed, (for they condescend to "speak

* Our correspondent, a beloved brother labouring for the Lord in Canada, who has furnished us with the published documents of Mormonism, states that the delusion is fearfully spreading; and that when he wrote, (in the summer) he had heard that six of the ministers were on their way to this country. ED.

† The 13th chapter of the book of Mormon, p. 230, in particular may be referred to. The principles there sanctioned, are such as to deserve for the

of the world ;" 1 John iv. 5.) is just such as we should judge suited to adapt the work for general reception in a land of political enfranchisement. But what is of more consequence, there is a virtual denial or subversion of the foundation-principles of truth—"the truth" which believers count themselves happy to "continue in." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) Viewed apart from circumstances, these productions would be regarded as mere trash ; what gives them the slightest interest or importance, and justifies, it is hoped, the present notice of them, is the partial success they have obtained in America, in subverting souls ; and the interest attached to the question adverted to throughout this paper, and in evidence of which we think this work may be fairly adduced, as to whether the time for the spreading of delusions is not really at hand. That any should be deceived by it, might seem strange to us, whose circumstances, and the thoughts of whose minds it seems in no way adapted to. But we must remember the testimony of the word—"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but will turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned away to fables." (2 Tim. iv.) In the writer's judgment, no words could more aptly describe the present productions. They are precisely "fables."

One of them, called the book of Mormon ; is thus introduced to our notice in the title page.

chapter the title of *ανομία*, (2 Thess. ii.) as advocating principles closely identified with a spirit of lawlessness. As for instance—"Because all men are not just ; it is not expedient that ye should have kings to rule over you." "Ye cannot dethrone an iniquitous king, save through much contention and bloodshed." "It is not common that the voice of the people desireth any thing contrary to that which is right." "Ye shall cause a smaller number of your lower judges to judge your higher judges, according to the voice of the people." "I desire that this irregularity (between kings and subjects) should be no more in the land, and this land be a land of liberty." "Therefore they relinquished their desires for a king, and desired that every man should have an equal footing, and every man expressed a willingness to answer for his own sins."

Experience teaches us that the most high flown sentiments respecting the rights and liberty of man, are quite compatible with truckling to the most flagrant violation of the principle espoused, as in the following extract from a section on governments and laws in general ; book of Rev. s. 102. 12. "We do not believe it right to interfere with bond servants, neither *preach the gospel to, nor baptize them*, contrary to the will and wish of their masters. . . . Such interference, we believe unlawful, and unjust, and dangerous, to the peace of every government, *allowing human beings to be held in servitude*. (Acts iv. 19. Mark xvi. 15.)

"An account, written by the hand of Mormon, taken from the plates of Nephi.....written by way of commandment, and also by spirit of prophecy and revelation.....to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof."

This Nephi, is related to be the son of a Jew, named Lehi, who living in the time of Zedekiah, and being favoured with revelations from God, fled from the persecutions of his brethren; and after many years of wandering, was brought to the great waters which separate the continents of Asia and America, and thence brought into "the land of promise," as the latter is called. The record purports to be an abridged, but inspired account, both of this event, and the succeeding centuries of the history of his descendants—the Nephites, the Lamanites, &c. ; the first part being compiled from the records of Nephi, and the rest, from that of his successors in the office of preserving and continuing these sacred records. Mormon, and Moroni, his son in more recent times discover and abridge these records, for the benefit of posterity; and it is reserved for the hand of "the Gentile" to bring them out to light, by a translation. Wherefore, as in the preface, we are certified that the writing and interpretation thereof is by the gift of God; so at the close of the volume, we have the following attestation to the qualifications of the translator.

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this book shall come, that we through the grace of God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record.....and also know that they have been translated by the power and gift of God, for His voice hath declared it unto us.....and we also declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes the plates and engravings thereon," &c.

And to this is added a further testimony of the genuineness of the plates in his possession. And in the book of commandments purporting to be made up of revelations, the following declarations occur, respecting this book of Mormon; sect. 2, page 2. "The book of Mormon contains the record of a fallen people, *and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ* to the Gentiles, and to the Jews also, which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to

others by the ministration of angels, and is declared unto the world by them, proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to His holy work, in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old."

In section 4, of the same book, on priesthood, paragraph 8, it is called—"God's new covenant with the children of Zion;" and the turning point of their deliverance, is "repentance and remembrance of this covenant." In section 13, paragraph 5, the elders &c. of the Church, are commanded "to teach the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ which are in the bible, and the book of Mormon; in the which is the fulness of the gospel."*

These extracts are sufficient to prove that what is claimed for this production is no less than inspiration. Before we part with it however to turn to other points, it may be worth while to notice the remarkable pains taken to inform us of its being written in a language not common to either Jew or Gentile, or intelligible to any. The record of Nephi, sets out with informing us that it is written "in the language of his father, which consists of the learning of the Jews, and *the language of the Egyptians*." (p. 1.) He does not think fit to show how this came to be the language of a Jew "who dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days;" (Ibid) but we are more particularly and carefully informed at p. 567, that this "Egyptian" language was "reformed Egyptian, being handed down and *altered by us* according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written it in Hebrew; but the Hebrew *hath been altered by us also*; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold! ye would have had no imperfection in our record. But the Lord knoweth the things which we

* To explain this term, which does not seem to apply to the mere annals of a people, it must be observed that the book of Mormon is not a mere record of history, but written apparently in imitation of the scriptures, where the historic is combined with what is strictly doctrinal and didactic. It professes to give a series of revelations and predictions relative to Christ and the truth He taught, only much more minute and copious, (as all prophecies forged after the event are wont to be,) sometimes agreeing verbatim with the New Testament; but in other respects, full of the grossest trash; and as may be supposed, at utter variance with the truths inculcated by the gospel.

have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language, therefore He hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof."

Another circumstance connected with this book of Mormon, we are made acquainted with, in the following manner.—It appears that the translator, had entrusted certain manuscripts on the first part of the book Mormon, to one from whose possession they were taken, and they were lost.—Here was a dilemma. They fell into the hands of persons who might compare the old translation with the new, which it would become necessary to make. Now as divine inspiration and no less was claimed for the translation, the two must correspond. They could not differ from one another without a serious compromise of the pretension. The dilemma was thought worthy of being provided for, by two express revelations: one dated July 1828, in which the translator is reproved; the other May 1829, to the following effect:—

"Behold Satan has put it into their hearts to alter the words, and *they read contrary* from that which you translated, and caused to be written. Behold! they ask thee to translate it over again, &c. . . . behold! I say unto you, that you shall not translate it over again; for behold if you should bring forth the same words, they will say that you have lied; that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted yourself; and behold they will publish this, &c. And now verily, you remember it was said in those writings that have gone out of your hands, that a *more particular* account was given of those things upon the plates of Nephi. . . . Therefore you *shall translate from them* down, until you come to that which you have translated, (which was from the abridgment of Mormon,) which you have retained, (i. e. not lost;) and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. . . . behold they have got only a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi, &c."

How much resemblance to the crooked paths of deceit is there in this—how much like a deed of darkness that seeks to hide itself from detection. It is because their deeds are evil, that men love darkness rather than light; "for every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be *discovered*," (ἐλεγχθῇ. John iii. 20.)

The other publication consists of two parts. 1st.—Lectures on the doctrine of salvation. 2nd.—Items or principles for the regulation of the Church, as taken from the revelations that have been given since and before its organisation; of the former parts,

some brief notice will be taken, when we come to speak of the doctrines they hold ; and we turn for the present to the book of *revelations*, containing “the covenants and commandments,” for evidence to show the character of the claims set up. Before making any extracts however, it is to be observed these revelations profess to be direct communications from God, and from Jesus Christ, whose names and appropriate titles, are not only used in thorough disregard of their scriptural and appropriate connexion, but with a freedom which, (utterly rejecting the veracity of these pretensions, as every believer must instinctively do,) can only be viewed in the light of awful blasphemy. Their pretensions for the most part are these.—They claim to be “the Church of the latter day saints ;”—to be “the only true and living Church on the face of the earth,” with plenary apostolic powers, and endowments commensurate with these pretensions ;—the establishment of a new order of things—the gathering together of the Church to its inheritance—the new Jerusalem, declared by these revelations, to be on the western borders of the Missouri, and ere long to be *manifested* at the coming of Christ.

1.—The setting up of the Church.

Section 4, paragraph 1, 2.—“A revelation of Jesus Christ unto His servant Joseph Smith, jun. and six elders, as they united their hearts and lifted their voices on high ; yea, the word of the Lord concerning His Church, established in the last days for the restoration of His people, as He has spoken by the mouth of His prophets, and for the gathering of His saints to stand upon mount Zion, which shall be the city New Jerusalem ; which city shall be built, beginning at the temple Lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, jun. and others with whom the Lord was well pleased.”

2.—“Verily, this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation ; for verily, this generation shall not pass away until a house be built unto the Lord.”

It happens unfortunately for the correctness of these pretensions and their conformity to scripture that in the New Jerusalem there is to be no temple. (see Rev. xxi.) For their view of the distinction between the New Jerusalem here meant and that which

shall be again established in Judea ; see an extract from the book of Mormon, page 567, quoted farther on.

Section 2, paragraph 1.—“The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand, eight hundred, and thirty years, since the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeably to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God.”

Sect. 1. paragraph 5 & 8.—“Behold ! I am God, and have spoken it ; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding : and also that those to whom these commandments were given, might have power to lay the foundation of this Church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity, and out of darkness, *the only true and living Church upon the face of the earth.*”

2.—Plenary Apostolic Inspiration, and a fresh inspired Word. The claim to this is implied by these very “revelations,” but it is made expressly and formally in the following extracts :—

Sect. 1. Par. 8.—“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, *it is the same.*”

Sect. 22. Par. 1.—“This is the ensample unto all who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is to go forth : they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost ; and whatsoever they shall speak, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, *shall be scripture* : shall be the will of the Lord, His mind, His word, His voice, and the power of God unto salvation : behold this is my promise unto you, O ye my servants. I the Lord am with you.”

B. of Mormon, p. 123, 124.—“Many of the Gentiles shall say, a bible, a bible, we have got a bible. O fools, because that I have spoken one word, ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another. *Ye need not suppose that it contains all my words,*” &c.

Book of Rev. Sect. 13. Par. 5.—“The elders, priests, &c. of this Church, shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the bible, and the book of Mormon, *in the which is the fulness of the gospel.* All this shall ye do as I have commanded concerning your teaching, *until the fulness of my scriptures are given.* And ye shall speak and prophecy as seemeth me good, &c.”

We almost fear to quote

Sect. 91. Par. 3.—“We, being in the Spirit on the 16th of February, 1832, by the power of the Spirit, our eyes were enlightened so as to see and under-

stand the things of God, *even those things which were from the beginning before the world was*, ordained of the Father, through His only begotten Son, of whom we bear record; and *the record which we bear is the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ who is the Son, whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision,*" &c.

"The gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ" is said to be, Rom. xvi. 25, "*according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest*;" and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, *made known* to all nations for the obedience of faith." "The dispensation" to the Apostle Paul was, to be made "a minister to fulfil (or, fully to preach) the word of God, even the mystery which *had been* hid from ages and generations, but *now* is made manifest to His saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; *which* is,—Christ in us the hope of glory." (Col. i. 25—27.) The same Apostle could say in respect to this his ministry, "that he had kept back *nothing* that was profitable unto his hearers;" that "he had not shunned to declare unto them *all* the counsel of God." (Acts xx. 20—27.) When on earth, Jesus assured His disciples—"all things that I have heard of my Father, *I have made known* unto you;" (John xv. 15.) and after He should leave them, the Spirit was "to guide them into *all truth*;" (xvi. 13.) both bringing "all things to remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said," (xiv. 26.) and "shewing them things to come." (xvi. 26.) Accordingly the Apostle John writing to "babes in Christ," (παιδια) says—"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know *all things*; I have not written unto you because ye know not THE TRUTH, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth."....Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning.....These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." (1 John ii. 21—26.) Through the word therefore and the anointing of the Spirit, the simplest believer (παιδιον) is in possession of that which is here claimed with so much ostentation. The claims here put forth, are at direct issue with the word of God and his

experience. See especially, 1 Cor. ii. 9, ult.—He that “hath the mind of Christ is judged of no man,” and can submit to hear of any pretensions without being troubled or shaken in mind by them: “for who hath known the mind of the Lord, that *he may instruct him?*” viz.—the spiritual man, (seeing he *has* the mind of the Lord.)

3.—The recognition of twelve new apostles.

Sect. 43. *title*.—“Revelation. to Joseph Smith, jun., Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, making known the calling of twelve Apostles in these last days, and also, instructions relative to building up the Church of Christ, according to the fulness of the gospel.” Given in Fayette, New York, June, 1830.

Sect. 4 Par. 9, 10.—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, who have now my words, *which is my voice*, blessed are ye, inasmuch as you receive these things.”

10.—“And as I said unto my Apostles, even so I say unto you; for you are mine Apostles, even God’s high-priests.”

Sect. 2. Par. 8.—“An Apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to confirm those who are baptized into the Church, by the laying on of hands *for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost*, according to the scriptures; and to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the Church, and to confirm the Church by the laying on of hands, and *the giving of the Holy Ghost*.”

4.—The two-fold Priesthood,—their orders, power and office.

Sect. 3. Par. 1, 9, 10, 8.—“There are in the Church, two priesthoods, namely—the Melchizedek, and the Aaronic, including the Levitical priesthood.”

“Every priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices,” (Heb. viii. 3.) Now what sacrifices remain, save such as every believer can pay, (Rom. xii. 1., Heb. xiii. 15, 18.) under a dispensation of the fulness of the gospel, which proclaims peace to every believing sinner through the shedding of blood of the one great sacrifice, and access to the very holiest by the same blood? Bearing His own blood in within the sanctuary, (the heavens,) he obtained for us eternal redemption; and Himself, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, and that not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. The notion of a separate order of priesthood now, when all are in one sense consecrated by His blood to do priestly service unto God,

or, when in another sense, none are priests but Christ,—the alone Mediator between God and man, can only proceed from fundamental ignorance of the gospel.

9.—“The power and authority of the higher or Melchizedec priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the Church,—to have the heavens opened unto them,—to commune with the general assembly and Church of the first-born, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant.”

The keys have been once (in the sense of *απαξ*, Jude iii.) committed to the Apostles, (Matt. xvi. 19, and to the Church, xviii. 18.) and the Church has already entered upon the distinctive privileges here enumerated, which in their scripture meaning, constitute the blessed portion of every believer, in virtue of his calling; for, *to the disciples*, (Matt. xiii. 11.) it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; *to the Church* the Apostles were stewards, to minister the mysteries of God.” (1 Cor. iv. 1.) Accordingly, the Apostle Paul could say, (1 Cor. ii. 6—10.) “God hath revealed them unto *us* by the Spirit.” (see also Eph. i. 9, 18., iii. 1—9.) Again, to *see* the heavens opened, not *unto them* but *to the earth*, is, as to manifestation yet future; (John i. 51.) but they are even now *passed into* heaven, in virtue of quickening and union with Jesus their risen head; (Eph. i. 3. comp. i. 20—23. with ii. i, 4—7.) “going in and out,” even unto the Father, by virtue of their access through the blood. (John x. 9., Eph. ii. 18., Heb. x. 19.) Then as to communion, the present standing of every believer is no less than that here claimed for a distinct order, “*Ye are come* unto Mount Zion, &c...and to the general assembly and Church of the first-born,” &c. (Heb. xii.)

The necessary consequence of setting up priesthood in the Church, (whether Episcopalian, Irvingite, or Mormonite,) is to keep the believer at a distance from God, and to rob him of his privilege of access to God without any other meeting-place, or mediator, than the Son of His love, where we have unhindered fellowship and in whom we find mutual delight.

10.—“The power and authority of the lesser or Aaronic priesthood is, to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordi-

nances—the letter of the gospel—the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeably to the covenant and commandments.”

8.—“No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant of Aaron.”

This pretension to *lineal descent and derived authority*, we leave the followers of Mormon to settle with those who have asserted like claims in the professing Churches of Christendom. There is a plainness of avowal in these pretensions which enables one to deal with them more summarily. For these claims to Levitical or Aaronical priesthood amount to no less than to displace Christ from His priestly office. The 7, 8, and 9th chap. of Heb. prove most plainly that the covenant, priesthood, ministry, sanctuary, offerings, &c. pertaining to the Aaronic order, are “disannulled for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.” If they are not, “if perfectness,” and this is the boast of the new covenant, “were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need, argues the Apostle, “was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood *being changed*,” &c. &c. (Heb. vii. 11, 12.)

Sect. 6. Par. 3.—“Therefore thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers, for ye are lawful heirs according to the flesh, and *have been hid from the world with Christ in God*; therefore your life and the priesthood hath remained, and must needs remain, through you and your lineage, until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the prophets, since the world began.”

The language describing the blessed position of the Church, as one in risen life and union with Christ, and the security of it, as hid with Him in God; and at the same time the unmanifested character of our sonship, (“The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not,” 1 John iii. 1.) is here applied to this imaginary order. The attention of the reader is requested to the manner in which the very principle of a separate order, destroys the portion of the Church; in that, neither office nor privilege can be assigned to it, but at the expense of what is appropriately the Church’s, either in it self or in the fulness of its head.

17.—“If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation—knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries, and peaceable things; that which bringeth joy—that which bringeth life eternal.”

“These things (said our Lord, John xvii. 13, 14.) I speak in the world, that they (whom, ver. 6. thou hast given me out of the world,) might have *my joy fulfilled* in themselves. I have given them *thy word*.” “*These things write we unto you* (says John 1. i. 21.) that *your joy might be full*.” Our joy is connected with entering into the fulness, and the power of the written word by the Spirit. To assert this of any new and pretended revelation is to nullify “*the word*.”

Sect. 47. Par. 1.—“Behold I say unto you, that all old covenants have I caused to be done away *in this thing*, and *this* is a new and everlasting covenant; even that which was from the beginning.” See also Sect. 4. Par. 8.

Jesus was the mediator of the New Covenant. He sealed it with His blood; (Heb. xii. 24.) it was ratified and brought into power by the death of the testator. (Heb. ix. 16, 17.) It is expressly called “the everlasting covenant;” (chap. xiii. 26.) every thing about it was of this character. The priesthood of Him that ministered it was “*for ever*,” and “after the power of an endless life;” (Heb. vii. 16, 17.) the Spirit through whom He offered Himself, is *eternal*; (chap. ix. 14.) the “redemption” it secured was *everlasting*;” (ver. 12.) the perfectness of the worshipper, as to the conscience, was *continual*: (εις τὸ διηνεκές scil. μέρος χρόνου, translated, for ever, chap. x. 1, 2, 14.) the cleansing, “*once for all*;” (ver. 10.) the inheritance provided “*everlasting*.” (chap. ix. 15.) What is this “new and everlasting covenant” then, purporting to be *now* brought in by the setting up of “*this thing*”—this new Church? We know indeed that the covenant we have been speaking of, runs in favour of the house of Israel; (Heb. viii., Ezek. xxxiv.) and that according to the terms of it, all Israel shall in the dispensation which is to come, be brought into blessing, and earthly glory be secured to them. But as to what concerns *the Church*, we know we have already got into our position of blessing under its terms. All *we* wait for is “the adoption, to wit, the re-

demption of the body ; (Rom. viii.)—translation out of conflict and suffering, into—not the western borders of the Missouri, but *heavenly* “mansions” in the new Jerusalem, which is above. (Rev. xxi., Gal. iv. 26.)

Sect. 14. Par. 1.—“For the last time call upon the inhabitants of the earth, for in mine own due time will I come upon the earth in judgment; and my people shall be redeemed, and shall reign with me on earth, for the great millennial, which I have spoken by the mouth of my servants, shall come.”

Sect. 27. Par. 1.—“Hearken, O ye elders of my Church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land which is the land of Missouri, which is the land I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints; wherefore this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion.”

Sect. 97. Par. 4, 9.—“Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands: be still and know I am God. And behold, there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed for the work *of the gathering of my saints*, until the day cometh when there is no room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains, or the strength of Zion.”

Sect. 15. Par. 12, 13.—“With one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed you, and it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; and the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, inasmuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion.”

13.—“And there shall be gathered unto it of every nation under heaven.”

14.—“And they shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.”

Sect. 18. Title.—“Revelation given in *Zion*, August, 1831. Par. 1.—Hearken, O ye elders of my Church, and give ear to my word; and learn of me what I will concerning you, and also concerning this land unto which I have sent you.”

Par. 2.—“Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, *for the present time*, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory, the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand.”

Inconsistent with themselves, and with the scripture as they are,

it is not very easy to state what their expectations precisely are. The extract, however, which we are about to give, shows that they distinguish between the Jerusalem that is appropriately Jewish, which is to have its locality in Judea ; and the New Jerusalem that cometh down out of heaven, the abode of the saints, and that is to be established in the land of promise. (America.) This is to be consequent on the judgment of the world, and the introduction of the new heavens and earth. Yet it would seem that previously, there will be a city built "like unto the Jerusalem of old." Coupling together what we find in the preceding extracts, and elsewhere in the volumes before us, it would appear that the present stage of things according to them, is this:—The place of the New Jerusalem has been revealed, a Church has been established ; the Lord is now gathering together His elect (like the wheat from among the tares) into it. And their preachers are to go forth into all the world announcing that judgment is coming and warning men to flee out of Babylon, and gather themselves unto the Church now set up in plenary power, in the land where the New Jerusalem is to be established—where *it is* established preparatory to the coming of the day of the Lord ; but where it shall be established in celestial glory, when the judgments are over, and the new heavens and new earth are brought about. Only those who obey the call, will enter into the celestial glory ; for others, are reserved the earthly, which they divide into two states.

It is a revelation supposed to be made (long before the first coming of Christ) to one Ether, a descendent of Jared, which Jared came forth from the dispersion of Babel.

Book of Mormon, p. 597.—"After the waters had receded from off the face of this land, it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord ; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve Him, who dwell upon the face thereof ; and that it was the place of the New Jerusalem, *which should come down out of heaven*, and the holy sanctuary of the Lord. Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land ; and he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come ; after it should be destroyed, it should be built up again a holy city unto the Lord ; wherefore it could not be

a New Jerusalem, for it had been in a time of old, but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built up unto the house of Israel, and that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph."

All Gentiles who believe are reckoned of the seed of Joseph. see p. 35.

"Wherefore the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance, and they shall build up an holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded until the end come, when the earth shall pass away, And there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and they shall be like unto the old, save the old have passed away, and all things have become new. *And then cometh the New Jerusalem*; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; *and they are they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph*, (i.e. believing Gentiles) who were of the house of Israel. And then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and they who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries, and are partakers of the fulfilling of the covenant which God made with their father Abraham."

But we turn to a more serious snbject of charge. It has been discovered on a further examination of these documents, that not content with *virtually* setting aside the scriptures by pretended new revelations, at utter variance with the truth; they have even ventured to deny the genuineness and correctness of the scriptures themselves, as received by us; affirming that the Gentile Churches have obtained them corrupted and altered from the state in which they originally were. This had escaped observation at first, though the manifest contrariety of the statements found in the extracts to scripture might have led to the suspicion.

There is more than ordinary effrontery in such an assertion in these days, and considering the fearfully solemn warning in Rev. xxii, it makes so grave a charge, that at the risk of lengthening these extracts too much, it is thought desirable to substantiate it. After rehearsing the events which attended the first advent of Christ, and the establishment and subsequent dispersion of the Church, allusion is made to the scriptures under the name of "the book that proceeded out of the mouth of a Jew," the record of

the Jews, and the sequel is as follows:—(page 33.)

“And the angel of the Lord said unto me, it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve Apostles bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God; wherefore these things go forth from the Jews *in purity*, unto the Gentiles; and after they go forth by the hand of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb, thou seest the foundation of an abominable Church, more abominable than other Churches; for behold *they have taken away* from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious, and after these were taken away it goeth forth unto all nations of the Gentiles, yea, even across the many waters (to America,) and because of this, an exceeding great many do stumble, &c.; nevertheless the Lord God will not suffer the Gentiles for ever to remain in that awful state of blindness... and I will bring forth unto them in mine own power, much of my gospel which shall be plain and precious; for behold I will manifest myself unto thy seed that they shall write many things that I shall minister unto them, to be hid up to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift, &c.; and in them shall be written *my gospel*.”

And by this, the reader is to understand the book of Mormon before us.

This novel and daring device, suggests a few reflections. There are two ways in which the devil may seek to subvert the foundations of the Church, which is the pillar and ground of truth.—By setting up specious claims to rival inspiration merely; or, concurrently with these, by boldly calling in question the genuineness and integrity of the word of God. The latter, as it is more daring, and must be made in the face of the best established testimony and proof to the contrary, can only be suited to times of very gross and general depravation and ignorance, or seasons of special infatuation, when the minds of men have been long already accustomed to disregard the scriptures, or to read it by the light of tradition. But of course the progress of delusion then becomes rapid and probably irremediable; which it is not in the case where the written word is only indirectly set aside as by the other method. For though much fatal error may be brought in, and the scripture by perversion made to give countenance to it, yet there it still stands in its integrity, an irrefragable standard of truth, ever operating to detect the falsehood of every rival and counterfeit pretension, and stripping even one that comes as an angel of light

of his bright disguise. The light it sheds upon the truth, the present and the future, is too full and comprehensive, too precise and well-defined, to leave room for any thing that human or satanic wit can devise; and therefore with whatever shew of truth and importance things may be given out, we have only to weigh them in the balance of the scripture, and according to our spiritual discernment, we shall surely find how in one point or another, they militate against the truth *once* delivered to the saints.*

In the present instance, without setting aside the authority of the scripture, there would have been found no means of introducing with any prospect of success, such a tissue of fables as we have before us; and the bolder course is resorted to, as we have seen. To estimate the degree in which a work, gross and exorbitant as this is in its character and pretensions, is fitted to gain credit in that quarter of the world, the state and circumstances of America must be adverted to. The stirring activity which the minds of men are evincing, and which is tending to the increasing development of all their powers and resources, and to the more complete subjection of the creature to their wills, is observable in many ways. It is not intended here to go into any lengthened remarks on the subject, except to observe that it tends to make men exceedingly impatient of restraints which fetter their energies, and particularly to make them covet political amelioration. Forgetful that sin, the root of all the evil they see in the world, is common to the whole

* This observation bears particularly on those who fetter the Church with ordinances or observances of man's appointing. They plead for a right to do so, provided they be not contrary to scripture. The next plea is that of the civil ruler is to be obeyed where the word of God does not forbid; and in these two pleas, you have the main argument for national establishments and authoritative rituals. The first plea amounts to saying—Because Christ commands nothing, therefore man may command what he pleases. Christ has called the Church to liberty, therefore man may bring her under bondage. Christ has destroyed the old ceremonial, therefore man may establish a new one. The latter plea is a gross violation of the principle of “rendering to Cæsar the things that be Cæsars, and unto God the things that be God’s. It is taking the things of God and rendering them the subject of Cæsar’s management. The Church knows no Cæsar as such “in the house of God,” (Luke xxii. 25, 26.) which in the absence of Christ, is under the direct ordering and governance of the Holy Ghost. And the sin of the Church has been a departure from the recognition of this truth both in principle and practice. “The moment the Church set up office, distinct from the energy of the Spirit, she apostatized from God.” And in that apostasy the bulk of the professing Church remains.

family of fallen Adam ; they ascribe it to the misgovernment of the few, who in the providence of God are vested with power and greatness, and every successful effort they make to throw off the yoke and to let loose the many, is hailed with triumph.

In this point of view, the land of America is peculiarly to many, what the book of Mormon calls it—"the land of promise." The tree of liberty has been planted,—“Behold,” says this book of Mormon, “it shall be a land of liberty to the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land.” “And they were exceedingly rejoiced because of the liberty that had been granted.” (p. 234.) Science, commerce, politics, learning, morals, religion, as there pursued, are to shew what man can do. Perhaps it is a fair field for observing what he really can ; but alas ! by that very circumstance it becomes a fairer field for proving what Satan can effect through instruments better prepared for his work. This may startle some, but let them take only the scriptural statement respecting the course of the world, that it is ordered by him, and that he rules in the hearts of men ; (Ephes. ii.) and apply it to such a state of things. Does it not become obvious that the perfecter the instrument is made, the more effective it becomes for the purposes of him who wields it ? However, the tree of liberty has been planted, and spreads its branches far and wide, and they are expecting it to fill the face of the earth. “It is a choice land,” says our record, “above all other lands. . . . and it shall be fortified against all other lands.” It bids fair to hope. Accumulated advantages of position and circumstances, and the spirit of its institutions have given unexampled rapidity to its growth, rising into manhood before it was well nigh heard of as a nation, and taking its place now among the first in power and importance. The unbounded fertility of its unpeopled wastes suggests no limits to its increase, and with them the world is now young, and man in maturity, with all his increased and increasing powers and resources, there set to play his part. Pleasing visions of the future, will, in such a state of things, be ever filling the heart and imagination. They read their destiny in the light of their hopes, and the providential ordering of the world seems to give to them its sanc-

tion. Now in such a state of things, the natural mind is any thing but in a disposition to be subject to the word of warning which tells of coming judgment on the world, and a sudden check to all the brightest hopes and schemes however far advanced in their career. No, other thoughts arise not so adverse to the vision that is indulged, and way is made for that accommodating notion, that the scriptures are not read aright, that we are rather on the dawn of a millennium, and the amelioration of the world begun. Such is the general belief amongst christians in the United States.

In the present instance it is not precisely this. The world at large is indeed given up to judgment, at the coming of the Son of man, which is expected soon ; and even "the land of promise" is admitted to stand a chance of not escaping, if they reject this work. But then there are other methods found for securing its pre-eminence and aggrandisement. And this is by investing it with interest of a peculiar nature, giving out even that the divine mind has a special interest in it, and will make it the blissful location of the New Jerusalem, or Zion ; in which all nations of the earth, (but this land above all others,) will be blessed. Taking advantage of the pretty generally hazarded conjecture, that the tribes of native Indians, (estimated recently, to amount to four hundred thousand,) might prove to be descendants of the long lost house of Israel ; the inventor of these "fables," or the compiler of them, has founded upon this conjecture which he has raised to the level of a revealed certainty ; the web of his design, and constructed, doubtless, at no small pains to himself, the tissue of a history and doctrine which forms the basis of this delusion. Accordingly the tribes are instructed in the book of Mormon, to look upon themselves as the descendants of Jewish families, that in their migrations from Jerusalem, passed over the great waters into the land, where the fate and history of their ancestors, and the special revelations of Christ and His gospel to them are unfolded ; and where they are assured that the covenant promises made to their fathers, will be fulfilled to them, in making them a blessing upon the land. In a similar manner the Gentiles are told the purposes of God in respect to the land, and taught that now in these days,

a Church has been called, and the limits of Zion marked out, and the fulness of the gospel brought forth ; and Apostles gifted with plenary power of the Spirit, such that even whatever they say “shall be *scripture*,” (meaning, it may be supposed, having the force of scripture,) and all are invited to flock to the land, under penalty of not escaping the judgments. But as the testimony of prophetic truth was distinct and explicit in affirming all these expectations to be vain, and the pretensions to be false ; as the doctrines of the gospel inculcated truths as remote from the Mormon gospel, as light is opposed to darkness ; it is plain, no mere claim to rival inspiration would serve to support such novel and unscriptural pretensions. Therefore as we have seen, the genuineness of the scripture, as we have received it, must be disparaged, and if “the work” were believed, the former would henceforth with them, only serve to speak in its own garbled language, the sentiments and religion of Mormonism. And here we are called to perceive the subtlety, and trace the footsteps and the working of Satan.

Yet this has been no new device of his. It was this course which that false prophet who gave birth to the Mahomedan delusion, was instigated to adopt, when it became necessary for the support of his claims, to uphold a like record of blasphemy and folly—the Koran.

In the existing state of the fallen and corrupted christianity of the East, it did not suit his purpose totally to deny the divine mission of Christ, or the divine authority of the scriptures. Both were allowed. There was traditional feeling and belief of their truth, which it might have proved fatal to his claims to oppose directly ; for though indeed his opinions were for the most part established in blood, yet much was done through delusion to rivet them on his followers. But by affirming they were corrupted, (and a bold affirmation united with success, will with the world, often carry credence ;) he destroyed, effectually, the authority of the scriptures, while they continued to supply him with a never failing store of grand and sublime truths, respecting God and His attributes and dealings, of which he availed himself to give a brilliancy

and a grandeur to some of the sentiments which "the fable,"—the Koran contains ; and that have, it is well known, done much to accredit it amongst its followers. Besides which, if his own subsequent and divine mission were believed, he could on the credit of that, use such parts of the scripture as suited his purpose, and give to them a superadded sanction for the maintenance, not of the truths which they uphold, but the error he was bringing in.

And this is precisely what the work before us is now seeking to do. The book of Mormon abounds with sublime passages from scripture, revealing the future glory of the earthly state, &c., besides many of the preceptive parts. But then they are garbled and distorted, mixed with all sorts of fictions, and so made to accredit the delusion. No more crafty way could be devised in an unhealthy, corrupt, and ignorant state of the Church ; (and in the United States, the state of ignorance and spiritual destitution in some parts, is deplorable,) to hoodwink men, and lead them thus into all manner of delusion and error.

It may yet appear in the last days of the Church, when men shall be turned away from the truth, and be turned unto *fables*, and shall be given over to believe *a lie*—that these passages will find *a more ample* fulfilment than they yet have, by bringing in rival inspiration, and "adding to" the word. This is undoubtedly of a most pernicious effect in subverting souls. But it can hardly be conceived that the climax of evil, connected with the development of the man of sin, can take effect without a previous latitude being obtained ; by also "taking from" the written word its claim to be received as genuine, and so completely invalidating all appeal to it. Doubtless with a refinement of subtlety in the mode of its accomplishment, suited to the circumstances and temper of the times. Let the professing Church therefore beware !

To return however to the productions before us.—Since the scriptures are thus presumptuously set aside, and God's revealed wisdom and truth set at naught ; it may be worth while to take a brief view of that which is here afforded *as a substitute*, in the doctrines set forth and constituting in their language, "the *fulness* of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

And for this purpose, we turn to the lectures which profess to give an account of the "doctrine of salvation." One would think from the great stress laid in them, upon that cardinal point of salvation—faith; that their design was to do honour to God's revealed way of saving a sinner, by making known to faith the righteousness of One in whom he could stand accepted before Him. But no such thing.—Faith as here spoken of, is some mysterious mental energy, operating like a talisman or mystic charm common alike to the creator and the creature, "the principle of all action and power, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or earth!" as for instance :—

Sect. 1. Par. 16.—"Faith is the principle by which Jehovah works. Take this principle or attribute of the Deity, and he would cease to exist." "God spake, chaos heard, and worlds came into order by the reason of the faith that was in HIM. So with man also. Joshua speak by faith in the name of God, and the sun stood still, &c." Sect. 1. Par. 22.—"Faith, then, is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things; by it they exist, by it they are upheld agreeably to the will of God." Sect. 1. Par. 24.—And as before, "it is the principle of action in all intelligent beings." (Sect. 1. Par. 9.)

To what a state of infatuation—"deceiving and *being deceived*," must men have come, when they can bring themselves to affirm that the principle or moving cause of any action which man or angels perform, is an attribute of God! For plainly this is the conclusion which these statements convey. But we have no time or space for following out all the conclusions of absurdity to which they lead. And we must hasten to present one or two more extracts in conclusion, as further illustrative of the nature of its faith, and its bearing on salvation.

And 1st.—The definition of the nature of faith.

Sect. 7, 3, 7, 8.—"We understand that when a man works by faith, he works by mental exertion instead of physical force; it is by words, God *spake*, let there be light and there was light. Joshua spake, &c. Faith then works by words, and with these its mightiest works have been and will be performed."

2.—The way of its acquirement.

Sect. 6. Par. 7.—"Let us here observe, that a religion that does not re-

quire the sacrifice of all things, never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary to life and salvation; for from the first existence of man, it never could be obtained, without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It is through the medium of the sacrifice of all things, that men do actually know they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God: again, through that offering they obtain the knowledge of being accepted of Him. And without the knowledge of the course they pursue, being according to the will of God, men cannot exercise faith unto life and salvation."

3.—Its bearing on salvation.

Sect. 7. 9.—"As all the visible creation is the effect of faith, so is salvation also, whether temporal or spiritual. Without faith it is impossible to please God, Why? Because it is impossible to be saved without faith. As God desires the salvation of man, He must, of course, desire they should have faith. When men begin to live by faith, they draw near to God; and when faith is perfected, they are like Him; and because he is saved, they are saved also."

As then, acceptance with God, and knowledge of doing what is well pleasing to Him, is held, as we have seen, to be a pre-requisite to faith; there must be a state wherein we are consciously all this, and not yet saved! It is plain we have to conceive of salvation according to some new sense.

4.—What salvation is.

Sect. 7. Par. 9.—"If we can find a saved being, we shall understand *what all others must be to be saved*. Now Christ is the prototype or standard of salvation, in other words—a saved being. How is he saved? *Because he is a just and holy being*; and if he were any thing else, he could not be saved." And again—Par. 16.—"These teachings of the Saviour most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation; and what he proposed to the human family when he proposed to save them....for any portion *to be assimilated to his likeness*, as he was to his Father, is *to be saved*; and on this hinge turns the door of salvation.....who cannot see then that this salvation is the effect of faith?" &c. &c.

Now whether we look to the immediate or remote cause according to these views, we are brought to the old heretical doctrine, that salvation is by works. Is salvation referred to faith? We have previously been informed that faith cannot be obtained *without the sacrifice of all things*. Is the immediate cause referred to? Then salvation is represented, not as coming through faith in the

righteousness of another, but through conformity to God in holiness, in other words—"by works of righteousness which he has done." And the same heresy forms the staple of all the doctrinal statements of the book. The writer or writers must have been familiar with the scripture terms in which the doctrines of grace are conveyed; but it is plain the meaning, and application, and of course, the power of them they were ignorant of. From the manner in which they occur in passages, where evidently works are held forth as the ground of acceptance and coming to God, the doctrinal statements constantly run into palpable self-contradiction, and wear somewhat the appearance of inculcating what the Church of Rome does, and it is to be feared many pulpits of the Church of England—"grace of congruity." Take as an instance the following confused statement, book of Mormon, page 619,—“Come unto Christ, and be perfected in Him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if you do this and love God with all your hearts, &c., then is His grace sufficient for you.” And again—“If ye are this, (perfect in Christ) and deny not His power, (in gifts of the Holy Ghost,) then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of your Father, (Jews are addressed specially) unto the remission of sins, that ye may become holy and without spot.” Yet in another place it is said, page 614, “the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins.” And again, page 160, “Offer your whole souls as an offering unto Him, (compare Is. liii. 10.) and continue in fasting and prayer, and endure unto the end, and ye shall be saved.”

The doctrine of salvation by a holiness wrought in us, as opposed to the way of acceptance through the righteousness of another, has been a favourite one with Satan in his recent endeavours to get the Church from off the foundation of truths, which are her peace, her strength, and her security. The form in which it here appears, is more gross and with less disguise than usual, and involves besides the unscriptural use of language, the fallacy of confounding the means with the end. The great end of God in redemption, as regards the sinner, is to conform him to Himself. In

purpose it is the first thing, but in full accomplishment of fact, the last.

The Church is "*predestinated* to be conformed to the image of His Son." (Rom. vii. 29.) But it is not till the redemption (v. 23.) of our *vile* body of *sin and death*, (Phil. iii. ult. Rom. vi. 6, vii. 24.) that this will be fully accomplished. "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him." (1 John iii. 2.)

It is in *the hope* of this "we purify ourselves, even as He is pure." (v. 3.) The most as to this that can be said of the Church now is, that it is "growing up into Him in all things." (Ephes. iv. 15.) The most that can be said of any ministry in the Church is, that it is furthering this growth. (Col. i. 28.) This is mediately the office of the Spirit by the word (Ephes. v. 26.) according to Christ, who is actually thus "presenting the Church unto Himself without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," (v. 27.) having *first* "loved it, and given Himself for it." (v. 25.)

But the thing which these persons who are perverting the faith in America seem utterly ignorant of is, that renewal and sanctification, whether in whole or part, is a matter that concerns—not sinners as such, but sinners *previously* awakened to a conviction of sin, and who have believed in Christ, and are therefore pardoned; to sinners *already* brought into a justified state, an accepted condition, into union with Christ, and a relation of sonship to God.

To a sinner in his state by nature, it is mockery to hold up Christ in his holiness, as the prototype of a saved being. The Spirit of God never does this. The Spirit ever leads the sinner to the discovery of the evil of sin, and his own personal vileness, both as more or less a transgressor, and as having sin existing *as a principle* in his nature. Then he begins to understand the real distance at which he is from God. In such a state it would be worse than useless to point to Christ's holiness; *that* can only produce further disquietude and wretchedness, for he sees only that with which his own vileness can have nothing in common.

No, he has *realised* his distance and alienation from God, and in the fact of that distance discovers that *he is lost*; and a soul that feels *this*, wants nothing less than a *Saviour*.

If all had ended in the perfect exhibition in Jesus of moral excellence and holiness, that would not have met the awakened sinner's need. As a much esteemed brother in his ministrations amongst us has well said—"The want of such an one is only met *in the cross*; having been taught through the Spirit a sense of what is due to sin, to see the curse laid upon Jesus meets his need," and certifies his conscience of peace with God, and sin forgiven, because borne in all its weight of curse by another, and that one, God's Son.

And thus Jesus according to the record that God has given of Him in the gospel, becomes the blessed object of faith apprehended by the soul unto salvation.

But faith while it saves the soul, also brings us into *union with Christ*; and in that union are comprised all the blessings that subsequently flow to the believer.

In fact, to be in or out of Christ, is the immense difference to a sinner in point of condition and standing before God. There is not upon earth (I speak not of devils) a creature at a greater *distance* from God than man as he is by nature. There is not in heaven or earth a creature in greater *nearness* to Him, than the same sinner when united to Christ.

"God has blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings *in Christ Jesus*." (Eph. i. 3.) "*All* the promises of God *in Him*, are yea, and *in Him*, Amen, to the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.) "He has chosen *us in Him* before the foundation of the world." (Eph. iv.)

"Therefore let no man glory in men, for 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." (1 Cor. iii. 21.)

How very blessed to be able to measure our acceptance and approval in God's sight by that of Christ Himself. This comprehends all that thought can conceive, or heart desire; not only complete forgiveness and justification, but all the favour and delight of love with which the Father views His beloved Son. Blessed, wondrous love! who can say what its bounds are or shall

be? how does the thought of it rebuke our cold and feeble tribute of praise, and the scantiness of the service that should be rendered in grateful love?

I will only add, that the completeness and perfectness of the standing of the believer in Christ, furnishes the *high* standard of the believer's holiness; all that he is *judicially* in Christ, ("holy harmless, unproveable in His sight,") that and no less is it God's purpose the saved sinners should be *morally*, through the power of the Spirit, working in the new nature that he has in Christ. *Thus* he "mortifies His members," &c. *Thus* sin dies within him daily. *To this extent*, he would be practically holy,—Christ has died and risen; the believer also in Him—first, judicially, (Rom. vi. 4.) and then as a daily thing, "in newness of life." What comfort and blessing in the thought to a believer! He cannot find a *higher* standard of holiness and righteousness than that which he already possesses in the sight of God, as accepted in Jesus. But this is not all—for the cross of Christ, thus seen to cleanse the conscience from the guilt and condemnation of sin, also acquires in this way a *moral* power to purify the heart from the power and dominion of it. And the gospel is proved to be not only the most effectual, but the only effectual means for exalting the holiness of God, both enforcing and *securing* its claims.

But we must conclude. The preceding extracts may suffice to show what Mormonism is. Looking to the absence throughout the productions before us, of any of the grand fundamental truths of the gospel, and the folly and reckless impiety of the pretensions made by persons, who would be thought exclusively "the Church of the latter day saints," there is no reason for believing that the principals at least have attained to any saving knowledge of God or of His truth. Nor would there be reason to fear that any real believers would be snared and taken in such a delusion, were it not for the peculiar character of the times, which give warning of the prevalence of such a fearful power of seduction.

One thing we cannot help noticing, though it must be very briefly, and that is the very great similarity between the claims set up by this body, in that sister country, and those which we are

in some measure familiarized with here. I allude to that of Irvingism. They agree *in the time, at which in either country they sprang into existence*. The same elements of error were working from 1827 and 1828, and in either case assumed a settled form in the years 1830,—31. Both lay claim to being *exclusively the Church of the latter day*. Both preach *there is no safety out of it*. Alike they claim the possession of *a new Apostolate*—and to have the living *voice* of the Spirit amongst them in *new revelations*, which are elevated to the authority of the scriptures.

Both are distinguished by *the undue efficacy and unscriptural character they attach to ordinances*;* and alike offend against *the scriptural liberty† of the Church at large, to do priestly service unto God*.

It is singularly characteristic also of both, that while they denounce the apostasy of all the professing Churches of christendom in no measured terms, *they both connive at the evil they see, by sanctioning and even exhorting persons awakened to the evil, to stay in them till, as they say, the spirit calls them out—that is to say, till a more convenient season; showing that to come out from, and be separate from evil, is not so much their desire, as to come out and be separate unto themselves.‡*

* In proof of which, we quote the following from the book of revelations Sect. 14, Par. 3.—“This greater priesthood (Aaronic) administereth the gospel, and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even of the knowledge of God. Therefore in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest; and without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest in the flesh, for without this, no man can see the face of the Father, and live.”

† Sect. 13, Par. 4.—“It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach any gospel, or to build up any Church, except he be ordained by some one that has an authority, and it is known to the Church that he has authority, and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the Church.”

‡ Compare the following extracts, book of Mormon, p. 115. “The Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block—that they have built up many Churches; nevertheless, they put down the power and miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom, and their own learning, that they may get gain, &c. . . . and there are many Churches built up which cause envyings, and strifes, and malice.” Again p. 120.—“Their priests teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost which giveth utterance.” . . . p. 131. —“because of pride, because of false teachers and false doctrine, their Churches are become corrupted. . . yea, because of pride and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms; they have all gone astray, save it be a few,

It is easy for the natural man to see many and gross corruptions in the religious systems of the day, such as even he cannot tolerate or wink at. What shame ought there to be to the godly who are in them, in the reflection that while the world is awakened to them and does not tolerate them, *his* conscience is either yet insensible to their grossness, or his heart even carried to defend them. But the world, though it sees the evil, can only substitute its own *evil specific* in its stead. And even the children of God may so learn to separate from present evil, as not to avoid falling into kindred or opposite error. *Haste* seems to be peculiarly *the* "work of the flesh," unto which such are liable to be betrayed. To see evil and "to cease from it," is not all.—There is a further necessity of *learning* "to do well." The grace of God teaches us this in the *most* happy way, if we are humble and possess a constant spirit of waiting on the Lord; but many are taught it with more sorrow, though with ultimate blessing, by slow and perhaps bitter experience, *after failure*.

Whichever way it may have been ours to prove—blessed are we indeed, if in the end at least we find we have learned, as a *first* lesson, never to parley with what offends the conscience but "to cease" from it directly; and then in our progress out of it, feeling *humbled at every recollection of the past, instead of elated at the present*, we are daily learning lessons of wisdom and grace; that, like Him whose ear was wakened "morning by morning to hear as the (taught or) *instructed* One;" our path may resemble that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

who are humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led—that in many instances they do err, because they are taught by the precepts of men."

Yet with all this, we have the following at p. 116. "Behold! hath he commanded any that they should depart out of the synagogues, or out of the houses of worship? Behold! I say unto you, nay."

THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

THIS portion of the word of God has commonly been the most precious to the Church. Many a soul has enjoyed it as such, without, perhaps, exactly knowing why it was so ; for the correctness of our spiritual tastes and desires is often much above the measure of our spiritual intelligence. And it is well that it is so. But the special delight of the saints in this portion of the scriptures may be accounted for ; and I believe the reason of it lies in this—that it particularly presents the Lord to us in that person and in those actings which do immediately associate Him with the Church,

Before, however, I give what appears to me to be the general character and order of this gospel, I will suggest some introductory things which have helped me, as I judge, to a fuller understanding and enjoyment of it myself. May the Lord control our thoughts, and lead us into His own truth !

From the whole of their history, the people of Israel might have learnt how entirely dependent they were on those resources which God had in Himself, beyond, and independent of, their own system ; for by such resources they had been in all stages of their history sustained and conducted. Their father Abraham had been called by an act of sovereign grace. (Josh. xxiv. 3.) God's own hand had preserved and strangely multiplied them in Egypt. (Ex. i. 12.) In distant solitudes, where Israel was not known, Moses was prepared to be their deliverer from Egypt. All through the wilderness, their journey had shewn them their utter dependence on God. By His Spirit, and not by might nor by power, did Joshua, after Moses, fulfil his ministry, reducing the nations of Canaan ; and afterwards, though in different circumstances, there was still the same thing. Joshua's sword, which had been the verifier of the Lord's faithfulness to Abraham and his seed, had no sooner been sheathed, and the blessing transferred from the hand of God which

had thus brought it, to the hand of Israel which was now to keep it, than it was lost. It slipped away from its new guardian at once. Faithlessness and weakness were as clearly now marked in Israel, as truth and power had been in Jehovah. Israel and Canaan were Adam and the garden again. But this only gives fresh reason for the same grace as before. Ere the first chapter of the book of Judges closes, Israel, by disobedience, had forfeited every thing. The inhabitants of the land were not driven out. But the rest of that book only shews us God's presence among them; repairing the mischief from time to time with His own hand, and in the energy of His own Spirit.

And this must needs be the character of God's acting in a time of forfeited blessing. Either judgment must be executed in righteousness, or blessing be brought in sovereign grace. Man by the previous trial having been found wanting, must be humbled and set aside, and God come in with some new energy of his own to do a strange act, something anomalous or irregular, something beside the order of the dispensation, and independent of what were properly its own resources. All the deliverances wrought for Israel in the times of the Judges, are accordingly of this character. The appearance in Israel of Deborah, Gideon, Jephtha, and Sampson, is such a thing, as the system, if maintained by its own resources in its own path, would never have led to.*

Thus as to Deborah—"She judged Israel in those days." But this was not quite such a successor to him who was "king in Jeshuran," as we might have counted upon. But the honour had passed into the hand of a woman, for Israel was out of order. Trespass had come in with a disturbing force, and the remedy must be applied, if at all, by God's own hand. And so it was. Therefore in her magnificent song, she sings—"O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength;" a confession that the source of her strength and victory was all in God, and that in the energy of the

* And indeed we have a sample of this, previously to the times of the Judges. The irregular ministry of Eldad and Medad, and their companions was the sovereign provision of God, through the Spirit, for the failure in Moses, for his refusal, through impatience, to proceed with the work that had been exclusively committed to himself. He learnt, to the rebuke of his unbelief, that the Lord's hand had not waxed short. (Numb. xi.)

Spirit, and in that only, she had fought the battle of the Lord and conquered.

So with Gideon.—He was not of Judah to whom such honour had by ancient right belonged, but of Manasseh, and his family, the least in Manasseh. But such an one is called away from his threshing, to bear that sword which was soon to distinguish itself as “the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” But what was this sword of such renown? Three hundred men with trumpets and pitchers! Strange weapons of war against the host of Midian. But Midian ran before them. A cake of barley bread tumbled in and overturned the tents of the enemy. For it was the Lord Himself, who was now in action again, and the treasure of Israel’s strength might therefore well lie in an earthen vessel.*

And Jephtha in his turn tells the same tale. The son of a strange woman, he had been disclaimed by his brethren in Israel, and cast out among the Gentiles. But this is the one whom the Lord chooses, again to be Israel’s saviour in the day of their trespass and trouble. But where is Israel’s honour now? where is the glory and worth of their own system, when he whom his brethren despised and cast out as a base thing, is their only hope in their calamity? The honour was not their’s, nor was the strength of their own system their help and defence now. The Spirit of God in sovereign grace to Israel, comes upon Jephtha. The battle was the Lord’s. Israel had again destroyed himself, but in God was his help.

And all this we have again displayed in Samson. All that shelters in and conducts him in his strange course of action, speaks of the strength and way of God alone. There was nothing in the system of Israel that could account for it. Samson was a child of promise, raised up in the dishonoured tribe of Dan, and thus was a sign of God’s grace and sovereignty. And according to this, he is at once separated to God, drawn as far as might be, out of the strict Jewish order and line of things. The path which he trod lay right across the beaten path of Israel. The secret of God was with him, but none knew his riddle but himself. His kindred

* 2 Cor. iv. 7, seems to be in allusion to Gideon’s lamps and pitchers.

in the flesh did not know it, for it was the secret of God. And he himself has done with father, and mother, and country, and the law of Israel, and is under a new and special dispensation. Contrary to the law, and yet by the direction of the law-giver, he marries a daughter of the Philistines. And throughout his course he does not go the common way of Israel, or use the resources of Israel, but he does strange and surprising acts from the time that the Spirit first moved him in the camp of Dan, to the time when he died in the midst of the Philistine lords. All that he does, was of one great character. An unknown energy stirred and conducted him. Israel's own resources were again by all this, set aside, and God himself was displayed in His own grace and power.

So after the book of Judges closes, we see the same thing. Samuel like Samson was a child of promise, and a child of promise is always the sign of grace ; (Rom. ix. 8.) for it says, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And therefore at his birth, his mother celebrates through the Holy Ghost, the praises of grace. He becomes at first a mere waiting boy in the tabernacle, but from thence he is called forth that all Israel might know him to be the prophet of God ; and finally see in him the raiser of the stone Ebenezer—the deliverer and help of the nation."

And after him, in David, we again see God's own way and resources displayed in the time of Israel's need. For David was taken from the sheepfolds to feed Israel. His father and his brethren took no account of him ; Israel knew him not, but the Lord chooses and anoints him. He becomes for awhile an exiled and needy wanderer, but at last he has the kingdom settled in his house, by a covenant of sure mercies for ever.

Thus from the call of Abraham their father, to the exaltation of David their king, through Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and Samuel ; every stage in this wondrous journey, is seen to have been accomplished in the grace of God—the resources of their own system, and which lay in their own hands, proving utterly vain.

And I would add, that the prophets were another line of witnesses to the same truth. They were raised up for Israel's guidance and help, by an extraordinary energy of the Spirit. The primitive settlement of things in Israel, did not provide such a ministry. The nation was to stand in the remembrance and obedience of the words which Moses had delivered to them. (see Deut. vi, xi, xxxi.) But forgetting these words, an extraordinary presence of the Spirit of God is called for, and that is displayed in the person and ministry of the prophets.

Thus, by this line of teachers or prophets, as by the other line of rulers or deliverers, testimony to the need of God's own resources in their behalf was left with every succeeding generation of Israel. And this was continuously telling out to them, that they could not stand in their own covenant, and that all their hope of final honour and rest lay in the grace and power of God. And so we know it will be—Israel will stand as God's people in the latter day, in the strength that is laid up for them in the Lord Jesus; to whom therefore, these two lines of witnesses point, and in whom, as the true prophet of Israel, and as the true king of Israel, they will both end. And what refreshing will it be for those who are weary of man, and sick of his wisdom and his doings, to walk in a sphere where man shall be hid, and God alone displayed! "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

But there was another and a deeper purpose of God which was constantly seen in the history of Israel. The eminent persons I have been noticing, were all of Israel, and pledged only Israel's mercies. But God had purposes beyond Israel,—purposes touching *the Gentiles*, of a very exalted character; and this He signified also by another line of witnesses, formed, as we shall now see, of eminent personages, who were all of them Gentiles, or strangers to Israel.*

* Some time since, just as the view, which I am now going to speak of, presented itself to me in the scriptures, I was much encouraged by reading a passage in the "CHRISTIAN WITNESS," which shewed me, at least, as I judge, that the brother who wrote it had taken the same view. (See Vol. 3, p. 267. NOTE.)

There appears to have been a body of Gentiles at all times, living in the midst of Israel, who take an inferior rank to Israel, though enjoying blessings and ordinances with them.* But there was also a line of distinguished Gentiles, who, whenever they appeared in the history, took a place, and were called into scenes and services, as did, on the other hand, greatly raise them above the level of Israel. Both of these things are, I judge, very significant, illustrating the plans then reserved in God's counsels for the Gentiles or strangers, the great body of whom will hereafter in the kingdom take a place subordinate to Israel, though in Israel's joy, while there will then be an elect and distinguished body of them (those who are now called out to form the Church of God,) whose place and dignity will be far above that of Israel.

The first of these distinguished strangers who meets us, is Melchisedek. The honour that was put upon him, need not to be particularly spoken of here ; it is generally so well understood. But he only begins a series of persons, each illustrious in their generation and day, like himself.

After him, we meet with Asenath and Zipporah, the wives of Joseph and of Moses ; they were both strangers to Abraham : but they became the mothers of those children who were given to these two illustrious fathers in Israel, while they were in their days separated from Israel ; and thus do they hold dignities that the chiefest daughters in Israel might envy.

We next are introduced to Jethro, who on Israel's coming out of Egypt, takes upon him without rebuke, though he was but a stranger, a priest of Midian, to do priestly service in the presence of Aaron ; and to give counsel touching affairs of state to Moses. This was occupying for a while, a very illustrious place in the midst of Israel. The brightest glories in Israel were thus for awhile, outshone ; and Moses and Aaron, the king and the priest in Jeshurun, are set aside by this stranger. Fair token, like Melchisedek before, of great things to come for the Gentiles.

* See Ex. xx. 10., Lev. xvii. 12., xviii. 29., xxiv. 24., Numb. ix. 14., xv. 14, 15, 18, 29., xix. 10., xxxv. 15., Josh. viii. 35., 1 Chron. xxii. 2., 2 Chron. ii. 17., xv. 9., xxx. 25.

After Jethro, we see Rahab, another stranger, but one who, we may all remember, was brought to have a high memorial in Israel ; such a memorial indeed as the daughters of Israel longed for continually. For the hope of Israel comes through her after the flesh ; (Matt. i. 5.) and she is the one whose faith is spoken of in connection with the faith of their father Abraham. (Jam. ii.)

Next, in Jael the wife of Heber, the Kenite ; we see the stranger again much honoured. It was by her hand, in a very special measure, that God subdued the king of Canaan before the children of Israel, so that her praise is thus rehearsed—"Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber, the Kenite be ! blessed shall she be above women in the tent !"

After her, in a third female, in Ruth the Moabitess ; we see the stranger again honoured with many honours. Though a daughter of an unclean and rejected people, she is given a place equal to the chiefest mothers in Israel. Like Rahab before her, the hope of the nation comes through her according to the flesh ; (Mat. i. 5.) and she is given a standing equal in dignity with Rachel herself. (Ruth iv. 11.) She had no natural kindredness with Israel ; but through grace she is grafted on Israel to become the bearer of the stem of Jesse, whose branch is, as we know, the only hope of the people.

And afterwards in the times of David, we have the stranger kept most honourably in view. This appears first in Uriah. He was a Hittite ; but his fidelity to the God of Israel, and zeal, self-devoting zeal, in the cause of Israel, shine out blessedly in contrast even with Israel's chiefest and noblest and best child in that day. This poor relic of the defiled Gentiles, rebukes no less a son of Israel, than king David himself.

We get the stranger again in these times of David, in Ittai the Gittite. (2 Sam. xv.) He with his 600 men, appears to have joined himself to David, when forced to seek a refuge among the Philistines. And he continued faithful to David down to the very end. He came into the land of Israel with him, after Saul had been removed, and the language of such an act was just what Ruth had been before to Naomi, "thy people shall be my people,

and thy God my God." He was not of Israel, but more true to Israel's anointed king, than Israel was ; for in the time of David's second sorrow, when his people had revolted to Absalom, and the land was in rebellion, it was this stranger that clung to him whether for life or death. "Wherefore goest thou also with us," said David to him, "return to thy place, and abide with the king, for thou art a stranger and also an exile ; whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us, seeing I go whither I may ? return thou, and take back thy brethren : mercy and truth be with thee." And Ittai answered the king and said, "as the Lord liveth and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." How beautiful and affecting all this is ! how perfect the tenderness of David, and the faithfulness of this his long tried friend and servant, and how eminently by all this is the stranger distinguished in Israel.

But in these same days of David, the stranger or Gentile, is again introduced to us in the person of Araunah ; and as usual, in a way of eminence and honour. David's transgression had brought the nation under judgment, and the angel of the Lord was going through the land slaying his thousands, when at the bidding of the Lord, his hand is stayed at the threshing-floor of this Jebusite. There it was that mercy *first* rejoiced against judgment. Sin was reigning in Israel unto death, but grace is made to reign unto life *first*, in this inheritance of the Gentile. What a high distinction was this ! what a note of favour to the Gentiles ! Surely all this had a voice, though there was no speech nor language. For the fulness of the Gentiles is *first* to come in, and then all Israel is to be saved. God's grace to us now, is the pattern of His future grace to Israel ; (Rom. xi. 30, 31.) as Araunah's threshing-floor gave the rest of the land a pattern of that abounding grace, by which it was to be delivered from the sword of the angel.

Afterwards, in the times of the kings, I may notice both the widow of Sarepta, and Naaman, the Syrian. Not that they were either of them ever brought to high estate in Israel, as other

strangers, but they were made the standing monuments of distinguishing and electing grace. (see Luke iv. 25—27.) After these, we reach Jehonadab the son of Rechab. (2 Kings x.) He is made assessor with Jehu, in judgment on the house of Ahab. And as this action of Jehu, was the foreshewing of the Lord's judgment of apostate Israel, (Hos. i.) we get in Jehonadab thus honourably associated with Jehu, a type of the stranger, or the Church associated with the Lord in the coming day of His vengeance on the apostasy. For then the Lord is to come with *ten thousands of saints* to execute judgment—the *armies in heaven* are to follow the word of God on white horses.—And thus this introduction of Jehonadab, not only again gives us the stranger in very eminent and holy honour, but also the glimpse of some of the high dignity, that is in reserve for the Church of God, in the latter day.

Thus among the Patriarchs, and successively in the times of Moses and of Joshua, of the Judges, of David, and of the Kings, the stranger is occasionally presented to us, and always in distinction. But beside this *occasional* testimony, there was the *abiding* presence and testimony of the stranger or Gentile in Israel. I mean in that family to which this Jehonadab, and others whom I have noticed, belonged; the family of the Rechabites, who continued in Israel from the earliest times down to the latest, from Moses to Jeremiah. (Jud. i. 16. Jer. xxxv.) And all through these many centuries, they dwelt as strangers in the land. At the very first, they went up from the *city*, to dwell in the *wilderness*, and at the very end, they are seen maintaining the same character. They neither built houses, nor bought fields, nor sowed seed, nor planted vineyards; all the days they dwelt in tents, and did not eat of the fruit of the vine. Thus they were a standing order of Nazarites, more separated to God than even Israel; and so faithful were they to their consecration-vows, that at the end when the Lord was pronouncing judgment upon His own people, He pledged to the house of Rechab, that they should not want a man to stand before Him for ever. Throughout the long period of their tabernacling in Israel, wherever we hear of them, it is always

to their praise, always taking such a place of honour, and sustaining such a character of holiness, as distinguishes them, like all the other strangers, quite above the level of the nation.*

Now upon all this I would observe, that as Melchisedek ought to have been to the Jews, a notice of a better order of priesthood, than that of Aaron, (Heb. vii.) so this line of strangers, following thus as it were in the train of Melchisedek, might have been in like manner, the constant notice of better things in reserve for the Gentiles, than all that which had distinguished Israel. Israel might by them have been prepared for the calling out of the Church, which with the Son of God as her head, is the true stranger upon earth, and which is to hold a more honoured place under God, than Israel ever knew. The Church is that to which all these eminent strangers pointed beforehand. For the Church does not tread in Israel's path. She is a stranger where Israel was at home. Her citizenship is in heaven and not on the earth. The saints are the sons of God, and the world knoweth them not even as it knew Christ not. They stand as at the end of the world, (1 Cor. x. 11.) dead and risen with Christ. The Son of God was given no place on earth, and they as with Him, do but sojourn here, separated in principle from all around them, as the Rechabites were separated from Israel, among whom they therefore did but tabernacle or pitch their tents.

I do not however speak of the *histories* of these strangers as typical. I only point to the fact of their high exaltation in Israel, as being a notice from God, of his high exalted purposes concerning the Church—the true strangers. The histories of some of them may have been so typical, (as I have noticed Jehonadab's sitting with Jehu in his chariot, was) as the histories of others of them may not have been so. But it is not the details of their histories that I have been here looking at, but simply the fact of their exaltation in Israel.†

* I might add the cases of the Centurion and the Syrophenician, as the strangers who appear in the midst of Israel, when the times of the New Testament had begun. For like their more ancient brethren, they appear in great distinction. The Lord signalizes them both.

† I would not however refuse to observe that I know no little historical

Thus these two lines of personages, end in Christ. The line of distinguished Israelites or Jewish worthies, who were called forth in the special energy of the Spirit, for the help and guidance of Israel, ends, as I have already noticed, in Christ; as Israel's true prophet and king—"the God of Jeshurun," who in the latter day, is to be the shield of their help, and the sword of their excellency. The line of distinguished Gentile strangers, who sustained a character and bore dignities and honours far above the level or ordinary calling of Israel—ends in Christ as the head of His body, the Church. And the coming kingdom will manifest Him and those who are severally associated with Him, in these several glories. All things in heaven and on earth shall be then gathered in Him. The true strangers or the saints, will then shine in the heavens, "as the sun in the kingdom of their father;" and Israel will find their rest, their holy rest, on the earth, under David their prince and shepherd.

Now all this leads me to our gospel; for of Christ as the Son of God, the stranger upon earth, and of the Church which has association with Him in that person and character; the gospel of St. John is the appropriated witness. Indeed it is that which gives it its distinction, and makes it, as I have already noticed, that portion of the oracles of God, which is most precious to the saints.

And let me here observe, that this office of St. John under the Holy Ghost, suits well with the place which he had previously fil-

passage that more sweetly unfolds the Church during the interval, from Israel's rejection of Messiah to Messiah's final deliverance of Israel, than Ex. ii. 16—22. Zipporah (to whom I have already just alluded) here becomes debtor for deliverance and life, (of which water or a well is the constant emblem) to Moses in the day of his exile from Israel. And by this, he entitles himself to receive her as his wife from the hand, and with the full approval of her father. All this is beautifully significant of the mystery of Christ, and the Father, and the Church. And in further proof of this being a type, we may remember that Stephen speaks of the rejection of Joseph and of Moses, by their brethren, as kindred with the rejection of Christ by the Jews. Joseph's marriage with a Gentile, and Moses' marriage with a Gentile, clearly, therefore, set forth the Lord's union with the Church during His rejection and enstrangement from Israel.

I would here just notice, that Jehovah's estimate of what a *stranger* was to expect, and the Holy Ghost's estimate by St. Paul, of what a *saint* should expect, is the same. (Deut. x. 18., 1 Tim. vi. 8.)

led in connection with the Lord Himself. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who lay in His bosom ; and now he is made to tell us of Him, whom the Father loved, and who lay in the Father's bosom. It was with his Lord's *person* that John had been familiar, and it is of His *person* that he is now made the special witness.

May we have understanding hearts to understand the secrets disclosed in this heavenly word ! Could we but discern it, every line of it, carries with it, its own divine authority. But, beloved, the only safe and profitable knowledge, is that which we get in communion with the Lord, through the Spirit ; and that which, when acquired, ministers to still more enlarged communion. May we prove this, more and more.

I would now follow our gospel in its order, observing briefly, and as I may have grace given me, upon its general character, and detailed contents.

CHAP. i. 1—18.—I read these verses as a kind of preface, serving to introduce this gospel in its due character, as the gospel of the Son of God—the Son of the Father—and the Baptist's testimony is here summarily appended to this preface, as serving the same end.

And here I would notice that in this gospel, our Lord Jesus is not merely Son of God, but Son of the Father. As Son of God, the promised king of Israel was known ^{to} the nation. (see Matt. xxvi. 63.) But as Son of the Father—as the one whom the Father sent, they knew Him not. And it is generally as Son of the Father, that we are to remember Him, while reading this gospel.

And here too I remark, that the place which our blessed Lord immediately takes on His appearing upon earth, is that which I have already observed belongs to Him as the Son of God, and to His body the Church, that is, the place of a *stranger*. He is here shewn to us at once in this character,—as light in the midst of darkness,—the maker of the world, and yet not known of the world, coming to His own and yet not received of His own ; made flesh, and yet only tabernacling for awhile among us. All this

shews Him to be the stranger here, and it is thus that this gospel introduces him. And accordingly at the beginning, it assumes that His question with the world, and His question with His earthly people Israel, were both determined. (see ver. 11, 12.) The Spirit of God in our Evangelist, at once shuts up the world, under the condemnation of being "without God," and concludes Israel in unbelief; and upon this brings out an elect family, not registered in the earth or born of flesh, but born of God, for whom "grace and truth," the fulness of the Father in the Son, were now provided.

And on these prefatory verses, I must further observe, that they take us up to God Himself. The book of Genesis, as one has remarked, opens with creation; but the gospel by St. John opens with Him who was before creation, and above creation. It is to Him that we are here immediately taken. Creation is passed by, and we get to "the Word," who was with God and was God.

This is the opening of our gospel, defining it to be the gospel of the Son of God, the creator of all things, the declarer of the Father, the fountain and the channel of grace and truth to sinners. And according to this, the glory which St. John tells us we have beheld, is that "of the only begotten of the Father," that is, a *personal* glory, while the glory which the other Evangelists record as having been beheld, was the glory on the holy mount; that is, an *official* glory merely. And this again characteristically marks the end and bearing of this *divine* gospel.

19—28.—And even in these verses the action can scarcely be said to have commenced, for they give us, *only by way of recital*, the Baptist's testimony to the Jews, before the Lord Jesus had been manifested to him as the Son of God. For so little had the Spirit of God in St. John to do with Jewish testimony, that all this is given here by way of recital, telling us what had been the Baptist's confession to the messengers of the Jews.

29—42.—But here the action fully opens, and this is with the Baptist's direct testimony to Jesus, after the manifestation of Him as Son of God.

And having borne witness to Him as the Son of God and the

Lamb of God, the Baptist appears as one who had consciously fulfilled his course. In the 35th verse he is as one who had retired from his ministry, and was simply enjoying that in which it had all resulted, the manifestation of the Lamb of God. He is there heard merely uttering the hidden satisfaction of his own soul, when he said, "behold the Lamb of God!" For he does not appear to have addressed these words to His disciples, but they, hearing him thus in holy happy contemplation of Jesus, follow Jesus. And beloved, it is this which gets the same honour now. Our power in drawing others after the Lord, mainly rests in our joy and communion with Him. John had done with himself, and was lost in thoughts of the Lamb of God; and His disciples seem to catch his mind, for they leave him and follow Jesus.

But where do they follow Him? we are not told. In all grace the Lord encouraged them to follow, and they came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day, but where it was we know not. They follow Him along some untold path, and were with Himself, but that is all we learn. For the Son of God was but a stranger on the earth, and they, if with Him, must be strangers too, without place or name here. And so is it here signified; for this little gathering was to the Son of God, and to the Lamb of God; but in principle it was not here—in principle *the earth* did not own the place, for this was the first handful of wheat for the *heavenly* granary—the first fruits of the Church or heavenly family unto God and the Lamb.

But there are some points in these verses that I would a little further observe upon. The Baptist speaks of Jesus being really before him, though coming after him; and he repeats this as with some jealousy. (v. 15, 27, 30.) And St. Paul, referring to John's ministry, alludes to this feature of it. (Acts xix. 4.) But this, I judge, is very blessed; for in this the Holy Ghost, who spake of John, honours Jesus as the great subject of all the divine counsels, the great ordinance of God to whom all other ordinances pointed, and in whom they ended. And therefore though he came after them, he was before them; and John, as if speaking the mind of all ordinances and ministries, says, "after me cometh a man which

is preferred before me, for he was before me." For it was the Son alone that had been set up from everlasting ; (Prov. viii. 23.) the great first object in all the divine counsels ; and every prophet, and ordinance was but his servant, for a testimony to him. And again on these verses, I observe, that John and the Lord had no knowledge of each other till John came forth in ministry. John had been brought up in Judea ; our Lord in Galilee. But on the Lord's approaching John to be baptized, John at once acknowledged Him—acknowledged Him without any introduction. There seems to have been some consciousness that this was He, awakened within him. (Mat. iii. 14.) He had, indeed, acknowledged Him even before he was born. (Luke i. 44.) The world knew Him not, but John knows Him ; and thus condemns the world. But he does not know Him so as to bear witness to Him as the Son of God, till the Spirit descends and abides on him—for that, as John was admonished, was to be his divine attestation.

And further—I must here observe, that this gospel in full consistency with its general character, gives us in these verses, what I may term the *personal* call of Andrew and Peter ; while St. Matthew, not noticing this, gives us their *official* call. But this is in beautiful order with the mind of the Spirit, in the two Evangelists ; with such thankfulness and delight should we mark the perfection of the divine testimonies.

43—51.—In these verses, we have the action of a subsequent period, called here "the day following." This action is the ministry of Jesus Himself ; and the fruit of that ministry in the persons of Philip and Nathanael.

But this is a new thing. This was not a gathering to Him as "the Lamb of God," as the former had been, but a gathering to Him as the one "of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write." And therefore this is a sample, not as the former was, of the Church or heavenly family, but of the Israel of God that is to be saved in the latter day after the Church has come in. And this Israel of the latter day will be known to Him in grace in the midst of the Jewish nation, as Nathanael here is known to Him while under the fig-tree—the standing symbol of the Jewish na-

tion. (Matt. xxi. 19.) And this Israel of the latter day will make the same confession to Him which Nathanael here does. They will own Him and receive Him as the Son of God, and the king of Israel. And when this comes to pass, all will be ready for the display of the glory ; the distant glimpse of which the Lord here accordingly catches, and a sight of which, in due season, He then promises to Nathanael, the representative, as we have seen, of His Israel.

All this, I thus judge, is very significant, and will be found to be confirmed by the opening of the following chapter :—

CHAP. ii. 1—12.—We have just had the Church and Israel severally and distinctly manifested in the two gatherings to Christ in the previous chapter. Accordingly we here get “the third day,” or the marriage ; the wine for which Jesus Himself provided.

Now these circumstances give notice of the mystic import of the scene before us. For the “third day,” (which is the same as the resurrection-day,) the marriage, and the wine of the Lord’s own providing, are things which stand allied with *the kingdom*, in the thoughts of those who are familiar with scripture, on this subject. And thus I doubt not for a moment, that this marriage and wine sets forth the coming kingdom of the Lord, where He is to appear both king and bridegroom,

To this marriage in Cana, the Lord had been bidden as a guest ; but at the close of it, He takes another character there, and becomes the host providing and dispensing the wine. So by and by, when we have tasted of the inferior joy which our skill or diligence may have provided ; He Himself will prepare the joy of the kingdom, and drink anew with us there of the fruit of the vine. And by this easy gracious action, He transforms the mere marriage-feast at Cana, into a mystery, and makes it the occasion of manifesting His glory, setting forth in it that kingdom of which He had just been speaking to Nathanael. He becomes Himself the host or bridegroom. The governor sends to the bridegroom who had bidden them all there, as though He were the one. But it was Jesus who provided the joy of the place, and who is still keeping

“the good wine” for His people till the last—till all other joy is over. Jesus was the true bridegroom. This was the feast when He turned the water into wine ; as He will in the kingdom again pass by all our resources of joy, and give what eye hath not seen, nor the heart of man conceived.

And I cannot refuse adding (so sweet are these notices of the Church’s interest in these things,) that it is *the servants*, and they only who are here thrown into connection with the Lord. They are in his secrets, while even the governor knows nothing about them. And the mother also, (kindred with him in the flesh,) is thrown at a distance from him. (v. 4.) It was *the servants* who were brought the nearest to him in the whole scene. And so with us, beloved. Jesus, the Lord of glory, the heir of all things was a servant here ; He came “not to be ministered unto but to minister ;” and those who are humblest in service are still cast the nearest to Him. And in the day when He will provide the true wine of the kingdom, His servants that have served Him shall, as here, be dispensers of the joy under Him, and be distinguished as in the secret of His glory. “If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”

13—22.—After all this, we see our Lord at Jerusalem, there with authority cleansing the temple, and thus asserting the royal prerogatives of the Son of David. (see Matt. xxi. 12.)

To all this authority that He thus assumes, He is then challenged for His title, and He simply pleads *His death and resurrection*.* “Destroy this temple,” says He “and in three days I will raise it up.” And so it is. This is His title. His rights and honours as creator of the world and as the Lord of Israel, were as we saw, denied Him ; (see i. 10, 11.) His title to them was disallowed, and we know that He has acquired all power in heaven and earth

* In the gospel by St. Matthew, when the Lord is challenged for His title to the same authority, He refers to the ministry of John the Baptist and not as here to His death and resurrection. (Matt. xxii. 23, 27.) But this only preserves the characteristic difference of the two gospels ; for John’s ministry was the verifier of his authority to the Jews, death and resurrection is the verifier of it to every creature.

by another title, death and resurrection which has displaced the usurper, and regained for man the forfeited inheritance. This gives Him now sure unquestionable title to every thing, But how would He have been straitened had not this His baptism been accomplished? Had not the corn of wheat fallen into the ground and died, it would have abided alone. But because He humbled Himself to death, God hath exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name.

Chap. ii. 23. iii. 21.—Thus the joy of the kingdom was exhibited,—the power of the kingdom exercised, and the Lord's title to it set forth and pleaded. Now in due course, the title of others to enter into the same kingdom with Him, becomes the question; and this question accordingly is here discussed. And deeply affecting to us all, is this holy and solemn matter.

Man is a creature whom the Lord the creator cannot trust. Adam's breach of allegiance in the garden made him so. Man then did all he could to sell God's glory into the hand of another. The dispensation of the law has proved him to be still unworthy of the confidence of God, and this character is here stamped on him by the Lord Himself. "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men." He knew what was in man, and could find nothing that He could trust. What a sentence! Nay, more than this. Man as he is, can never be so improved as to be trusted again by God. Man's affections may be stirred,—man's intelligence informed,—man's conscience convicted, but still God, cannot trust him. Thus we have read, "that many believed in His name when they saw the miracles that He did, but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them." Man in this was putting forth his best; he was moved by the things that Jesus did; but still the Lord could not trust him. For in the kingdom there is to be none of this distrust of man, but the Lord must have in His people there, the joy and confidence of well-trying allegiance; as he says, "ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom." But in man himself, there is none of this trustworthiness, he must therefore be born again.

The need of this new birth, He here preaches to Nicodemus.

But having stated this requisition, the Lord graciously discloses to Nicodemus the seed of this new life. He preaches to him *redemption through the sufferings of the Son of man as its means, and from the love of God as its rich and blessed source*. The word of this salvation is the seed of this needed new life, the word which by the gospel is preached to us. (1 Pet. i. 25.) And when the Lord had thus disclosed the seed of this new life to Nicodemus, He seeks to sow it in Nicodemus himself, to sow it (where it ever must be sowed if unto fruit,) in his conscience. For Nicodemus had come to the Lord by night, as though his deeds could not bear the light, and the Lord aiming as it would seem, to reach his conscience, just on their parting says, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov-
ed." Thus our Lord here teaches the need of the new birth, through the word of salvation. Without it man cannot be trusted of God. And without it the kingdom of God could not, as our Lord here further teaches us, be either *sure* or *eternal*. What association for instance, had the elder brother with that which was the characteristic joy of the Father's house? None! He never had so much as a kid to make merry with his friends. None but a returned prodigal could draw forth the ring, the best robe, and the fatted calf. And so the kingdom is such a kingdom as none but *redeemed sinners* can apprehend its joys, or have any place in it. There is not one *righteous* person in it from one end of it to the other. All are *redeemed*. Every thing in it is reconciled by blood, as it is written—"and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether things in earth or things in heaven."

Deeply interesting to us all is this beautiful conversation. And I would further observe, that in it our Lord shortly alludes to the *earthly* and *heavenly* things. The new birth, as the needed entrance into the kingdom, is the subject of the conversation; but our Lord just hints that this entrance opens both earthly and heavenly places. And St. Paul's discourse in Rom. xi, is of this kind also. He speaks there of the partaking of the fatness of the root of the olive, as the only way of all blessing, as the Lord here

speaks of the new birth. But he afterward shews that that way introduces to different orders of blessing, which he expresses by the terms—"the gospel," and "the election;" (see v. 28.) answering to the "heavenly things," and the "earthly things" of this passage. And scripture, I judge, teaches us that the Church now grafted on this fat root (that is, grace which is opened for us in Christ—and made known of old to our common father Abraham,) grows up into heaven; Israel by and by grafted on the same root will spread itself over the earth, and the whole will form the beautiful fruitful tree of God's own planting, filling heaven and earth. As Jacob saw the same mystery under the figure of a ladder, whose foot was set on the earth, but the top of which reached to heaven; and to which our Lord alluded in speaking to Nathanael. Such will the coming kingdom be; it will have its heavenly and earthly departments—its higher and lower glories—and the Son of man will be the centre of all: "the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man."

22—36.—After the Lord had thus discussed with Nicodemus the question of man's entrance into the kingdom, He is seen for a little moment pursuing His ministry, as minister of the circumcision in Judea. (ver. 22.) But we see this only for a moment. For to detain such things before us would not have been within the scope of this gospel, which takes [the Lord as we have seen, out of Jewish connection altogether. And in the next passage we may notice the same; (ver. 23, 24.) for the Baptist is here seen in connection with Israel, but it is in like manner, only for a passing moment; and in order too as it would seem, to give him occasion under the Holy Ghost, to bear a testimony to Jesus, not at all in His Jewish glory, but in higher honours and sweeter joys, than Jesus could have ever known as Son of David. (see ver. 25, 26.)

On this occasion the disciples of John were jealous for their master, because all seemed to them to be going after Jesus. They seem to be of the spirit of Joshua of old, who, when one reported that Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, moved with envy because of his master, said, "my lord Moses forbid them." But as Moses there rebuked Joshua, so here John acknowledges

that all His joy was fulfilled in that, which was thus provoking the displeasure of his disciples. He was but the bridegroom's friend. He had waited for such a day as this. His course was now therefore run, and he was willing to retire and be forgotten. Like his fellow-servants the prophets, he had held up a light to guide his generation to Christ, to lead the bride to the bridegroom, and now he had only to retire. He stands here, as at the end of the line of the prophets, and in his own name and theirs, leaves all in the hand of the Son of God. And when he gets on this theme, (the glories of Him who was greater than he,) how gladly does he go on with it. The Spirit leads him from one ray of this glory to another. And blessed is it, when Jesus is the theme that thus awakens all our intelligence and desire. Blessed, when we can each one of us be thus willingly lost and be nothing, that He alone may fill all things. Be it so with thy saints, Lord, through thy heavenly grace, more and more!

CHAP. iv.—Thus John is gone, and with him every thing but the ministry of the Son of God. All now lies in His hand alone, and accordingly He here goes forth simply as the Son of God—the Saviour of the world. He appears before us here (iv. 1.) as one that was rejected of Israel, and is now leaving Judea the place of righteousness, simply as the Saviour of sinners.* And going forth in this character, He must needs go through an unclean place, for in such only could the Saviour find His proper objects. But journeying among us in such a character, cost Him bitter pain and weariness; the sample of which we find here. But He took this journey for the love He had to sinners; and so here we find Him, as soon as He gets out to the unclean place, addressing Himself to a woman that was a *sinner*.

It was quite in consistent righteousness that the Jews refused all commerce with the Samaritans. It was according to their calling

* The contrast in ver. 1, between "Jesus" and "the Lord," is very marked, and very significant of this. It was *Jesus* who had been baptizing and making disciples in Judea; but it is *the Lord* who now leaves Judea. *Jesus* the Jew is left behind, and the Lord, the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, goes forth.

to say, "it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." For this was a testimony against evil, and such testimony was the very trust which Jehovah had committed to Israel. They were to be God's witnesses against the world,—they were the clean separated from the unclean, for a testimony to the righteousness of God against a corrupted earth. But Jesus was now standing aloof from Israel. He had left Judea, the place of righteousness, and was standing in defiled Samaria as Son of God—the Saviour of sinners. He had already gone to Judea, looking for righteousness, the proper fruit of that country, but had not found it.—He is not now to look for it in Samaria. Here He must be in another way altogether—in the way of grace only, and in the consciousness that He was so, that He was here only thus in grace, as the Saviour of sinners, He addresses Himself to the woman.

There had been from the beginning, a secret with God beyond and behind all the revealed requisitions and order of righteousness that had been established in Judea. There was "grace and the gift by grace." The Jew might have had committed to him a testimony to righteousness against the world; but the Son of God was the gift of God to the world, entrusted with life for it; "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" and in the blessed consciousness that he carried with Him this secret of grace for sinners, He now says to the woman, "give me to drink." She wonders of course, as well she might, that He did not keep his distance as a Jew; but she did not yet know that the secret of God was with Him. But this was soon to be disclosed. The glory that excelleth was about to fill this unclean place. The Lord God is now taking His stand, not on the burning mount in righteousness, but at the head of the river of life, as the Lord of the well, ready to dispense its waters.

What blessing is thus preparing for this poor outcast! None other than an outcast could know it. But such must also know that the source of this blessing is not in themselves. And this the Samaritan here learns. She is made to know herself—to look well and carefully round on all things that ever she did, and to see that

it left her only a wilderness and land of darkness. Her conscience is dismayed—"he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." But wilderness and land of darkness as it was, the Son of God was there with her. This was blessing, such blessing as an outcast in a wilderness could know. It was to outcast Jacob, who had only the stones of the place for his pillow, that heaven was opened, and God in fullest grace and glory was revealed. So here with this daughter of Jacob. The Lord was again opening the rock in the desert. The ark of God was now again planted with the camp in the midst of the wilderness. The unclean Samaritan is spoken to by the Son of God, the Lord of the well of life; and this was joy and the power of love to her, for it separates her from her own pitcher, and fills her spirit, and her lips, with a testimony to His name. Beloved! this is divine! A poor Samaritan whom righteousness had bidden to stand by in an unclean place, is thus made the pattern of the workmanship of Jesus, and taken into the secrets and intimacies of the Son of God! It was her very place and character of *sinner* that thus throws her in His way. It is only the *sinner* that lies in the *Saviour's* path. And, brethren, whatever of sorrow or of trial the entrance of sin may have caused us, or may have still to cause us, yet without it we could not have had our God as we now have Him, opening His own bosom, the treasure-house of love for us, and giving us forth the Son from thence.

The disciples, on their return, wonder, like the woman, that Jesus had not kept His Jewish distance. But still they are conscious of the presence of a glory that was above them; for "no man said, what seekest thou? or, why talkest thou with her?" They did not as yet know the secret which the Son of God carried. He then shews them, as white already for harvest, fields which their faith had never surveyed. They knew of no fields but such as of old had been parted among the tribes. In their esteem, God's husbandry must be confined to that sacred inclosure. But there was, as we have already seen, a secret with God. It was the Son of God—the Saviour of sinners, who had now gone forth with seed, and His toil had prepared a harvest for the reapers, in the defiled

plains of Samaria.* He shews His disciples a company just coming out from Sychar, who were soon to say, "this is indeed the Christ—the Saviour of the world." And thus were they ready for the sickle. The harvest in Judea was plenteous; (Matt. ix. 37.) but in Samaria it was white for the reapers. The Lord had borne the toil of the sower; had talked, weary and faint, with the woman; but He would now share with His disciples the joy of the harvest; and in pledge of this, He abides for two days with this little gathering out of Sychar, believed on, and owned as the Saviour of the world.

These two days at Sychar, were thus a little taste of the joy of harvest. They were some of the most refreshing which the thoroughly wearied Son of God ever tasted on this earth of ours. For He found here some of the brightest faith He ever met with, and it was only the faith of sinners that could ever have refreshed Him here. Nothing in man could ever have done this—nothing but that faith which takes man out of himself into God. But this joy was only for two days. He is quickly called down to a lower region. After these two days, He goes on to Galilee; and thus gets into Jewish connection again: and He goes with this sad foreboding, "a prophet has no honour in his own country." And with increased trial of heart must He feel this now, from the liberty which He had just been knowing among the poor sinners in Samaria. And His foreboding was found to be true. He finds faith in Galilee, it is true, but faith of an inferior order. The Galileans receive Him, but it is "because they had seen all things that He did at Jerusalem." The nobleman and his house believed, but not until they had carefully verified Him by their own witness-

* I would here observe, that in our Lord's considering the question of "worship," to which the woman drew Him off, He still speaks in His character *as Son*. The woman addresses Him as a Jew, but He does not answer her as a Jew. He rather shews that all Jewish worship was now ending; and in the consciousness that the Son had now come, He teaches her that the hour was come, when all accepted worship must be in the spirit of adoption, that it was *the Father* who was now claiming worship. His whole reply expresses the consciousness of this, that He was addressing the woman, not as the Son of David who had come to purify the temple and bring back the revolted Samaritans from this mountain, but as the Son of God who was come to give all sinners access by one Spirit unto the Father.

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ses. The gathering at Sychar had believed Himself—the Galileans now believe Him for His works' sake; (see xiv. 11.) the Samaritans knew Him as in Himself—the Jews were now, as it were asking a sign again. The one accordingly came into union with the Son of God; the other receive health from the physician of Israel; and thus defiled Samaria is, in blessing, before righteous Judah.

Here the first section of our gospel closes. It has led us in the paths of the Son of God along this evil world of ours. At the opening of it, we saw His glory, and found that the moment it shone out upon the world, it proved the darkness of the world. The Son of God met no answer from man. The world that was made by Him, knew Him not. But He carried with Him a secret—the secret of the grace of God to sinners, deeper than all the thoughts of men. A stranger He was on the earth;—but the revealing of His secret to poor sinners, had virtue to make them strangers with Him.

(TO BE CONTINUED, IF THE LORD WILL.)

ST. PAUL'S COMPANIONS AND YOKE-FELLOWS,

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 393, VOL. IV.)

TITUS.

THE epistle to Titus is addressed to "Titus mine own son after the common faith," implying that he was converted by the ministry of the Apostle; where and at what time cannot be ascertained with any certainty, but being "a Greek," as all the first christians at

Antioch were ; and being first presented to us in service as accompanying St. Paul from Antioch to Jerusalem ; it may fairly be supposed that he was an Antiochian, and converted in the interval between the Apostle's arrival at that place, when sought for and brought by Barnabas, and their departure together to Jerusalem, with alms "for the relief of the brethren which dwelt in Judea."

In the narrative of the service of Barnabas, I endeavoured to prove that this was St. Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, some further account of which is thus given in the 2nd chap, of the epistle to Galatia—"then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also."

As no notice is given of any call of Titus to this work like that of Timothy, neither any allusion whatever to laying on of hands, whether by St. Paul or the presbytery of Antioch ; we have no scriptural ground at least, for speaking of this as a commonly observed rule.

I have already shewn how variously the Holy Spirit bestows, and orders His own gifts ; and if this is the beginning of the course of arduous service I am about to trace, we may judge from the evidence afforded us, such as it is, that the Apostle, discerning in the exercise of the wisdom bestowed on him, the opening of that character and those gifts, which were afterwards so matured—took Titus with him to instruct, as well as perhaps more fully to ascertain the truth of his judgment concerning him.

In this visit, the perpetually controverted question of submission to Jewish authority, and to the law, on the part both of Jew and Gentile was strongly urged ; and that "through false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage." It is remarkable how these two questions are wedded in modern as well as in ancient opinion and practice—the first in opposition to the great truth of the sovereign presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church—the second, to the accomplished work of Christ on the cross, as alone justifying the believing sinner. In writing to the Church of Galatia, where false brethren had in like manner probably found entrance, he sets aside the first by proving

the independence of his own authority, saying "immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me.....but of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were it maketh no matter to me—God accepteth no man's person;" (Gal. 1st and 2nd chap.) and of those also who pressed circumcision, he says, "to whom we gave place by subjection, not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you;" and adds as an instance confirming what he had said, "but neither Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised."

The Jewish Apostles received their authority and appointment immediately from the Lord, and they had been His companions, and no one can lightly censure a Jew for giving special deference to them: when, however, they sought actively to undervalue the equally authoritative Apostleship of St. Paul, because he had not been similarly circumstanced, or appointed to office by the "twelve;" they were then entangling others in their own ignorance and prejudice—and this he resisted; they might question his authority, and refer exclusively to Peter, James, and the others; and he could and did bear with them: but when they openly denied his Apostleship, and sought to lead the Gentiles into the same error, then, "he gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour."

There is a memorable instance of this grace, in his readiness to submit to the prejudices of these men, in Acts xv. There were, as we have seen, Jews at Antioch, who were pressing circumcision, and who were doubtless opposed, like these in Galatia, to St. Paul's Apostleship as irregular, and to his opinions as subversive of the honour and integrity of the Jewish law; and the Greeks there with the readiess of human nature to submit to any thing that will, "make a fair shew in the flesh," were yielding to them, when resisted by Paul and Barnabas. He does not however attempt to set the evil aside by any claim of subjection to his authority;—he might have done so, and surely there would have been nothing abstractedly wrong in his doing so: but such conduct would not have suited the case—it would have been no expression of God's love, or of that grace which can bear the infir-

mities of the weak. They might have impugned his authority if he had asserted it, and in so doing they would have resisted Christ, and he would rather shield them from so great a sin; and besides, the question was not then his Apostleship, but the necessity of circumcision; and instead of losing sight of this in another, or, displacing it by the more remote one of his own office and power, he loses himself in a pressing desire to remove the evil, and submits their question to the authority they were at once ready to acknowledge; thus settling the difficulty in their own way, and by the judgment of their own court—keeping his own claims, whatever they were entirely out of sight. But when the question of his office is the prominent one, as it necessarily would have been, when he went up to Jerusalem the second time; then, as in itself most important he guards it carefully from any, either real or apparent dependence on the Jewish Apostolate; and when it is called in question by the false teachers among his own converts at Galatia and Corinth, he promptly vindicates and asserts it. Yet as edifying is his exclusive object, (as he says, “let all things be done to edifying;”) he never intrudes it in the face of prejudice, and when spiritual profit can be imparted by its concealment, for the sake of the weak and ignorant, he is ever ready to leave his authority where his opposers would have it.

In the question of circumcision, his conduct appears to result from the same principle; it was nothing in itself, and nothing to him, and as long as the Jew retained it in ignorance, and used his pre-possession harmlessly, he not only left it alone, but yielded to it as a prejudice, that he might obtain an entrance for the truth that would remove it; if, however, it was revived in its past importance, and pressed as a duty on the consciences of others, and so put before Christ or with Christ, he promptly resisted it, as subversive of the liberty and meaning of the gospel. Thus it was in the case of Timothy, “him Paul took and circumcised, because of the Jews which were in those quarters, for they all knew that his father was a Greek;” his mother however was a Jewess; and this gave the Jews some natural claim to him; and that he might not meet them on this ground of prejudice at all, St. Paul appears to

to me, to rid himself of the difficulty which the agitation of it would create, by submitting to their prejudices, so removing them out of the way, and thus gets entrance for the gospel, which if it did not set aside circumcision altogether, yet put it where it was as harmless as any thing else in the soul's salvation, behind the cross of Christ.—Not so, however, with Titus, nor at Antioch or Galatia. In the case of Titus who was a Greek, it was forcing Jewish error and prejudice on a Gentile; and it is as evident, that it was then at Jerusalem as elsewhere urged along with the keeping of the law, as necessary to salvation, as indeed the words of the Apostle show—"because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we gave place by subjection—no, not for an hour, *that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.*"

At Antioch "certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren—except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved; and with them therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation. And with the Galatians, who had alike been led astray by false teachers, (of whom he says, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you,") he thus remonstrates—"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage; behold! I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing, for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law; for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love."

This, then, appears to have been the Apostle's rule and practice too; whenever the prejudice could be robbed of its power by forbearance, he bore with it in the hope of delivering those who were in bondage to it; but if the error was vital in itself, then the truth he preached could alone remove it. If, however, men came in Christ's name, robbing the cross of its glory, and the Lord of His rights—ruining the souls they professed to teach, he resisted them at once, and speaks of them in no measured terms; or further, if

his compliance was exacted as approbation of the error, however trifling, cherished as it might be by an uninformed conscience, or the sway of habit, he would not yield even though the custom or ceremony had in it, the sacred remembrance of divine appointment but in every thing else, does he not speak clearly when he says, "For though I be free from all, yet have I made myself servant unto all, *that I might gain the more*, and unto the Jews ; I became as a Jew, *that I might gain the Jews* ; to them that were under the law, as under the law, *that I might gain them that are under the law* I am made all things to all men, *that I might by all means save some*.

On the Apostle's return from Jerusalem to Antioch, there can be no doubt that he was accompanied by Titus, and there I judge he continued until the Apostle returned to that place, from his second course of service. That he was not with him in these travels, cannot I think be questioned ; for the accounts are so in detail, and give such frequent prominence to his fellow labourers, Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy, that if Titus had been with them, he could not have escaped notice.

On St. Paul's leaving Corinth, (having planted the Church there,) he passes on to Ephesus ; (Acts xviii, xix.) and thence to Cæsarea and Jerusalem, "that by all means he might keep the feast ; and having accordingly gone up and saluted the Church, he went down to Antioch, *and after he had spent some time there* he departed and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. It was during this visit then, I conclude that he renewed the fellowship with Titus, that had been so long interrupted ; and on leaving Antioch to return to Ephesus, took him as his companion, having ascertained during his stay, (for he spent some time there,) the truth of his earliest judgment.

No detailed account is given of this journey, it is summed up in few words ;—"he went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples ;" and therefore it is evident we can gather no information from it, relative to Titus ; but in the absence of this, there is an intimation, though

most indirect, yet quite sufficient to substantiate what I have supposed. It is commonly allowed, that the epistle to Galatia, was written after this visit to that place, and in it Titus is familiarly mentioned, as though well known to them, and mentioned in such a manner, as connected with the error spreading among them, as though his case would be at once so strong, as not to be evaded. Now if they had been ignorant about him, the mention of his name would but have awakened questions, such as, who is Titus? and the force of the proof would have been lost, till inquiry had been made; besides, he could not have been so spoken of without explanation, if St. Paul had not known their acquaintance with him.

If this be true, we may be fairly challenged to present him when next noticed somewhere with the Apostle, beyond Galatia; and so we find it in his history—he stands before us at Ephesus, girding up his loins to be the messenger of the irresistible anxieties of the Apostle's heart about his beloved Corinthians, of whose divisions and misconduct report had been brought to him but a little before. In the history of Timothy, I have already traced the outline of these events. Brethren had come to Ephesus from Corinth giving a sad account of the prevalence of evil there; bringing also letters of inquiry about many difficulties; they had returned, carrying St. Paul's reply, that is, the first epistle to that Church.

Then Timothy and Erastus are sent on into Macedonia, and Timothy charged, if possible, to go on to Corinth, "to bring to their remembrance the Apostle's ways which be in Christ, as he taught everywhere in every Church:" (1 Cor. iv. 17.) after the departure of Timothy, as well as the epistle, St. Paul's anxieties evidently increase; he had written "out of much affliction and anguish of heart," and he was then about to follow himself: he had intended to have gone straight across by sea to Corinth, and from thence to Macedonia, and so returning again to Corinth; but he was checked in this intention by the state of the Corinthians; "I call God," he says "for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth." (2 Cor. i. 15, 23.) That he might give them time to repent, he delays going there, however ardently he desired to see them, and turns his course round by

Macedonia. It is evident, however, that after he had sent the epistle, (for in it he makes no allusion to the coming of Titus,) and after Timothy had left him, unable to continue so long in suspense, he hurries off Titus from Ephesus to Corinth, that he might obtain the earliest tidings of the effect of his letter, probably charging him to return by Macedonia, and yet expecting such speed as to ensure their meeting at Troas. On leaving Ephesus, the Apostle pursues his course towards Corinth, by way of Macedonia; and on reaching Troas, he finds a door opened to him of the Lord; but he says, "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother, but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia;"* on reaching Macedonia however, he thus writes,—“I am filled with comfort; I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulations, for when we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no rest; but we were troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears; nevertheless God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus, not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me, so that I rejoice the more.....therefore we were comforted in your comfort, yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all; for if I have boasted anything to him of you, (and doubtless he had done so when meeting him again at Antioch and elsewhere, telling him of all God's grace through him to the Gentiles,) I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth: even so our boasting which I made before Titus, is found a truth, and his inward affection is more abundant toward you whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all; how with fear and trembling ye received him;—I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence in all things.” (2 Cor. vii. 4, 16.)

The difficulty of such a service as this, none can question; the

* St. Paul had been charged with changeableness for not going to Corinth at once, according to us, now he might be, for forsaking a door opened of the Lord, for preaching the gospel, in the steadiness of his purpose to go to Corinth; of both, however, he could say. “now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.”

blessing resulting from it where there is grace to fulfil it, is as apparent ; many epistles could not have brought to pass, what the hasty visit of this trusty Evangelist accomplished : and while we learn from this history something of the new sphere of joy and sorrow into which those who seek God's glory in His Church are called ; how touchingly and yet how simply is the fellowship of spirit between Paul and Titus, and both with Christ shown to us, in their mutual triumph over the repentant and now approved Corinthians.

The conduct of Titus was so entirely in accordance with the feelings of the Apostle, and so fully did he identify himself with him in opposing the false teachers and troublers there, that when commending his own Apostleship to them, he says, " did I make a gain of you by any of them I sent unto you ? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you ? walked we not in the same spirit ? walked we not in the same steps ? As the mission alluded to was doubtless that which I have been considering, we learn thus incidentally that a brother accompanied Titus from Ephesus, in accordance with the common and happy practice of going out two and two.

In the 1st epistle to Corinth, St. Paul speaks of a collection, as though it were being generally made by the Gentile Church of his own planting, for the poor saints at Jerusalem. " Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye ; upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come, and when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem ; and if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me. Now I will come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia, for I do pass through Macedonia." (1 Cor. xvi.) And again when at Corinth and writing to Rome, he thus speaks of the same thing, " but now I go to Jerusalem to minister unto the saints, for it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem ; it hath pleased them verily, and their

debtors they are, for if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things." (Rom. xv. 25, 27.)

On reaching Macedonia, the Apostle is cheered not only by the coming of Titus, but by the great liberality of the Macedonians in the collection they had made, and he promptly sends an account of it to Corinth, (as it appears to me) by the hand of Titus, whose interest in, and affection for the Corinthians had been so recently proved, that he might excite them to the same grace, and that his boasting of them to the Macedonians might not be contradicted by the event; and he thus writes to them—"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.....praying us with much intreaty, that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.....insomuch that we desired Titus as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also, ...but thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you, for indeed he accepted the exhortation, but being more forward of his own accord, he went unto you, ...as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you, for I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many; yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf, that, as I said ye may be ready, lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting; therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty and not as of covetousness.....Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you, or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ, wherefore show ye to them, and before

the Churches the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf." (2 Cor. viii and ix.) Thus, then, that the collection might be ready—that the Achaïans might not be surpassed by the liberal though poor Macedonians—that his boasting of them in this grace also might not be put to shame ; with all the abundant love that could seek their welfare and honour, in the face of all the neglect and dishonour they had put on him. The Apostle sends his fellow-helper and partner before him to Corinth, who "walking in the same spirit," and "having in his heart the same earnest care for them ;" willingly accepts the exhortation, and hastens again to Corinth :—what a living scene is this ! what an adaptation of spiritual gifts and character to the urgencies of a spiritual people ! what could the precision of carnal order do in its place ? to speak in the gentlest terms, it is but the trifling of children.

No further mention is made of Titus in the Acts ; he is not in the number of those who accompanied the Apostle from Corinth to Rome ; (Acts xx. 4.) and the only remaining traces of him are to be found in the epistle addressed to him at Crete, and the 2nd epistle to Timothy, the last St. Paul ever wrote.

The epistle to Titus could not have been written before the Apostle's imprisonment at Rome ; for the long interval between his first going from Antioch, until he stands before Cæsar is so filled up in the history of his travels, that no space is left for a winter passed at Nicopolis, (spoken of in the epistle,) nor indeed for any visit to Crete previous to that recorded in his voyage as a prisoner to Rome. But the epistle is written when free and on his way to Nicopolis in Macedonia, and after a visit to Crete, as he says, "for this cause left I thee in Crete," &c.

In the account of his voyage to Rome, we are told "he spent some time in the fair havens near the city of Lasea, in Crete ; (Acts xxvii. 8, 9.) but no intimation is given to us that he found any Church there, or that he planted one during the delay ; nor is it said that Titus was with them in this voyage, (though it is strongly implied that he was not ;) so that it is fair at least to suppose, in the absence of fuller evidence, that the Apostle left some one on the Island, (perhaps Aristarchus the Macedonian,

who beside Luke, was his only known companion ; (Acts xxvii. 2.) and that after his release from Rome, he returned there taking Titus with him ; when finding Churches widely spread, he left him "to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain Elders in every city." (Titus i. 5, 6.)

We have no account of the length of his stay or service at Crete, that he had a permanent and confined jurisdiction over the Churches in that Island, is no where shown, but evidence to the contrary is fully given to us in this epistle, and none but those who rely on the ignorance of others could have so boldly asserted it, in the very place where its refutation is to be found. At the close of the epistle, the Apostle says, "when I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter ; bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them." (Titus iii. 12, 13.) Here, then, is an express charge to leave Crete and go to Macedonia, but yet not to do so till either Artemas or Tychicus relieve him of his charge ; it does not appear to matter which, but it is evident that whichever it may be, he is to take the place of Titus and do the same things, (it need hardly be said that Titus would have given over the letter of instructions to his successor.) The narrative is very plain and simple, and cannot well be objected to. Titus had acted as a temporary Apostle at Crete, St. Paul's "fellow-helper" concerning the Cretians, as he had been at Corinth ; and now Artemas was to go there, and Titus return to the Apostle. All this is directly against any settled episcopal control.

But it may be said, that, though he was thus freed from his charge for a little to go to the Apostle, yet he returned there again and resumed it, and that the appointment of Tychicus was but provisional : but what proof of this can be found ? The scriptures bring him before us once more as though purposely to deny this, and (as in the case of Timothy) to show how he acted as a subordinate Apostle, an Evangelist, and a wanderer to the last. "Demas" (saith St. Paul in the last letter he ever wrote,) "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is de-

parted into Thessalonica—Crescens to Galatia—Titus to Dalmatia." (2 Tim. iv. 10.) That he joined the Apostle at Nicopolis, we have no reason to doubt; and this reference to him plainly asserts his presence with him at Rome, where he probably accompanied him from Macedonia. There they parted—St. Paul had nearly finished his course, and was ready to be offered; but the work of Titus was not yet ended, and he left him in the urgency of service to go to Dalmatia, not to Crete, but to Dalmatia.

There is no portrait of Titus to be gathered from the accounts given of him. There are no distinct features of character to be found; the history of his mission to Corinth is both affecting and beautiful, but even here we must learn what he was in our knowledge of the Apostle; they were of one mind and spirit—but Titus is lost in St. Paul.

The disputed question about the authority and office of these men, naturally arises here; and whether the continuance of such in the Church can be proved or otherwise, one thing I think must be fully conceded by every unprejudiced mind. And it is, that their existence at any time establishes beyond dispute a *principle*, from which it is most unsafe to deviate. If these men were not chosen and appointed by the people,—if they had power to ordain, if not to select Elders,—to receive accusations against, and to rebuke them when so ordained,—to guide and determine in agitated doctrinal questions, and otherwise to set the Churches in order; then at the least we may conclude, that the Lord's early practice with His Churches, was altogether at variance with the democratic polity of so many in this day. On the other hand, the application of the principle they inculcated to National Establishments is entirely faulty, however valuable the principle in itself; and though it may be used triumphantly to prove many in error, it is quite true that those who forsake it for one of their own choosing, must err in some way, but this by no means proves that those who contend for it are right in its application. To abuse a truth is more perilous indeed, than to throw it away altogether.

But though thus acknowledging the principle of such authority

in the Church in its earliest days, and readily conceding that matters are wrong, if it is not still in exercise *in some form*, I can find no part of scripture giving the most indirect intimation, that either Timothy, or Titus, or their fellows, had instructions or authority to select men to fill up their place. There is one passage I am aware used for this purpose ; but it does not touch the question at all. “ The things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also.” In what way can this be said to speak of a transfer of authority ? it does not in any way allude to it. It is not “ the authority thou hast received from me, the same commit to faithful men who shall be able to govern others also,” which alone could have expressed so important a charge ; but “ the truths, the doctrines thou hast heard from me, teach to faithful men in such a way, that when they have learnt from you, they may become teachers of others also.” Let us remember, that at that time, the sum of Apostolic doctrine was not common to all the Churches, as it is now ; some had one epistle, some another, some none at all ; and these fellow-helpers came in to supply this deficiency ; they were the apostles’ living epistles to the Churches that had none, and to complete what was wanting in those that had but one. They had been his constant and intimate companions, hearing the Holy Ghost speak by him on all occasions, and when absent were charged “ to hold fast the form of sound words which they had heard of him :” (2 Tim, i. 13.) and these truths, thus learnt and so committed to their trust, they were charged to commit to the trust of others, not by appointment to office, but by teaching.

Dismissing then this passage as altogether irrelevant, where can another be found ? The word is plain and express as to the appointment of Elders by them ; but there is not even an obscure passage to be produced, giving sanction to the opinion, that the peculiar office and authority of these men, was to be continued by their appointment. The principle may be produced, and the expediency of its continuance may be urged, and we may defer to such a plea, but this does not come to us with the weight of scriptural precept or practice. Let us consider that it was not

created to make up for the loss of Apostolic pastorship altogether, but that it existed along with that and depended on it, and then every plea of expediency might equally be urged for the continuance of the Apostolic office; indeed the principle of authority I have spoken of, may as surely be sustained by the fact, that it once existed, as by the subordinate service of Timothy and Titus; and I may well add in the words of another, though not applied to this subject; if it had been contemplated to render the offices of these men permanent by successional appointments, “we cannot but expect on so capital and momentous a subject, that some necessary instructions and a formal warrantry too, would have been conveyed to the parties who were to exercise powers so extensive, so delicate, and so difficult.”

In the selection of Elders and Deacons, nothing is left unsaid; and it is remarkable that while in almost every epistle, the people are required to submit to their Elders, yet not one word is addressed to Elders for guidance in their behaviour to superiors, and yet there can be no comparison between the offices, as to their importance.

I do not myself, nor do I ask any to decide dogmatically without further evidence, that such authority should not now be exercised in the Church; but this I can fairly ask, if the whole tenor of their service, does not imply the possession of some peculiar and transitory power, as annexed to the office and gift of an Evangelist? The office and gift, I do not doubt the continuance of; but could not Timothy, or Artemas, or Tychicus say, what none since have been empowered to do. “I am come with direct instructions from the Apostles, and claim your submission. Do any inquire of us? *We are the partners and fellow-helpers of St. Paul.* To Timothy, the Apostle writes thus—I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia.....these things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.....till I come, give attendance to reading to exhortation, to doctrine.....Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me—do thy diligence to come before winter. And to Titus

“for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting when I shall send Artemas or Tychicus, be diligent to come to Nicopolis.” This is language which would naturally be used to a deputy, to one filling up temporarily the place of the writer, but it is altogether out of place if addressed to a person permanently fixed in a prescribed office ; indeed I know not how it can be disputed that their office was no continued circuit of superintendency or archepiscopacy ; no fixed guardianship over the interests of a certain number of Churches, but that all these men had the care of all the Churches with and under the Apostle ; and so exercised their care here or there, as the necessity arose. Ephesus, Rome, Achaia, Macedonia, Crete, and Dalmatia, were within the diocese (as it is called) of Titus, co-extensive indeed with St. Paul's ; and the attempt to separate their office from that of the Apostle, and make it analogous with the appointed and permanent duties of a modern Primate, (as some call Timothy and Titus,) is most idle.

And I must add, that while on one hand, the consideration of the word of God, as bearing upon this question has led me more strongly than ever to see the mistake of the various dissenting Churches ; yet on the other hand, even if it could be proved or shown that the bishopricks and primacies of the National Establishment, were in accurate accordance with Apostolic rule (which I have shown they cannot be,) and allowing fully the value of the principle retained by it ; yet is it appalling to see how the vitality of the question is hidden under this mere show of good.

“Christianity (says the author I have already quoted,) is the belief of certain alleged facts, and it is also a certain line of conduct springing from the motive which the knowledge of these facts engender ; but all men do not profess this faith, nor do all that profess it maintain a course of conduct such as must be reckoned necessary to the christian character. The gospel therefore, if its peculiarity and its power are to be preserved, brings in a distinction between man and man, even between those, who, in no other sense as members of society are to be distinguished ; our alternative is either to lower christianity and to convert the Church in-

to a receptacle of impurity, or to adhere to some rule of discrimination, nor can we use any other rule than its own, the Church and the world must needs be parted.

Again—"Christianity is a comprehensive combination, but it is also a special one—a power of judgment and exclusion is therefore essential to the very existence of a christian society; the door of the primitive Church stood open, but the Church itself was kept clean. It is an equal fault for a Church to have an open door and a promiscuous assemblage like a market, or a bolted door upon an Augean stable."

Compare this with the National Establishment, and where are the corresponding features? indeed what honest mind recognizing the simple truth contained in these words, can do otherwise than apply its censure to what indeed is "a promiscuous assemblage like a market;" a system destroying, as far as it can, the distinctness, and peculiarity, and power of christian truth.

And even in this "promiscuous assemblage," there are rulers and teachers claiming Apostolic authority, and seeking to establish their claim by the proof of their conformity to Apostolic usage and form, and by contrasting their conduct with the errors of others. It is a common blind to set about proving others wrong, because the inference is as commonly drawn, whether true or not, that the objector is right in his ways; but a really honest and humble inquirer for truth, cannot be so satisfied. Men who neither know or care for the specialty of christian truth, appointed by a civil power to Church offices, merely because the form of their office has some show of Apostolic conformity, arrogantly claim a right, which if the word of God is to be obeyed, it is no better than sin against Christ, and the welfare of His Church, to acquiesce in for a moment-

If any man should have the gifts and character of Titus, he may serve in his office, if not, it is at the peril of any to defer to those who assume the one without the other.

So also as to Elders. It is true that instructions concerning them were given to Timothy and Titus and not the people, yet are the instructions public, and if any who say they are in authority,

disobey the word of God by appointing persons other than so described, are others to follow their disobedience and own them? The instructions plainly state what are God's required qualifications, and how can it be said that He appoints or owns those who do not answer to the description.

The word of God indeed plainly calls on us to judge and try all who declare themselves teachers. In the epistle to Galatia, the whole Church (not those in authority) are thrown upon this trial. Though we (Apostles) or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received let him be accursed," &c.

This is a solemn charge to judge, and it matters not by whom the false doctrine is taught, ordained or unordained, Apostle or angel, let him be accursed. If then on the one hand men say they are to make teachers, and to choose between one and another, and unmake or dismiss at their pleasure, the word of God denies this right, and charges them with departure from its principles, to say the least. But on the other hand, if any, while contending for more scriptural order, require us to submit to worldly minded, proud, and heretical men, pleading for their authority, the appointment not of Christ or His Church, but the world, while at the same time all the distinctness of the Church, is spoiled or obscured by the system that acknowledges such to be vested with the authority of Christ, I speak unto wise men! What are we to say and to do?

It is easier to discern what is wrong, than to direct others into the path which will remedy it; but there is a moral principle at issue, which it is perilous to cast away; "abhor that which is evil." The Lord has never put us into the dilemma many are contented with,—that of making a comparison of evils, and then accepting what may be thought the least.

Why are we to be contented with any evil? If the democracy and levelling of the dissenters be wrong, let us forsake it and seek to submit to spiritual authority, but where is it? In the National Establishment? can any seriously put in its claim without having reached the extreme of hardihood or simplicity? that which tram-

ples on and destroys the very meaning of God's Church, and receives its honours and appointments from the world; and through its thousands of licensed teachers, sends abroad false doctrine and heresy of every kind; and on what plea? it is sometimes gravely answered "Apostolical succession." The ghost stories of the nursery are more worthy attention; and surely those who are influenced by the one, will be by the other. How can this satisfy a soul searching for the path of obedience?

I lay not much stress upon the testimony of Church history, but every one who has any acquaintance with it, will know that as far as its evidence proves it, none ever did follow Timothy or Titus in their peculiar service. That there were at a very early period chief bishops of a kind somewhat similar to those in modern practice, cannot be denied, though their dioceses were much more limited. A president of overseers in a city or district being their general character; and that they speedily departed from Apostolic practice, in almost every thing, may be proved by the strange fact, (strange as bearing on this question,) that with the exception perhaps, of the very few earliest, these diocesans were elected by the people, instead of being appointed by superiors; and there was oftentimes as much division and contention caused by it, as there is frequently now, in a dissenting Church.

It has been said however, that the continuance of the office, being intendend of God, may be proved by the following question,—If the Elders depart from the faith or act immorally, to whom can an appeal be made for their reproof or removal? I reply by asking another question,—If the authority or jurisdiction so deferred to, fall into the hands of a traitor, such as Judas, or a multitude of the like kind, who have ever claimed it; where can appeal be laid against such?

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that subjection is strongly enforced in the word of God; the principle indeed, may be found in almost every page. Both deceiving and deceived men, often put this strongly before humble believers, and then apply it so as to suit themselves; but let us beware—a true principle misapplied, leads to more evil, than if altogether evaded. We are called on

to submit, but if two persons claim our submission, and we cannot defer to one without rejecting the other, we must be careful to examine the warrant of each ; for if we obey the wrong one, we necessarily disobey the right. A pretender to the throne of this country, might put before us the word God, commanding submission to civil rulers ; we must allow the precept, but then there is a previous question to be considered, before the truth can be applied in such a case.—Is he the civil ruler we are bound to obey, that is, is he the right person ? because if we mistake in this matter, while the *principle* of submission is duly acted on, we may yet be hanged and quartered for treason ; the wrong application of the principle, being the very crime of rebellion for which we are judged. So also, and yet more carefully, must we ascertain in spiritual questions, the lawfulness of the pretensions of those who claim our submission.—Some are the delegated servants of Christ, (the Holy Ghost has not left the Church,) and as such, submission to them, is submission to Christ ; but many are pretenders, nay, come with authority from the world that is ever opposed to Him ; and if we submit to such, we are but rebels, and must look for the consequences of our treason.

An unconverted man, cannot possibly be the servant of Christ.—An heretical or uncertain teacher, cannot be sent or authorized by Christ.—No, nor every christian, unless specially gifted or qualified for the office to which he lays claim. (see Ephes. iv.) All these may speak of authority—Apostolical succession—regular appointment, or what not ; but the word of the Lord says, “ Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.” I know thy works....
....and how thou has tried them, which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.” “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him.”

“ Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.” That which calls itself a Church, is lost to its own standing—its own spiritual privileges and dignity, if for a moment, it allows the continuance, in

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avowed and visible membership, of any whom it does not consider to have passed from death unto life ; but when its highest and most responsible duties of rule, teaching, and pastorship, are gravely spoken of, as in the hands of unconverted men—Sabellians, Socinians, &c., and men, however moral, who live in the world, (for the friendship of the world, is enmity with God ;) I confess it appears to me, that if any such are christians, (and surely many are,) there is no accounting for it, except by that which explains all the delinquencies and abominations within and without us,—the deep and desperate ruin that sin has effected—and the still prevailing power of the unwearied deceiver and destroyer.”

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THOUGHTS ON THE APOSTASY OF THE PRESENT
DISPENSATION.

It has been already observed in these pages, that the scripture is in one respect a painful book, because it is the record of what man is ; in every age receiving, and in every age marring the good and perfect gifts dispensed to him from above. That it should have been so, is not surprising to any one who knows a little of the deceitfulness of his own heart, and has there learned to read the character of man. With respect to the ages that are past, all are ready to acknowledge that each dispensation, whether in paradise or in the world before the flood, or in Jerusalem, has ended in evil. We see that in each, the expressed desires of God were disregarded, and that what was planted a noble vine, wholly a right seed, soon turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine. But while recognizing this in the dispensations that are passed, we are slow to judge the age in which we live, and to ac-

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knowledge apostasy there. We should naturally shrink from contemplating the fearfulness of such a truth, even if there were no new and trying responsibilities entailed on us by the acknowledgment.

A refusal to recognize God, in the manner in which He is at any given time present in living power amongst men, is the great criterion of apostasy. Thus, in Israel of old—whilst God was present among them in visible glory, claiming their acknowledgment and worship, they refused to yield it and turned to the worship of Baal and the idols of the nations. After that the characteristic principle of their dispensation had been hopelessly compromised, and the token of God's visible presence been in consequence withdrawn; they were ready to acknowledge Him as the only true God, and utterly to disclaim the worship of their former idols; but when He came again among them in living power in the person of His Son, they rejected Him as utterly in the mode of His manifestation then, as they had done when He was otherwise dwelling among them before. The Lord Jesus has now withdrawn. His personal presence can now no longer be rejected. Yet God is still present in the earth in living power among men, for He dwells in His body the Church through the Spirit. And accordingly it is not in the rejection of Jesus, nor the rejection of God as God, but in the rejection of God, as at present acting on the earth, viz.—in the spirit in the Church, that we find the great present evidence of the apostasy of the dispensation to which we belong.

In the 12th chap. of the 1st of Corinthians, we find the relation of the Holy Spirit to Christ's body the Church, very clearly unfolded. First—He gives it its living power of unity.—By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. And, secondly—He rules in the Church, for He divideth to every man severally as He will.

Here, then, are two things.—With respect to the first, the loss of that manifested unity to which the Church is called, and the little concern manifested by believers as to what schism is, and its danger; these and other questions connected with this rejection of the Spirit as the author of union, have been so frequently dwelt

upon in this work ; that I pass this part of this subject now, and confine myself to the second, viz.—the refusal to own the Holy Ghost as the One who alone can and who alone does give order and office in the Church of God.

In the world Jesus is not acknowledged. His Spirit does not there either qualify or appoint the officer, or the magistrate, or the statesman. Men arrange their own plans and appoint their own functionaries. But the Church is the present sphere of the Lord Jesus' rule through the Spirit. Its order, He has prescribed in His word. He has there written its laws, once and for ever ; but its functionaries He supplies from age to age, by giving them, through the Spirit, knowledge, and utterance, and living power. That there ever have been and are such, every one who has known the way of life will readily acknowledge. They have been preached to—been watched over—and been taught—they have received and owned the blessing and power of God in some evangelist or pastor or teacher, whom He has sent. Such gifts, then, are given ; such persons endowed by the Holy Ghost, do exist ; the question is, does the professing Church of God bow to the Spirit's appointments ? or does it reject them, and substitute others in their stead ?

I need not turn to the Church of Rome. I need not point out, how, after having brought hosts of unconverted nations within its pale by nominal baptism, and called them the Church of God ; it next proceeds to appoint their functionaries just on the same principles, though with infinitely more recklessness than any secular monarch would display in appointing his officers or his magistrates. I need not refer to the Church of Rome, to show how "office" is supposed to give to carnal and unregenerate men, authority to minister to the Church of God, though no spiritual nor even moral qualification be found in them ; for these things are equally found, equally defended in the Establishment of our own country. Those whom the Spirit qualifies are set aside, and those whom man qualifies are substituted in their room.

If not—where is the Church whose only care it is to see to whom among them the Spirit has divided any of His blessed gifts ? and to own such and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's

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sake, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, learned or unlearned. If such be the order of ministerial recognition, it is well; but if not, if things which the world has and handles; things with which the Holy Spirit (whom the world cannot receive) has no communion, regulate the arrangements of the Church of God—if education or rank—the will of the prince, or the landowner, or purchase money control the appointment—then it is plain that it is the world which rules, and not the Spirit of God.

And this is the fearful truth. Not only is the unity of the Church lost—not only are persons solemnly recognized as christians who show themselves by their fruits to be of the world—but more than this, the Spirit's order is deliberately superseded by one which man has substituted in its room. Surely if any thing could mark the certainty of apostasy, it is this; for it is the rejection of God in the way, in which, during this dispensation, He specially acts: and this and all the other features to which I have referred, are found more or less palpably distinguishing all, even the reformed, Established Churches of christendom.*

“Now is my kingdom not from hence,” was our Lord's word of warning to the disciples. This and His other assurance respecting the Spirit of truth whom the world could not receive, but who should abide with them for ever, may be said to constitute the distinctive character of the dispensation of the Church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven—written in heaven because the earth was unworthy of them. The Gentiles possessed and ordered the world and its systems long before the Lord Jesus came, for the times of the Gentiles commenced with Nebuchadnezzar. Their character was not changed by His mission, save that they added to themselves fresh guilt by crucifying Him; neither has

* The ordinary argument for proving that we ought to recognize unconverted and ungodly men as pastors and teachers, when they have taken upon themselves the office, in the appointed way, is the words of our Lord respecting the observance due to the Scribes and Pharisees, as sitting in Moses' seat. If uncircumcised Gentiles had placed themselves in Moses' seat, and our Lord had directed that they should be recognized, there might have been something like a parallel, but now there is no analogy at all between the cases. If our Lord had recognized as outward Jews, those who were not outward Jews, He would have recognized what is false. And if we recognize as spiritual Jews those whom we know to be otherwise, we sanction a falsehood.

the mission of the Spirit changed them, for it came not to this end, but to gather out from the world and to order saints in separation from it. The Cæsars of Rome—the kings of England—and the Sultans of Turkey, are indeed equally and all ordained of God. They inherit and exercise the power which God long since delegated to the Gentiles, when Daniel prophesied, and Daniel has described its ungodly course and termination. But these potentates do not rule either with, or by, or in the Spirit of Christ Jesus. Its laws are not their laws, nor its weapons their weapons; for what concord hath light with darkness? But where is there a national protestant Church, which has not acted in all its regulations, just as if the kingdoms of this world were already become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. Where is any such Church that has not eagerly sought to wield the world's carnal weapons in its defence, and to make itself and the world, one?

I conclude then, that the form which apostasy assumes in this dispensation, is first—a refusal to recognize the holy Spirit; and secondly—a conformation of the Church to the world's systems, contrary to the object of God in the dispensation; and therefore it is as salt that has lost its savour, only fit to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. This is an awful expectation, and a sense of its awfulness increases, when we extend our view from the professing Church back through the ages which lead us up to the flood. *As respects the world*, its present dispensation commenced from the moment when Noah descended from the ark, into a vacant world, and terminates at the revelation of the Son of man in glory; for we find this period of twice two thousand years thus awfully connected by our Lord, when He said, “as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man is revealed.” Since the flood, the energies of mankind have never been broken in upon by God in judgment,—the chain of their counsels has never been snapped,—day after day has added some new, some strengthening link; and it is when they shall be saying peace and safety, that sudden destruction will come upon them. The character of the nations, was manifested almost immediately after the

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flood at the tower of Babel, as that which God could not acknowledge or bless. And this their rejection was fully proved by the call of Abraham, and from that moment the nations became as dogs; (Mat. xv, 26.) strangers to the covenants, without hope, and without God in the world. (Eph. ii.) Through Abraham and his family there was indeed a possibility of reaching blessing. A promise respecting Shiloh was made to them, and it was added, "unto Him shall the gathering of the *peoples* (i. e. the Gentiles) be." But what if Israel should fail. Israel did fail, for when Shiloh came they knew Him not, but weighed for His price thirty pieces of silver. And so Israel was not gathered, and He said, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain" and He was called up into heaven. The taking of Jesus away from earth into heaven, was to the Jews just what the call of Abraham out of the nations, had been to the nations, viz. their rejection. The nations and Israel became alike outcasts, and lo-ammi (not my people) is virtually written upon both.

But yet God was long-suffering and still postponed the final manifestation of this righteous displeasure both against Jew and Gentile. He scattered the Jews indeed, but He did not destroy them. He waits till the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and then there shall be signs in the sun, and moon, and stars, and the day of full visitation will come, even the day of the LORD, terrible both with wrath and fierce anger. But in the meanwhile, both Jew and Gentile have leisure and opportunity to do what they have abundantly done, and are yet doing; even storing up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of GOD.

And thus after, and in consequence of two previous failures, the failure of the nations, and the failure of that which was chosen to be an earthly witness in the midst of the nations, a third body was constituted.—An election both from among Jew and Gentile, to be a witness of heavenly things—that having its head in heaven—its Father in heaven—the Spirit from heaven—its citizenship in heaven—it might in the midst of the rebellious nations, and rebellious Jews, be the heavenly inheritance of God; being as un-

like to the world, and as contrary to its ways, as Jesus was contrary to the thoughts and ways of Pontius Pilate, and Caiaphas, and Herod. But as I said before, the Church has failed, for christianity no longer stands forth as it once did, in heavenly contrast with the earthliness of Jews and Gentiles; but it may be truly said, that the name of the Lord is blasphemed among the heathen on account of us.—And thus we find, that Gentile godlessness and Jewish apostasy, will be followed by a third and more fearful development of evil still, of which the end will be, that “the vine of the earth, (and this name can belong neither to heathen Gentiles, nor to Jews :) will be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God.”

In the progress of Israel's apostasy, there, were indeed, many periods when the tide appeared for a season to be stayed. And light, more or less extensive, broken in upon the darkness. Such were the periods of Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah, and others; and analogous periods, are doubtless traceable in the history of our own dispensation. And I suppose few will doubt* that the era of protestant separation, may be considered as one. But have the protestant Churches ever sought scriptural manifested unity—obedient recognition of the Spirit—and thirdly, heavenly separation from the world and its systems? surely it must be allowed, that the unity of the National Churches has been unity with the world, instead of with the family of faith; and that they have sought Church order according to the Spirit, and separation from the world's systems, as little as the Church of Rome. With respect to the dissenting communions, even where unity has not been destroyed by sectarian regulations, we yet find that the power of the Spirit in the Church, is as much hindered as in the national bodies themselves, though in a different way. And this is a subject which I would affectionately, and I trust in no proud or self complacent feeling, commend to the consideration of our many brethren in the dissenting bodies. Instead of the Spirit being allowed to raise up among a company of gathered saints, any (whether few or many)

* There have, however, recently appeared among the Clergy of the Establishment, some who have not hesitated to say that the reformation was a mistake.

who might be Teachers, Evangelists, Pastors, &c. ; instead of His being waited on for this, the system of educated college ministry, and the things connected therewith, effectually tends to hinder plurality of ministrations, and to create a clergy whose authority though not drawn indeed from a worldly hierarchy, is based upon a foundation not less unscriptural, i.e., the election of the people. If it belonged to the people to qualify, it might indeed be theirs to elect ; but I do not elect my natural brethren and sisters ; for it is God that constitutes the relationship, and to refuse to own it would be to reject God. So is it also in the Church, it is God that constitutes the Pastor, the Teacher, the Evangelist : and if I take upon me to say which or how many I will recognize* (when I see that God has sent them,) what is this but to reject God ? Again, when so constituted, I owe them reverence ; “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.” “Know them that are over you in the LORD, and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” In these and other such passages, I find rule in the Church recognized (and it is a gift of GOD, 1 Cor. xii. 28.) as something peculiar and not possessed by all—to be exercised by the few and to be obeyed by the many. It affords another instance of the kind considerateness of our GOD. We see it in natural things. He lays not upon the child the responsibility of considering those questions, and meeting those cares with which the maturer age and wisdom of the parent is intended to cope. And so likewise in the Church, if the Spirit provides a parent who can direct and consider for the weak, one, who as a shepherd can guide the flock, it is not intended that the flock should guide him, but he the flock. Now it is this blessed relationship which that evil system of determining by the vote of the assembled Church altogether frustrates, making (it is to be feared) in most cases

* The only exception is deacons.—The reason is obvious. God is pleased to regard our temporal goods as our own.—“While it remained, was it not thine own, and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power ?” (Acts v. 4.) Consequently he allows us to choose our own stewards for dispensing that which he considers as ours. But spiritual gifts are not ours to give, they are God’s, and consequently He alone chooses and appoints His own stewards of them.

pastorship a name. Peculiarity of individual circumstances may indeed, in some cases, mitigate the evil ; but still in principle it is so evil—and the necessary effect of such a principle's operation is so decidedly to put the voice of the people in the place of the Spirit of God, that we cannot regard the dissenting systems less chargeable with this sin of refusing to acknowledge the Holy Ghost than the Establishment. Indeed, in theory, the latter is more consistent with the truth, for it does allow that all authority and regulating power descends from God, and cannot have its origin in, or its sanction from, man. How often amelioration and advancement has been impeded in dissenting communions, and the more spiritual been constrained to yield to the less instructed or worldly majority, an acquaintance with their secret history would, I believe, abundantly show.

But it is not this feature of apostasy only, which is found in the dissenting communions. They are not separate from the world *in practice*. Whilst congratulating themselves in not seeking as others, the source of their legislation and appointment in the secular powers, they yet, both as individuals and bodies, throw all the weight of their energy and influence, into the scale of those parties whom they politically favour, and thus become the partizans and supporters, of persons to whom the awful warnings of Jude and of Peter, seem almost literally to apply, even such as deny the only LORD GOD—the one LORD Jesus Christ,—dreamers who despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. It is hardly possible for such a union to have been formed, and that ostensibly for a religious end, without its being judicially visited ; and accordingly we find that one of the recent numbers of the dissenters' most widely circulated journal, has begun to commend and promote the circulation, of one of the most worldly and infidel publications, that has recently issued from the press.* Indeed we

* *A work of Mr. Lytton Bulwer, extolled in the Eclectic Review.* Since writing the above, I have been furnished with the following statement, from a christian friend. The laxity of the views entertained by many, on the subject of inspiration in the present day, is remarkable; but the following sentiments as they appeared in a recent number of the Congregational Magazine, are the more to be regretted, as they are put forward under the sanction of Dr. Pyc Smith. The views of Dr. S. as it would seem, are

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may certainly say, that infidelity, that most awful infidelity of the latter day, which makes man and the people everything, and God nothing, is the sure and manifested tendency of dissent, as a system ; and their feeble and imperfect recognition of the Spirit, as a living power in the Church, and their consequent substitution of talent and education in its room, has greatly tended to reconcile their minds to the principles of those who do nothing but magnify the powers and capabilities of man, and look to human energy, as that which is surely about to bring in the world's triumphant jubilee. Alas ! it is no wonder, while such unscriptural notions are floating before their minds, that they reject all that the scriptures testify respecting the evil character of the latter days ; and the personal revelation of the LORD, and refuse to have the millennium of God, because they are pursuing a millennium of their own. How applicable do these words appear to the present age ; " in that day did the LORD GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth ; and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine."

Surely the Church is called to penitence, but unless the evils be recognized how can there be any penitence ? We have apostatized, and the Lord is at hand, and yet neither is recognized, and we are ready to say wherein have we sinned ? Yet even where this is not the case, where, as in the Church of England, many have been brought to acknowledge, that iniquity has increased and will increase unto the end ; where there is really a disposition to fear and to mourn, yet even there what are the remedies proposed ? such only as will tend to deepen the slumber, and to lead more rapidly the blinded into the ditch. I do not presume to judge our brethren individually. They may be blinded by the

exactly the converse of the scripture rule. All scripture, says the Apostle, is profitable for instruction.—All says Dr. S that is profitable (in my judgment) for instruction, is scripture. The conclusion follows of course : Solomon's Song is discarded at once ; and the bulk of the Old Testament, save the few passages in which Dr. Smith can discover the "theological element," may be useful to the antiquary or the philologist, but contains nothing worthy of the name of inspiration, or peculiarly suited to the people of God. How is it possible that such principles should not lead into open rejection of the word of God.

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Church's ignorance and worldliness, or in other ways. I do not wish to judge *them* but we must judge their counsel.

I refer then, for an example of what I mean, to a sermon lately preached before Bishop Corrie, by Mr. Tucker, of the Church Mission Chapel, Madras. Bishop Corrie is well known as the friend of Henry Martyn; and Mr. Tucker, both in this country and in India, is well known as a minister of the truth. Mr. Tucker plainly sees the character of the present days. His words are these:—

“Perhaps the prevailing sins of the present day, which demand supremely patient and uncomplaining watchfulness on our part as ministers of Christ, may be all classed under one title, a spirit of independence, which, the more carefully it is analysed, the more clearly will it be found to be nothing more or less than *Atheism*. I speak of this spirit as the sin of the present day, not as though some new thing had happened to us, but because it seems evident, that as mankind advance to the manhood of the human race, and are more conscious of the power of those faculties which GOD has endued them with, this spirit of independence of GOD which dwells and works in every heart, will assume a more intellectual, and therefore more subtle, and malignant form, waxing worse and worse, until the iniquity is full, in an open and avowed apostasy from GOD. And such a view of things is, I conceive, in accordance with what our Lord and His Apostles have foretold shall take place, that the day of Jesus Christ shall not come, except there first come the apostasy, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called GOD, or that is worshipped, so that he as GOD sitteth in the temple of GOD, shewing himself that He is God.* “Again: This know also, ‘that in the last days perilous times shall come for men shall be lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, traitors, high-minded, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.’† And again, ‘the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.’‡ And again, St. Peter, ‘there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies denying the Lord that bought them, and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.’§ “Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.|| Let each one judge for himself, whether the spirit of independence is not marked as the distinguishing feature in all these descriptions, and whether this is not the spirit both prevalent and increasing in our times.”

* 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. † 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. ‡ iv. 3. § 2 Pet. 1, 2. || Ibid v. 10.

Such are the prospects which Mr. T. so accurately describes. But how does he advise us to meet and prepare for the evil? He sees that we have lost our unity. What then does he recommend as conducing to its recovery? The means of unity (says Mr. Tucker) in the primitive Church were these." I exhort you (says Ignatius the martyr and former disciple of St. John) to be zealous to do all things in divine concord; the bishop presiding in the place of the council of Apostles, and the deacons intrusted with the service of Jesus Christ." "All of you follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles, and reverence the deacons as GOD'S ordinance." "Be ye earnest to keep one Eucharist for the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ is one, and there is one cup in the unity of the blood; one altar, as one bishop, together with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants."*

Now when we remember who the bishops are, and who the presbyters that are thus to be revered as GOD, and as Christ and the Apostles; when we remember (and can Mr. T. deny it,) that the very existence of such bishops and such presbyters are the very tokens of apostasy—of the order of the Holy Ghost being set at nought. What is it but glorying in our sin, when we claim for them the very reverence and authority of GOD. If such be the light in which even spiritual men such as Mr. Tucker, are led to view the subsisting arrangements of what he calls the pillar and ground of the truth; what can be expected from other minds, who neither know nor value as Mr. T. knows and values, the gospel of the grace of God. The apparently successful effort which is now being made to recal the Church of England, and if possible the Church of Rome into a semi-popish standing, sanctioned as it is by many preachers of the truth, is surely one of the darkest and most hopeless signs of the present day, because it is putting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, and glorying in the very thing that ought to be abjured.

For what,—if the help of that tradition which is now insisted on

* See Sermon Page 14.

as necessary in making the scriptures practically useful, what, if we could indubitably and clearly ascertain what the practices and doctrines of the second and third centuries were, would the restoration of the Church to the position which it then occupied, conform it to the plain requirements of the LORD? The question is not how men acted, but what the Apostles taught; and surely they did not teach so obscurely, nor write their commandments so unintelligibly, as for it to be necessary to go to the practice of the Churches to illustrate and explain their meaning, for then, perhaps, I might fall amongst some of the grievous wolves which the Apostle speaks of, about to enter in after his departure; or such as those, with reference to whom, another Apostle has said,—“but, beloved, be ye mindful of *the Apostles* of the LORD and Saviour,” because of the false teachers which should arise. Indeed, the Apostles had not died before the principles of apostasy had begun to work, and before a century had elapsed from their decease, they had spread with a rapidity and power which left little that presents itself to the eye of an inquirer so free from the influence, as to be able to bear the test of scripture.* I doubt not that Mr. T. would be able to find in the early fathers, many maintainers of such a principle as that which he thus embodies. “It is from the Father, through the Son, by the agency of the Holy Ghost, that all authority of every kind flows;” and a mind that does not see the difference between the authority with which St. Paul gently cherishes the Church at Thessalonica, and that with which Charlemagne conquers Europe, would not be slow in admitting the rectitude of the same individual being sovereign of kings, in virtue of the same office which makes him the servant of the servants of GOD. Indeed unless the character of the despised upper chamber at Jerusalem is appreciated in contrast with the courts of Cæsar; I do not see how the real character of the present dispensation can at all be recognized. Men may have striven to identify the two, and may fancy that they have succeeded; but the power which worketh in the Church, is as distinct as ever from that which worketh

* See Note respecting Hermas at the close of this paper.

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in the world, as different as the Church itself, which is the body of Christ, is different from the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream. The Spirit of the Father and the Son, does not guide nor sanction the authority of the world, though the power of God overrules and controls its wickedness, and it was He too who entrusted it to men at the first, for had He not given it it could not have been abused.—But God God giving and acting as God, who “giveth to all men life, and breath, and all things, is something very different from God acting as the Father, through the Son, and the Holy Spirit; for Jesus hath declared that the world knoweth neither Him, nor His Father, nor the Holy Spirit. To give then to the authority of the Gentiles, exercised as it ever has been according to the rulers of the darkness of this age, that blessed covenant name, was, I believe, one of the earliest proofs that the Church had lost its apprehension of what christianity as distinct from Gentilism and Judaism really was.*

And why should we wonder at such early apostasy, when we see it in every way before. How quickly did the tower of Babel follow upon the Deluge, and the worship of the calf upon the promises which Israel had so readily made at Sinai. Scarcely had Israel assumed its corporate character as the legislated people of God, when they compromised the very distinguishing principle of their calling, by their worshipping like the nations an idol god.

* It cannot be too earnestly pressed upon all our brethren, who write as Mr. Tucker has now done, respecting all authority in the world being of Christ, that Christ, as Christ, as He to whom Jehovah said, “Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool,” does not now (as He by and bye will) administer the systems and governments of the world; for that administering power, was, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, committed to the Gentile image, and that image is not yet destroyed, neither will be, till the day of Armageddon. In the mean while Christ is the earth’s *rejected* king, hidden with God, exercising all the power of the Father’s throne, reigning as God, but not seated on His own throne; (see Rev. ii. 26, 27.) for God is long-suffering and the title of the rejected king of the Jews is not as yet vindicated, but the day is coming when according to the vision of Daniel, the Son of man shall be brought before the antient of days to be invested with His own Messiah power. When there shall be given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages may serve Him. Then there will be no authority allowed to be exercised on earth which is not of Christ, and according to the Spirit; but at present unchristian authority abounds, and the Church is the only sphere where the power of Christ through the Spirit is exercised and owned, though as I said even the Church has despised its birthright.

And immediately we find a second body, drawn from the midst of Israel, constituted in distinct separation from it, for Moses pitched the tabernacle without the camp, and told all who were on the Lord's part, to assemble there ; so that thus, there was Egypt, and apostate Israel, and the faithful remnant in separation from both. And thus for ages past has it been with the Church of God. We can see the world—we can see apostate christendom, almost identified, save as to responsibility and judgment, with it ; and has there not been in every age, a faithful remnant, whose brightest and happiest paths, have been those, which have led them without the camp, bearing His reproach ?

The word is our guide ; and if it be asked what is there beside, we answer—not tradition, but the Holy Spirit. We require a rule, and that is afforded in the written word ; we require power and wisdom, and faithfulness to apply the rule, and that is given by the Spirit in living men. Only let believers obey what they do know, and seek grace to know and to obey more fully, and necessary rule and direction will surely be afforded by Him who remaineth faithful ; and who is still able to supply evangelists, pastors, teachers, for the perfecting of the saints—for the work of the ministry—for the edifying of the body of Christ. And though there may be little strength, yet that little will be real ; and though there may be few things to attract the natural mind, yet there will be a power of edification, which they will value, who desire to fulfil that parting command of the Apostle, with which he concludes his prophetic testimony, respecting the evil of the latter day. “ But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

APPENDIX.

THE desire of those who are now maintaining that scripture without tradition is not an adequate guide to the Church, is to bring back the Church to an anti-papal standing, by drawing their tra-

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ditions from the writings of the early fathers, i.e., in other words, to bring back the Church to the doctrines and practice which were the germs of those fruits which the papal apostasy has since afforded in maturity.

The words of Mr. Dodsworth quoted and approved by Mr. Tucker, are as follows :—

“Some have contended for a sufficiency of scripture, alike inconsistent with common sense and with the pretensions of the divine record itself. They have contended that holy scripture is exclusively its own interpreter; and that we may safely cast aside the authority of antiquity, and the just influence of a well established tradition. They maintain that we have proved nothing to the purpose in shewing that such a practice or such an interpretation was held in the earliest ages of the Church; for that *we* have as much right to judge of the testimony of scripture as the immediate successors of the Apostles themselves. . . This I conceive to be a gross abuse of the principles of the sufficiency of holy scripture, and of the right of private judgment.”

Now without entering into any argument at present, I would simply ask, are we to test the practices and doctrines of the early Church by the scriptures or not? for I believe the practical question really is, whether we are to read the scriptures through the early fathers, or having the Spirit, to read them for ourselves?

I will now quote a few passages from one of the so called Apostolical fathers, (Hermas.) I trust they will at once show us the pit into which the maintainers of tradition are seeking to lead the Church. I rather quote from Hermas, because the Oxford writers with whom Mr. Dodsworth has connected himself, maintain the same doctrine respecting *one* repentance, as is found in the following passage, and nearly in the same words. Indeed, passages more revolting might be quoted from the Oxford Tracts, than even from Hermas himself. I believe they are about to republish the work from which the following extracts are taken. The edition from which I quote, is the fifth of Archbishop Wake's translation,

“And I said unto him, (i.e. to a being sent by God in a vision to instruct Hermas,) I have even now heard that there is no other repentance besides that of baptism, when we go down into the water and receive the forgiveness of our sins, and that after that, we must sin no more, but live in purity. And he said unto me,—Thou hast been rightly informed.” (Page 370.)

NOTICE OF MR. TUCKER'S SERMON.

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"If any one after that great and holy calling (i.e., to forgiveness of sins in baptism,) shall be tempted by the devil and sin, he hath ONE repentance; but if he shall often sin and repent, it shall not profit such a one, for he shall hardly live unto God." (Page 370,)

"But why the Lord did take His Son into counsel about dividing the inheritance, and the good angels, hear now. That holy Spirit *which was created first* of all, He placed in the body in which God should dwell; namely, in a chosen body, as it seemed good to Him. This body therefore into which the holy Spirit was brought served that Spirit, walking rightly and purely in modesty, nor ever defiled that Spirit. Seeing therefore the body at all times, obeyed the Holy Spirit and laboured rightly and chastely with Him, nor faltered at any time; that body being wearied, conversed indeed servilely, but being mightily approved to God with the Holy Spirit, was accepted by Him. For such a strict course pleased God, because He was not defiled in the earth keeping the Holy Spirit. He therefore called to counsel His Son and the good angels, that there might be some place of standing given to this body, which had served the Holy Spirit without blame, lest it should seem to have lost the reward of its service; for every pure body shall receive its reward, that is found without spot, in which the Holy Spirit has been appointed to dwell." (Page. 406.)

NOTICE OF MR. TUCKER'S SERMON.

THERE is nothing more painful to one who has the Spirit of Christ, than misplaced truth. To see a servant of Christ advancing that which is abstractedly true, and most precious as the portion of the children of God, and then either giving it to the world, or some evil system of the world's raising, is a most grievous spectacle; but one frequently presented to us in the present day. This is the painful impression left on my mind after reading Mr. Tucker's sermon.

In the sermon before us, the Church of the living God and the Establishment are treated as identical, so that for the sake of his

argument, what can be predicated of one can also be predicated of the other. Although it be a humbling and painful task to seek to expose the inconsistency of such an argument, yet it does appear that the Lord mercifully permits even His own servants, when advocating a system and not *the truth*, so palpably to err in their statements, that the absurdity becomes apparent to every one but themselves, who are to a certain point, blinded by the object they are pursuing; so that they cannot discern things that differ. Surely it would be the simplest method to enquire what were the principles, and what the practice of the Apostolical Church; and what are the principles, and what the practice of the Church of England; and if we could thus prove their identity, then indeed, we might safely predicate any thing of the one as applicable to the other. But in this sermon as well as most of the kind, the author starts on a "*petitio principii*." The objection not being that the Church of England is corrupted, or has declined, but that it never was as a Church constituted according to the principles of the Apostolical Church, or walking according to the commandments of the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I do maintain, that for the settlement of this question, an appeal to scripture is quite sufficient; and that until this question be settled, the value of tradition "as a help," cannot be allowed for a moment to be debated. Little did many a godly man think when "tradition" was first advanced as an auxiliary, and the scriptural ground of the Church of England thus virtually surrendered as untenable, that they who thought it at first to be the whim of a man of talent and keen debater, would so soon be led to follow in his wake, and to assert the very thing which at first so greatly alarmed their minds. Even when first the Oxford Tracts boldly put forth the pretences of the Clergy connected as that pretension ever must be with invalidity the doctrine of justification by faith alone, the godly ministers of the Establishment who knew the truth, and held very dear and precious, that of a sinner's justification before God, did not boldly controvert this assumption, because *they* were clergy; and the maintenance of this was one of common interest to those who held *the* truth and those who were darkening it. But this departure from

the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus, has led them on in the way of error, and many of them now are among the assertors of the divine and therefore exclusive authority of the clergy, which but a short time since they would have protested against. This is a subject of general interest to the Church, for it shows that there are principles at work which must speedily lead to their respective results, and it is very easy to see that the upholding office, apart from spiritual qualification, or which is the same thing, that man by conferring office, necessarily imparts the spiritual qualification, must speedily issue in the assumption of priesthood, from the thralldom of which, the reformation was once looked upon, as a deliverance. We cannot regard Mr. Tucker but as one who follows the Oxford School, and we thus get another testimony, that in every place where the scriptural authority of the Establishment is questioned, the defence is tradition or derived authority, to the virtual abandonment of the scriptures.

The sermon was preached at the visitation of Bishop Corrie, at Madras, and published at his request. The text, 2 Tim. iv. 5.

The second paragraph pp. 3, 4., is remarkable, and necessarily gives a character to the whole of his view of the Church.

"That which gives this epistle its peculiar interest, is the view we find the Apostle taking of the then state of the Church..... I think we may call it a more chastened, settled, and calm contemplation of the Church; not as he would wish her to appear, as the bride adorned and waiting for the bridegroom, but as harassed with heresies and dissensions, and hereafter to be called to pass through greater dangers still."

The Apostle did surely in this epistle, see the Church as "harassed with heresies and dissensions."—He saw the fearful tide of apostasy, even then setting in, as he had previously in addressing the elders of the Church of Ephesus; and in both cases he recommends the scripture as the safeguard; (2 Tim. iii., Acts xx.) and for a very simple reason, because the apostasy of the Church was before his eyes, and he could see in that, no safeguard for the truth. That very departure from her principles, which the Apostle saw thus commencing, is regarded as having taken place; (Rev. ii.) and the Church become first the subject of judgment, (chap.

ii, iii.) and then of prophecy, (from chap. viii. onwards.) Now this last implies settled departure from its principles ; for prophetic testimony has no place, whilst any dispensation stands on its proper ground before God ; but when it can be said “ Remember from whence thou art fallen, and do thy first works ;” then God raises His testimony against it, and at the same time by it, comforts the feeble remnant who remain true to the principles of the dispensation, which as a whole, has failed. There is no truth more difficult for us to receive, than that the dispensation in which *we* are, has failed ; the failure began early in the Apostles’ days and its consummation is shown actually and prophetically in the apocalypse. If Mr. T. recognized this truth, he would perceive that he was throughout this sermon, using the term “ Church” ambiguously ; and applying those characteristics which properly belong to the Church of the living God, wherein he dwells by His Spirit, to that which ostensibly presents itself to the eyes of men, claiming the name, but which is in fact, the vine of the earth about to be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God. Surely it becomes the sheep of Christ to be careful whose voice they listen to, whether it be to that of the good shepherd, speaking through His Church by His Spirit to their souls, the words of scripture which are profitable and sanctifying ; or the voice of the God of this world, speaking through the apostasy by tradition, to cause them to put away a good conscience, and then concerning the faith, to make shipwreck. It would save a great deal of needless controversy, if we were first to settle in what state the scripture leaves the Church. For it appears almost as profitless to discuss the question with one who argues from present circumstances, back to scripture, as it is to set the plainest declarations of God’s word, before the scoffer, who says all things continue as they were from the creation of the world. And thus the question as to the value of tradition, would not be raised till after the state of the Church, according to the latest scriptural testimony, had been settled.

It will be now needful to advance some passages in which the sense in which the term “ Church” is used, must entirely affect the truth of the statement.

"That necessity is laid upon us as pastors of Christ's flock, that we be prepared for evils and difficulties, and endeavour to contemplate these evils with a chastened, sober, cautious, and watchful temper of mind; expecting to have our hearts wounded and our spirits grieved, and that with that expectation we learn "to endure afflictions," and at the same time with steadfastness of purpose, we engage heartily, entirely, and constantly in the blessed work allotted to us, and in every particular fill up the service assigned to us, i.e., perfecting the saints, the edifying of the body of Christ." (Page 6.)

The simple question here is. does Mr. T. mean to take his stand as a minister of Christ or a clergyman of the Church of England? In the former case all who love the Lord Jesus would gladly receive him, and esteem him very highly in love for his works sake; in the latter, the question as to any New Testament warrant for the title and office, is immediately raised. But besides this, does Mr. T. feel himself or will his system give him, liberty to exercise his ministry for the profit of the Church at large? Or does he really mean that the only ministers of Christ are those who have received episcopal ordination?

"It is on behalf of this Church, that new creation whereby God will be everlastingly glorified in Christ Jesus, that we are required to "watch in all things, to endure afflictions, to do the work of Evangelists, and make full proof of our ministry;" of His flock we are appointed the pastors, the stewards, of His mysteries to His family, the watchmen of His Zion wherein He delighteth. As all the graces of His Church flow from the love of the Father manifested in the grace of the Son, and communicated by the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, so does our authority proceed from the same source and from the same channel. The Father is the head of all authority, and this authority He has given to His Son, whom He has constituted head of His Church; and His Son thus exalted, has by the Holy Ghost given authority also to us, "As my Father sent me, even so send I you." We are not merely preachers and teachers of religion, but we are called to this office, "to minister the *doctrine* and *sacraments*, and *discipline*, of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded. It was for this that we hesitate not to say, we have received the Holy Ghost for the office and work of priests in the Church of God, committed unto us by the imposition of the hands of the Bishop with his presbytery; so that we have "power and commandment to declare and pronounce to all God's people, who are penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins." As stewards, we affix the seal of the covenant of grace, and distribute to the Church of the blessed nourishment of Christ's body and blood, and all by the command, and with the blessing, and in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Here again the question may be asked. Is this Church, that new creation whereby God will be glorified in Christ Jesus, the Church of England? And when Mr. T. says "we hesitate not to say, that we have received the Holy Ghost," &c. he is surely speaking of the clergy corporately, so that mere ordination gives the necessary spiritual competence. And then the exclusive claim to minister the sacraments is superadded to countenance the notion of the so ordained multitude, being priests in the house of God.

But there is one statement in this paragraph which needs more especial attention. "The Father is the head of all authority." Now as a broad abstract statement there is nothing to be objected to, but in its application it makes the Clergy to be the Church, and attempts to supply by virtue of official authority, that which can only be supplied by the living energy of the Holy Ghost giving the needful wisdom under any special circumstances, for guidance and direction, and that too in matters of doctrine and discipline. Any thing analogous to what took place either at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) or what was commanded by the Apostle, (1 Cor. v.) is rendered morally impossible by such an assumption of authority as here is claimed. And this is really the painful part of the subject, it makes the blessed covenant relation of our God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to become a mere abstract doctrine, since they have virtually ceased their agency, which is now only to be exhibited by a select body of men asserting pretensions which the Apostles never did. The abiding presence and living activity of the Comforter as a sovereign, dividing to every man severally as He will, is thus virtually set aside as a truth. The necessary consequence is, that the children of God are deprived of much of their present blessing, in not being taught to look to him as their teacher and admonisher, and consoler; and the felt responsibility of knowing those who guide them and esteeming them very highly for their words sake, is supplanted by a cold and careless recognition of nominal office. There appears nothing available to recover the Church from its present blind clinging to office, short of the recognition of the faithfulness of the Lord to His promise, that the Comforter should abide in the Church throughout the dispensation. For the

Lord and His Apostles having furnished a sufficient standard in the scriptures to which every thing might be brought, and the latest testimony given by the Lord from heaven, being by His special commandment *written*. (Rev. i. 10.) The Church was not left to be guided by statute law, because there was the Holy Ghost to apply the all comprehensive principles already embodied in the word, to given circumstances at any time. And if our brethren of the Establishment had only said, the word is not sufficient, we would not have differed; but when they say, tradition is the supplement, and thus bring the Church under statute law, we say the Holy Ghost is the applier of the Word, and thus bring it under the law of liberty. The question would not be, whether there are distinct offices in the Church, or whether all are alike competent to minister, for in this we should be agreed. (1 Cor. xii. 28.) But the difference between us, is as to the mode of the needed power being supplied, which we do assert to be *in the way of special gift to distinct individuals from Jesus ascended*, and therefore to be living energy, and not in the way of derived office, which however it may assert authority, has not the needful influence to make the authority itself to be grace in the possessor, and the acknowledgement of it grace in the subject. For real authority in the Church cannot be separated from real spiritual influence.

“And here I may observe generally, that considering the elements in the midst of which she abides, the existence of the Church is a perpetual testimony to the love, and power, and faithfulness of her Lord and God. Such is the enmity of the human heart to God that the world would, if it had been able, long since have destroyed the Church, because she bears the image of God, and is His chosen on the earth: “Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore* the world hateth you.” (John xv. 19.) And this is the Church's portion, until the coming of her Lord; as the one witness on her Lord's behalf, to have poured in upon her the contempt and hatred of an ungodly world.”

Surely the world supports the Church of England, and what its ministers are looking to is the world. Should the world withdraw its support, the consequence would be, that many of the formularies so highly extolled would be given up by their supporters. And we are constantly forced to ask the question, if the

Establishment be the Church, what is the world? For in scripture the world is one system, and the Church another, each under their respective Lord and appropriate influence. But the most fearful statement of this Sermon remains to be noticed.

2.—“In discipline.—Here this spirit of independance, is perhaps, less subtle, and more easily recognised, both in its workings and in its origin.

„ It is from the Father, through the Son by the agency of the Holy Ghost, that all authority of every kind flows, and man is commanded to obey in the Lord; “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake.” (1 Pet. ii. 13.)

“Proud man openly refuses to acknowledge and to obey the precept, but turns the stream of authority, back in an opposite direction—pronounces passive obedience an exploded doctrine; declares that kings reign not by the grace of God, but by the will of the people; and ministers are to preach by the same law. The same spirit is seen as more extensively prevalent, in the notions that are entertained of christian unity, and the means of attaining to it. Page 14.”

I have read this several times over, fearing I had mistaken the author. It does seem so monstrous an assertion, to say that the kingly power is by the agency of the Holy Ghost. And it is only by calling to mind, the almost impossibility for a clergyman, from the position in which he stands, and the habit of using the Liturgy, to distinguish, even in theory, between the nation and the Church; which makes me believe, I have caught his meaning.

I believe passive obedience to be the New Testament doctrine, but in a much larger sense than Mr. T. uses it; for it must be unto God, or else it becomes disobedience. In the case of kingly authority, passive obedience I believe to be our rule, since he is God's ordinance to us for good; but then we are left the alternative to obey or suffer, and if the king command us to do a thing contrary to the command of God, we must count it joy to be thought worthy to suffer for the truth's sake; and this will necessarily be the case, when the king interferes in the rule of the Church of God; for he is not a gift given from the ascended Jesus for the edifying of His Church; but whatever he may be esteemed by others, he is a gift given from God to His Church whilst in the world, for a restraint upon the evil of the world, until a given

period. It is thus that christians can most thankfully bless God for His gift, and pray too for the continuance of these authorities, and protest against the lie, that they are to be set up by the will of man.

Surely when the Apostle Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans, he recognized Nero as God's ordinance; but did he recognize God standing in the relation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to Nero? Is not such a relationship salvation? God was not *revealed* in this relationship, when He committed power to Nebuchadnezzar; yet he was God's ordinance. It is quite true that the same Spirit, which moved on the face of the waters, (Gen. i.) and which gave Samson power to slay the Philistines, is the one whom we know, as dwelling in the Church. But now He stands in a different relation and office—as the Comforter; for previous to the ascension of Christ, the Holy Ghost was not. The accident of the power being nominally christian, or really christian, alters not the source of their authority, which clearly was of God, before His manifestation of Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. All real Church authority is derived from Jesus as ascended, and is only for edifying the Church. And here again we have a most grievous instance of the entire identification of the world with the Church, to the great detriment of the latter.

We are quite one with Mr. T., that ministers are not to preach by the will of the people, but by obligation laid on them by God who has given them the competency; and after that is given woe be to the man who preacheth not the gospel. He is not to wait for man's sanction, but being reconciled to God Himself, and God having put into him the ministry of reconciliation, he needeth only the constraining love of Christ to set his gift in exercise. It is an awful thing for one to run who is not sent, but as awful to hinder one from going who is sent of God; a tendency of our minds, be it remarked, noticed in the scriptures for our admonition. (Numb. xi. 28., Luke ix. 49.) If preaching the gospel be not obedience to God, it is like every other sin, self-will; and this is the case when any one preaches merely as hired by the people, or is set up and paid by the authorities of the world.

So again, we are quite one as to the truth of the statement, "The same spirit is seen as more extensively prevalent in the notions that are entertained of christian unity and the means of attaining it."

Now we seek most strenuously to assert that we are not left to the guidance of our own wisdom, which is but self-will after all, as to the manner of christians manifesting their oneness in Christ. We do believe that self-will has been abundantly displayed in the constitution of the several sects into which the Church is divided, and that the sin of schism has been made very light of, and that the right of private judgment has been carried to such an extreme, as to invalidate the authority of scripture and to deny the presence of the Holy Ghost. All this was the re-action occasioned by emancipation from the traditions of men. But whilst Mr T. can see clearly the spirit of disobedience in every other sect, he perceives it not in his own. And this is the solemn part of the question between us, the sin of rending the body of Christ must be chargeable on one of us, and it is a fearful sin, and a question which must not be approached with levity. It is surely right that the question should be simplified to the minds of christians, and it comes simply to this—who is the schismatic, he who seeks to maintain the unity of the Church of England, or he who aims to promote the unity of the Spirit? Now it is remarkable that Mr. T. should have ventured in the same paragraph to show the means of unity appointed in scripture, and the means of unity in the primitive Church, that is, after the Churches had lost the blessing of Apostolical care.

THE MEANS OF UNITY APPOINTED
IN THE SCRIPTURE, ARE THESE:—

"Continuing stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. The walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all

THE MEANS OF UNITY IN THE PRIM-
ITIVE CHURCH, ARE THESE:—

"I exhort you (says Ignatius the martyr, and formerly disciple of St. John,) to be zealous to do all things in divine concord; *the Bishop presiding* in the place of God, and the presbyters in the

lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Obeying them that have the rule over us (in the Church) and submitting ourselves. Keeping the ordinances as they have been delivered to us, marking them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine we have learned."

place of the council of Apostles, and the deacons intrusted with the service of Jesus Christ. All of you follow the Bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles, and reverence the deacons as God's ordinance. Be ye earnest to keep one Eucharist, for the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ is one, and there is one cup in the unity of His blood, one altar, as one Bishop, together with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants."

Surely the parallel afforded by Mr. T. himself is a sufficient proof that the primitive Church hath departed from scriptural simplicity. How important the word "the faith *once* delivered to the saints," "the acknowledgment of the truth according to godliness."

It is strange that Mr. T. should have overlooked those blessed unities, the knowledge of which maintains unity in the Spirit; "one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

I would solemnly ask myself, have I violated one of those unities in seceding from the Establishment, and I do before God, say no! and therefore that which I have left, has nothing to do with the maintenance of the unity of the Spirit; it may have to do with uniformity, and I do greatly tremble for Mr. T., and many of his godly brethren, because they are identifying two things wholly distinct, uniformity produced by the exercise of external authority and unity by the invisible energy of the Spirit; the one manifested in the long dark age of the universal sway of the Church in the world, the other for a little moment in the primitive Apostolical Church, and only to be fully displayed in that day of glory, when

they shall be all one, and the world know that Jesus has been sent of the Father, and the disciples loved as Jesus Himself, of Him.

“Of independence as exhibited in practice, it is enough merely to advert to the general spirit of insubordination, the contempt that is manifested for every thing old or established, the disregard of oaths, the crumbling into separate pieces of combinations that seemed almost indissoluble, and that which is most marked and most demands attention; the attempts that are making on a vast and comprehensive scale to hold up men as possessed of a machinery, moral and intellectual, by which to govern themselves, and to render them great, virtuous, and wise, independent of God. Our fathers in the childhood of the world built a visible tower that should reach to heaven, but this generation is engaged in a more awful scheme of apostasy, in building one that is invisible, not material, but moral, intellectual, and spiritual; equally founded upon earth, and doomed to more terrible destruction.” (Page 16, 17.)

In this fearful anticipation, we do entirely coincide with Mr. T. And there is nothing we would more deprecate than while seeking real liberty in the Spirit, we should be found in any wise to give a cloak to that spirit of independence, which we know as taught of God to be lawlessness. No; we do believe that nothing but the acknowledgement of God in all things, nothing but the simplest obedience as children, will prove really a preservative in these dark days of error and unrestrainedness. But the remedy against falling into this evil train, cannot be the attempt to subject man's mind to an authority, the assertion of which can only be made by *justifying the most flagrant practical evil, and dulling the sense of individual responsibility*. As a theory, what Mr. T. says, may be very beautiful; but the theory of the Church, as he has given it, is not even the *theory* of the Church of England. And it is constantly found when the Spirit is grieved in an individual by the practical evil and worldliness of the Establishment, that the way he is attempted to be silenced, is by an appeal to the authority of antiquity, or by the argument, that, as individuals they are not concerned in the evil of their system. How pointed a safeguard against such sophistry, is the almost latest warning from heaven:—“*He that hath an ear, let him hear what THE SPIRIT says to the Churches.*”

THOUGHTS ON NEHEMIAH : OR, BLESSING IN AN APOSTATE DISPENSATION.

WE may be quite sure that God has exercised His own perfect wisdom, in determining what parts of the world's history, and of His own people's history, should or should not be recorded in His word ; and though we may be often unable to discern the bearing of certain passages or books of the divine record, yet we may surely ascribe this to the dimness of our own sight, and rest satisfied that whatever is recorded of the things that happened of old, is written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Any one who can look back upon the time when he saw nothing respecting the Lord's earthly reign, and Israel's blessing in the latter day, and can compare his thoughts on scripture then with those which he has had since a knowledge of the Lord's second coming opened on his mind, will be able to say how many parts of scripture have become full of interest and light, which once appeared uninteresting and obscure.

Again—when we have learned a little to turn off our thoughts from resting only on ourselves, and to regard the scripture as unfolding the thoughts of God respecting the Church, and Israel, and the world, in their present and future histories, we find that many parts from which we failed to draw any definite instruction, when we read the scripture as isolated individuals selfishly, have assumed quite another character, when we have learned to see that our interests are indissolubly united to one body, even the Church, whose welfare and interests cannot be separated from our own. And thus we are by our own experience, furnished with many proofs, that when we have found scripture in any part unintelligible, it has arisen from our ignorance and want of wisdom in applying it aright.

It has already been remarked in a former paper, how every dispensation whose history is recorded in scripture, bears marked

upon it, the same sad features of man's continual propensity to depart from God, and be false to those principles of blessing, by preserving which, his fidelity would have been manifested, and his happiness secured,

But amidst these sorrowful relations of progressive evil, we have several times brought before us a more cheering and blessed subject of contemplation, and that is the power of the Spirit of God, even in the midst of apostasy and evil, to raise up and find a path for those who desire to return and to serve God in righteousness and truth.

Of this we find one instance in Hezekiah ; he lived at a time when the tribes of Israel had long ceased to care about every thing which marked them as distinct from the nations around, and which gave them oneness together as the blessed people of the Lord. Their paschal feast, the pledge and evidence of these blessings, had altogether been neglected ; but Hezekiah re-establishes and summons all Israel to its celebration. The greater part mock—but a few obey. He sanctifies the priests for worship, and the Levites for service ; supplies them with sacrifices that they may have where-with to offer, and intercedes that they and their offerings, though deficiently sanctified and imperfect, may yet be accepted : and they are. Here is one blessed type of the Spirit of Christ leading a little remnant, (whilst all others are careless) into power of manifested obedience and worship, supplying means of service, which through intercession finds with all its weakness and imperfection, acceptance and conscious blessing.

But it is not to this period that I wish to direct our attention now, but to the later period of Nehemiah, a period which furnishes I believe, some important principles which will be useful in directing our judgment in many questions about which the Church is anxious. Nehemiah lived at a time when “ the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof burned with fire ;” i.e., the chosen city—the city which God had chosen to set His name there—the only place where He could be worshipped—the city which once laughed all her enemies to scorn, was now defenceless and deserted, and the people which should have been most blessed,

were scattered and in reproach. It was the sense of this—the sense of God's being dishonoured, and of His peoples being despoiled of their blessing ; it was this that moved the faithful heart of Nehemiah, and caused it to sorrow, when he might have enjoyed all the luxury and splendour of the Persian palace.

He had one desire—to see Jerusalem restored, and worshipped in by her own separated people, that Jerusalem might become again palpably distinguished from the nations around.

And are *we* not living at a time when that which ought to be seen as the separated portion of the Lord, the Church of the living God is scattered—its unity broken—itself undefended and unseparated by its proper bulwarks of truth. Nehemiah's anxiety was to restore the wall of Jerusalem—a wall is that which separates and defends ; and this truth is to the Church—"Girt about with truth." "Sanctify them through the truth." Doctrinal truth—the very first knowledge of the blood of the paschal lamb separates from the world unto God. Practical truth—any one precept of Jesus received and acted upon—separates from the world—and brings into the paths of God. And whilst it separates, it defends, for it gives a strength in God which Satan is not able to overthrow,—“Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” Only let the Church, enfeebled as it is, and scattered, realize the truth of her heavenly calling—let them live the precepts of Christ, and the world will soon see that a separating wall is builded.

There were many things to discourage Nehemiah in his work. In the first place, there were his many enemies saying, “what do these feeble Jews?” &c. “If a fox should go over, he would break down their stone wall.” And in answer to these taunts there was no divine interference as of old—no manifestation of the presence and glory of God—nothing which to the outward eye could give the least sanction to their work, or prove that God regarded it with favour. With one hand they builded, and with another held a weapon to resist the foe.

Again—it might have been said to Nehemiah, by what authority doest thou these things? Those of old who had delivered

Israel—such as Gideon, for example, had received the plain and manifested appointment of the Lord. David and Solomon were the Lord's anointed, the *ordained* rulers of His people. But Nehemiah had no such appointment, though the very circumstances of destitution and uncertainty in which they were, seemed to render such appointment the more desirable. But we do not read of the peoples' stumbling at this difficulty, and questioning his authority and refusing to obey.

We read, "the people had a mind to work." Here was the great secret of their energy; they desired the restitution of Jerusalem, because they believed it was pleasing to God, and blessed for themselves; and therefore the superior fitness and zeal of Nehemiah for the work, was sufficient to secure the obedient submission of all, who really desired that the work should prosper.

His authority was over the obedient mind, I mean the mind obedient to God; and doubtless he who had refused to obey Nehemiah, thus labouring for the Lord, would have no less displeased Him, than if he had refused submission to David or to Solomon, who were manifestly and declaredly the Lord's anointed.

There are few things more important in regarding the circumstances of the Church, at any given period, than to consider in what part of the dispensation we are; for many things may befit one period of it, which would ill befit another. If Nehemiah had said it will be useless for me to labour, unless the glory is first restored, and unless the ancient order of Israel in her kings and priests is restored, he never would have laboured at all. But would such a claim have been seemly in the mouth of one, who knew that rebellion and apostasy had forfeited these blessings? And that if the divine sanction had been palpably given as of old, it would have been given to a little, and in many respects still disobedient remnant, very small in comparison of the multitudes of their brethren who were scattered in distant lands, and little able to maintain the proper position of God's Israel in the earth. Surely it rather became him without any unseemly pretensions of right to power and blessing, which had justly been taken away, to do what he did, viz., seek to restore the fallen people of God to separateness, and purity, and obedience.

And his labour was not in vain, for although the glory never came back to the city, and though suffering and conflict were the portion of those who dwelt in it, yet it was the place in which some with fasting and prayers were enabled to serve God, until they could say "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

I commend the consideration of these principles to those brethren who believe, that there yet exists among the nations a spiritual circumcision, who ought to be united together in the truth, and taught to worship and act together according to the directions of the Lord.

If they have not the power and ostensible standing which the Church once had, let us use obediently the power we have, for so only does the scripture warrant our expecting more. And if we are distressed, because the order which once obtained in the Church is no longer; let us remember that obedience and sincerity of heart in being zealous and repenting, gave to the company of Nehemiah a principle of order, as efficient and sure, as that which prevailed in ostensibly ordered systems of Israel's former governors. It is easy to say there is no authority in the Church now, and to make the absence of ostensibly appointed office which apostasy has broken up, an excuse for disobedience and carelessness; but they who desire to watch the hand of God, and to own any gifts or authority of His Spirit wheresoever, and under whatsoever circumstances given, will not find it difficult to discover an order which God will be able, and our consciences will be able to recognize as His. Only let there be an obedient and ready mind, and if there are those (and there are) who have gifts or have authority for edification in the truth, let them use it—let them wait on their ministry, and the obedient in heart will receive them and be edified.

"WOULD GOD THAT ALL THE LORDS PEOPLE
WERE PROPHETS."

*"There ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, ELDAD and
MEDAD do prophesy in the camp."—Num. xi. 27.*

Eldad, they said, and Medad, there
Irregularly bold,
By Moses uncommissioned, dare
A separate meeting hold !
And still whom, none but heaven will own
Men whom the world decry,
Men authorized by God alone,
Presume to prophesy !

"My lord Moses, forbid them."—xi. 28.

How often have I blindly done
What zealous Joshua did,
Impatient to the rulers run,
And cried, "My lords, forbid !
Silence the schismatics, constrain
Their thoughts with ours t' agree,
And sacrifice the souls of men
To idol unity !"

"Enviest thou for my sake ?"

Moses, the minister of God,
Rebukes our partial love,
Who envy at the gifts bestow'd
On those we disapprove :
We do not our own spirits know,
Who wish to see suppress,
The men that Jesu's spirit shew,
The men whom God hath bless'd.

*"Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the
Lord would put His Spirit upon them."—*

Shall we the Spirit's course restrain,
Or quench the heavenly fire ?
Let God His messengers ordain,
And whom He will inspire :
Blow as he list, the Spirit's choice
Of instruments we bless ;
We will, if Christ be preach'd, rejoice,
And wish the word success !
Can all be prophets then ? are all
Commissioned from above ?
No ! but whome'er the Lord shall call
We joyfully approve.
O that the Church might all receive
The spirit of prophecy,
And all in Christ accepted live,
And all in Jesus die !

C. WESLEY.

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THE SIN OF SCHISM.

EVERY successive manifestation by God of Himself to man has served to call forth the sin which is in man. Thus, when the Law was given sin appeared ; and through the Law sin or the offence hath abounded. Sin was in man before the law was given ; but until the coming of the Law with its various requirements, it wanted a cause to incite or call it forth. (“ The motions of sin, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”) In like manner, the introduction of the marvellous grace of the gospel has but afforded scope for the coming forth of man’s evil ; and indeed, in numerous ways in which it had not previously appeared. Among other exhibitions of the fearful evil in man, which have been occasioned by the perverted grace of the gospel, is one of an exceedingly hateful character in the sight of God—a sin marring even the very aim and end of that grace. This is the sin of Schism. This was undoubtedly in man’s heart, along with every other sin ; but it needed, in order to its formal exhibition, something to be set up of God. For, properly speaking, Schism cannot appear until God’s object in the gospel of His grace

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appears ;—Schism being the directly opposite thing to that object. Hence this sin is not found affecting the natural conscience of man, nor indeed as pressing upon a conscience awakened to the sense of sin and seeking the way of salvation ; although it comes under the general class of sins, viz.—works of the flesh. Accordingly, so long as individual salvation is the only object of thought, the sin of Schism is hardly apprehended in the conscience at all. And perhaps, nothing more manifests the general disregard or ignorance of God's aim in the gospel of His grace, viz.—**CHURCH UNITY** or **FELLOWSHIP**, than the light treatment which the warnings against **SCHISM** have ever met with. This sin is the constant subject of reproof, exhortation, or warning throughout the Epistles ; yet how few have troubled themselves to consider where it is chargeable. It has been so much the habit of men's minds to view communities* of christians as left at liberty to regulate for themselves ; and even, individual christians as permitted to unite themselves with communities according to their judgment or taste, or even to stand altogether aloof and alone ; that it is very possible for a whole community to lie guilty of the sin of Schism, from its never having questioned the soundness of the principle on which it has been acting. If it were true that God, having called an individual into the fellowship of His Son, had left him without any direction for his guidance, then indeed that individual might be suffered to follow his judgment ; whether to stand alone, or to associate with others on whatever principles might be deemed most conducive to their common welfare. But God has not so left man ; for almost all the preceptive part of the New Testament bears on the individual as sustaining certain relations as *a member of a body* ; and teaches him how to behave himself in the *house of God*—which is the Church of the living God. And so far from its permitting christians to associate together as they will, it lays down, for

* Every particular and national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church, ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done unto edifying. (XXXIX ARTICLES; Art. 31.)

their association, principles subsisting in the most essential particulars of their Faith.

The end of God in the gospel of His grace is, not the salvation of individual men, but the manifestation of Himself in a certain way. The grand attractive point held up of God to sinners is the death of Christ. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all to me; this He said, signifying what death He should die." He died, not only for the nation of the Jews, but that He might gather together in one, the children of God which are scattered abroad. This "gathering together in one" is, so far as christians are concerned in the earth, the great end of God in the gospel. And this the unity of christians was to be the great evidence unto the world, that the Father had sent the Son. This was the object for which Jesus prayed; (John xvii.) and it is the object for which each of His disciples ought to pray and to strive. It was *present and visible unity* for which Jesus prayed. All who are made partakers of the grace of the gospel are one before God: but the object is to make that Oneness *palpable to sense*. Hence the accomplishment and the maintenance of it becomes a matter of individual responsibility: ("endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.") This is the unity of and in the Spirit—unity in that in which we are one before God, viz.—in Christ risen, the quickening Spirit, the second Adam. It is therefore a unity independent of time, place, and circumstances; and can be attained and preserved only by each individual's realizing that which delivers him from present things—even oneness with Him who is risen and is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Now whatever hinders the manifestation on earth of that Oneness which christians have in Christ in heaven—is this sin of Schism. This manifestation is hindered *positive/y*, either when an individual follows his own will, and* separates himself from the

* There are two words in the New Testament by which the sin of Schism is marked:—"Dichostasia," translated "division," Rom. xvi. 17., 1 Cor. iii. 3.; and as one of the works of the flesh, improperly rendered seditions, Gal. v. 20.: and "Schisma," whence our word Schism, 1 Cor. i. 10. that there be no *divisions* among you; and 1 Cor. xi. 18.; and 1 Cor. xii. 25., that

communion of saints ; or when an association of christians, by prescribing rules not of the Spirit, preclude an individual from fellowship with them :—for such christians, so far from gathering with the Lord, are, in fact, scattering abroad. And it is hindered *negatively*, when an individual believer either stands aloof from the Visible Communion of saints, or holds fellowship with unbelievers who assume the privileges of the children of the kingdom, and are accredited as such by those who are unequally yoked with them.

We are furnished with a most instructive illustration of the principle and of the working of this sin, corporately, in the policy of Jeroboam. (1 Kings xii. 26—33.)

“ And Jeroboam said in his heart, now shall the kingdom return to the house of David :

“ If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again to their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

“ Whereupon the king took council, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem : behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

“ And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.

“ And this thing became a sin : for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

“ And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

“ And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made : and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places he had made.

there should be no Schism in the body. The meaning is easily seen from the use of the word in the material sense ; “ the *rent* becomes worse.” (Matt. ix. 16.)

“So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el, the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart ; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel : and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.”

We have here all the features of that policy which man has ever used, viz.—making the things of God to subserve his own interest. But we hence learn that the moment man begins to tamper with God’s religion, so as to adapt it to his own circumstances, “he provokes God to anger, and casts Him behind his back.” Whenever human policy is permitted to have a place in the things of God, the declension from God’s ways is fearfully rapid ; and the end of God is completely destroyed. Now God’s end after the settlement of Israel in the land of Canaan, was to have one place to put His name there in order that it might be the common centre of Israel’s unity. Thither were the tribes to go up. The effect of Jeroboam’s policy, yea, the very effect proposed by it, was to defeat this end ; (ver. 26—28.) It was too much for Jeroboam openly to avow idolatry ; neither indeed was positive idolatry settled in his heart, as clearly appears from his sending his wife to Shiloh, to Ahijah the prophet. (1 Kings xiv. 2.) Therefore it was a zeal for the religious welfare of the people, which he ostensibly put forth ; as if God, who had prescribed the mode of His worship, had not prescribed also the means. How much paternal care for the people was affected in His words. “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.” And when once such a principle is allowed, that man’s convenience may unsettle God’s plan, we know not where we may stop. At Jerusalem there was the house of God, having the ark of the covenant and the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, which had gone with the people in the wilderness, and passed on before them when they crossed Jordan into Canaan. So must Jeroboam also have some object of attraction :—he made two calves of gold, and “he set up the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan ; and this thing became a sin, for the people *went to worship before the one even unto Dan.*” In this was God’s own place of worship entirely given up. Now what was all this

but to make Religion a mere matter of human convenience?—but this is most hateful in the sight of God. God has made revelation of Himself and of the manner in which He will be approached. Here comes the first claim of God upon man's allegiance, "without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that seek Him. We cannot advance a step without the recognition of this principle. Before God had given a revelation of His will, men might indeed ignorantly worship Him. But *now*, the very first question is, will you submit to the way of God's own proposing of access to Him?—it is the obedience of faith. And what is the State Religion, or what is the People's Religion, but the standing out against God on this first principle, and saying, the one and the other, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem;" and therefore we will devise a plan of our own? It is as well for you to worship at Dan in the extreme north, or at Beth-el in the centre of the land, as to go up to Jerusalem, where alone the Lord had put His name. The moment that men are associated together on the principle of State policy, or on (what appears to most quite the opposite to it) the Voluntary Principle, God's own order is thwarted, and the full blessing from God is hindered. But when we have moved a single step in departure from the way of God, there is no saying where we shall stop. The plan of God being altered, further alteration becomes necessary; and it is instructive to pursue this in the example before us. God had confined the priesthood to the family of Aaron, and the service of the sanctuary to the tribe of Levi. Jeroboam therefore, in departing from the order of God in the first instance, was obliged again to depart; "so he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi." This will, in principle, necessarily follow the departure from God's own plan of worship in the grace of the gospel. When once Unity in the Spirit is departed from, those are accredited as worshippers who are not of the consecrated family; and those are recognized as teachers and as of a privileged class who have not the needful qualification—

the Spirit of God ; but who supply its place by human authority. "He made priests of the lowest of the people." But he must go a step further still. Israel was bound together by the great feasts. On three of them all the males were to appear at Jerusalem. These feasts were memorials of past, and pledges of coming mercies. On the fifteenth day of the seventh month was the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast of ingathering, and joy, and gladness. (Deut. xvi. 13—16.) In order to meet this, which might create a craving in the heart of one of Israel to go up to Jerusalem, Jeroboam ordained a feast in the *eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month*, like unto the feast that is in Judah. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el, the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month *which he had devised of his own heart*. Surely the parallel is painfully instructive ; for what has man's interference with God's order done, but this very thing—altered the time of the feast of the GREAT INGATHERING, which is in another Dispensation ; and making the effort to keep it *now* and *here* : a very necessary step after destroying the Visible Unity of the Spirit, and receiving as worshippers those who have not the Spirit. But this is the ingathering of the world into the Church, and the giving to the world the Church's most hallowed privileges ! But Jeroboam "had devised this of his own heart." Here we get the hateful principle as seen of God—the device of man's heart substituted for God's own prescribed plan ; and its great end to hinder God's own end—the Oneness of His people. And this once established, rendered reformation impossible. It was constituted in falsehood ; and therefore, whatever might be the individual's character, the one sentence runs, "howbeit from the sin of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, he departed not."

An exemplification of the manner in which this sin works in individuals is furnished in the passover. All the congregation of Israel were concerned in it. (Ex. xii. 47.) Three times a year were all the males to appear before the Lord. (Ex. xxiii.) This was to be the witness of their common acceptance as the people

of the Lord; and a refusal, by any individual, to do this would have proved his contempt of his birthright.* The admission of a stragler would have proved common contempt of the birthright, and in either case Israel's Unity would have been marred.

Now the Unity of the Church is based upon the death of Christ; and its manifestation as to place is in heaven. It begins with the recognition of that in which all are involved—"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The death of Christ declares this; and becomes the point of attraction to all. Whosoever therefore meets God in the death of Christ meets Him in the confession that he is lost—as much lost as any other who also has met God there. Here then all can meet together; all meet on a common level—on the acknowledgment of their common ruin. Whatever distinctions previously existed, the power of them is gone as to qualification in reference to God; for they are alike lost. There were two (Jew and Gentile) separated, the one from the other by insuperable barriers,—by nation, by education, and by habits; and, besides all these, their separation was sanctioned by God Himself. Yet for these two, God Himself found a meeting place. But it was one which broke down the middle partition-wall, and declared at the same time their common failure, and their common acceptance:—it was the cross. In this it is that Christ crucified is so pre-eminently the power of God and the wisdom of God: in its bringing the most discordant subjects into fellowship with Himself, and into fellowship with each other. And God in His applying His own principle of Unity, first of all, in the most difficult case, brilliantly manifests the virtue and the vigour of it. For surely that principle which can bring Jew and Gentile together, can bring any together.. And hence it comes to pass that real communion of saints is the guarantee for the preservation of the true doctrine of the Cross; for in that it is that they meet one another. The Cross therefore would answer to Jerusalem as the centre of Unity.

* His being refused admission to this Feast on account of sin, would have deprived him of his birthright: he would have been "cut off from his people."

But there is another thing, viz., the band which keeps together : that in Israel was, ye are "brethren," "ye are children of Abraham:" Israel's lineal descent from Abraham and their bearing God's covenant in their flesh, (Gen. xvii. 13.) was the band which bound Israel together ; so that they had titles and privileges as one man. It is thus still, inasmuch as we too are "brethren," yet, not as descended from Abraham, but as begotten of God into life in Christ Jesus. That which now bindeth is the New Life received from Jesus risen ; and this lifts us above such distinctions, and above all distinctions ending in death. Faith sees them already ended, and enters on the New Life ; and where this New Life is realized, how strong the bond of union ! "All ye are brethren." If the Cross declares unto us the end of all fleshly distinctions we must not stop here ; we must press on so as to get a present entrance into those things which the Spirit reveals. In these things all believers have a common interest. In these there is nothing which ministers to division. These are spiritual blessings, and are to be apprehended only in the Spirit. Hence, unity is *in the Spirit* ; and that which maintains it is *the Spirit*, shed abundantly on the Church by Jesus Christ, giving to each individual saint union with Himself the Head, and communion with all the members.

It necessarily comes to pass that the moment any thing is introduced as a point of unity, which the Lord has not commanded, there is room for the sin of Schism. That thing is made to occupy the place of the Cross ; and it is not that which links to the Head. Instances of this very early showed themselves in the Church. Questions arose as to the observance of days, and as to the cleanness of meats : but they were met and ruled by the wisdom of the Apostles. They presumed not to prescribe in such matters, because such prescription, though it would have been an attempt to produce uniformity, would in effect, have divided those who were one in the Spirit, and thus have produced Schism. In fact, the real ground of unity was not involved in such differences ; but it would have been, had they been made subjects of positive enact-

ment: and the moment this is the case, Schism is produced. A man might have observed a day, or might not have observed it, without in the least interfering with the blessed constituents of real unity—one body, one Spirit, one faith, one hope, one baptism, one Lord, one Father. Not one of these would have been affected by an individual's conduct in regard to a day, or to a particular meat. Such matters therefore were to be left free to the private conscience; only providing that this freedom be used for the display of grace in resisting one's own will and in yielding all proper compliance and conformity.

But directly that the kingdom of God was made to consist in meat and drink, and this became a term of communion, Schism was the necessary result:—the Cross of Christ and the Spirit of Christ were both forgotten; and the meat or the drink became the one object of concern and contention.* It is this which so fearfully characterizes almost all the Establishments of Christendom. They would be Schismatic even if they were reformed; for their very constitution is Schismatic. And the same principle holds in them as operated in the kingdom of Israel:—that, whatever might be effected towards reformation by the energy of any individual, *the sin*, which Jeroboam caused them to sin, was never removed.

Jehu was a great Reformer. He brake down the house of Baal; “howbeit, from the sins of Jeroboam the Son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them—from after the golden calves that were in Beth-el and in Dan.”

Much of what is flagrantly evil may be removed by a Reformer; but the original sin, working all evil, is in the very constitution of the system—even the setting up, as the basis of Union, of something which is not of the Spirit; and which therefore necessarily operates Schism: and this is the heavy sin of dividing the worshippers of God, and of leading them away from the order of God, in order to unite them upon principles and in an order of man's own

The time for the observance of Easter rent even the Nominal Church into East and West; and the refusal to wear a surplice and to kneel at the Communion, ejected in one day all the pious clergy.

devising. Every basis not broad enough for the whole Church to meet on proclaims this sin. And thus the various Dissenting bodies from the Establishment of this country are not more free from this sin than that from which they have dissented. Schism is the sin stamped on their constitution. Until this be removed, real reformation cannot be effected, and free and full blessing must be hindered. It is true that there are in bodies which are Schismatic in their constitution many individuals who have really union in Spirit with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ ; and who do not say "we forbid him because he followeth not with us." Such individuals are, for the most part, impatient of ascertaining the fact of the wide departure of the Church from God ; and they usually rest contented with what others sanction ; though it be to the grief of their own spirit. And what is remarkable, is the effort that christians have made after some basis of union better than their own associations afforded, in the many Societies in which they can co-operate. These efforts are but the demonstration of the fact of the schismatic ground of all those associations.

But while we look at this sin in its aggregate character, we ought also to look at its guilt as estimated by the Lord Himself. It was first exposed in His rebuke to John. (Luke ix. 49, 50.) Here the "with us" was the proximate object, not the glory of Jesus ; and it is so now : we may be labouring most zealously for the interest of any little gathered body of christians, but the moment that becomes our object, we are acting in the spirit of John. And here unconsciously many are systematically guilty of the sin of Schism ; more earnestly contending for the preservation of the unity of a particular body, than for the unity of the body of Christ. But is not this to contravene the wisdom of God ? Can any principles so effectually bind together a few in any given place as those which, had they free scope, would bind together the whole Church of God as one great Corporation, animated by one Spirit, although separated as to place ? And if it does appear, as probably it may, that there is greater unity among those who are united on a less broad basis and less comprehensive principles than the Holy Catholic Church,

what is the sad truth but that there is so little of the Spirit of God realized in the midst of us, that we must have recourse to some traditional and fleshly prescription ; and thus declare that unity is not to be had in the Spirit simply, and that we can meet together only as Schismatics. One thing needs to be clearly seen here,—that separation from *things* is not separation from *persons*. Suppose that an individual separates from the Church of England or the Church of Scotland, allowing the soundness of their doctrinal articles, and that they preach the truths therein stated, does he violate one item of the sevenfold unity of the whole Church ? No. Does he separate from the believers in it ? No. It may be that one who has separated, and certain believers who have not, depart together from their native country in the same ship ; are thrown together in some foreign land ; meet together, read together, pray together, and it may be, receive the Lord's supper together ; and in all this enjoy the real Communion of the Saints. This is no uncommon case : many testify unto the sweet fellowship which they have had as christians in the midst of Heathens, which they could not attain in England. And wherefore ?—because the moment they arrive in England, they return, one to the Establishment, and the others to their respective denominations ; and there is no common ground on which they can meet as christians at all. Does not this manifest that both the Establishment and the Denominations are the effectual carriers to Union,—in other words, that they are SCHISMATIC ; and that, in departing from them, not one single point of real unity is violated, and that the separation is not from the christians, but from extraneous things.

There are two ways in which, *individually*, we can be guilty of this sin. The one is refusing to assemble ourselves together as christians ; and the other is separating ourselves from such, after union with them. The Israelite who would have refused to go up to Jerusalem at the set feasts would have violated Israel's unity. "Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord." And whatever pretext he might use, he would only have shown that he preferred his own will and ways to the common

blessing of the **"Twelve Tribes."* (Acts xxvi: 7.) That Israelite would be needed to make up the integrity of the Nation. And so *in the Church* every individual has a place: and the blessing of the Church in any given place would be hindered in measure if only a single member of Christ in that place was dissociated from the rest. He would be as a dislocated limb. If it be asked why should so much stress be laid upon meeting together, the answer is, Obedience to the Lord's will requires it; and His promise of blessing is upon it. (Matt. xviii.) So might the Israelite say, why go up to Jerusalem?—because it is the Lord's command, and there He has "commanded His blessing." Notwithstanding the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, many at the time of Reformation came from Israel to Jerusalem, to be blessed in God's place of blessing. (See 2 Chron. xxx. 5, 11.) And may we not say that (as was the case) if only a very remnant remained faithful in the midst of general departure, the blessing was upon them; and that those who refused to attach themselves to the remnant feeble and outcast, were looked on by God as having despised their birthright. There was a remnant at the birth of the Lord Jesus; Anna, Symeon, and others waiting for the consolation of Israel, walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord;" and to these the Spirit of Prophecy was restored, whilst all that, though ostensibly the order of God, was yet found acting on its own principles, was rejected. And so even now: if there were but three individuals keeping the word of the patience of the Lord Jesus, and not denying His name, *there* would be the place of blessing. Others, it is true, might stand ostensibly as in the only place of blessing, saying that they are Jews: but God is dealing with realities and not names; and only where the principles of His truth are acknowledged as uniting His children, will the real blessing of the dispensation be found.

In looking at this sin as committed by an individual, we must remark that it is characterized as a work of the flesh, (Gal. v. 10:

* This is a compound word in the original in the singular number showing Israel's National integrity.

Dichostasiai, Seditions,) and although not partaking, in man's judgment, of the moral turpitude of adultery or murder, it springs from the same bitter root, the corrupted heart of man, from which proceedeth all evil. Whilst Christianity has been regarded as affecting individuals only, many have been ignorantly guilty of this sin in the manner above stated ; but when once Church-fellowship is recognized as the end of God in individual salvation, then it really becomes a question of solemn responsibility. And although it is exceedingly painful to witness the effect on the conscience of many who are hindered from ceasing to do evil, through dread of Schism, yet is this a proof of an awakened perception to the existence of Church-fellowship. Another thing to notice is, that Churchism has been considered so much in the light of human arrangement, that the passing from one denomination to another has rarely brought the sin of Schism before the mind : neither indeed is this change of denomination properly that sin, although it may be in many instances the result of much which bespeaks it in the heart. It may be instability or caprice ; but it is not properly rending the body of Christ. Schism is one of the most flagrant acts of self-will : it is self-will exercised against the order of God ; and it is especially the deliberate seeking of our own (supposed) good, rather than the good of others. It comes often in a very subtle form :—we expect perhaps greater blessing to our own soul through some particular ministry ; or we expect less trial than where we now are. Now, in the first instance, we are very partial judges ; and we quite forget that God must provide not only the matter, but also the *manner*, of the edification of His saints : and this manner is by not binding them down to the ministry of any individual however gifted ; for all the gifts are theirs, Paul, Apollos, or Cephas ; and the clinging to an individual is the mark of a low and carnal state. (1 Cor. iii.) In the second instance, it is quite true that there will be more ease *to the flesh* out of the Fellowship of the Saints than in it ; because the Church is God's School for breaking down self-will by leading into mutual forbearance and constant self-denial. And here it is that Satan gets such a hold on the mind to effect Schism.

Hence the exhortation, "Looking diligently lest *any* root of bitterness springing up trouble you ; lest there be *any* profane person." But when once the mind is brought deliberately to take its own way ; and, on any pretext, to withdraw from a visible Communion of Saints, the person so acting stands as one who has rent the body of Christ ; and as one "to be avoided ;" he being one who serves, not the Lord Jesus Christ, but his own lusts. The general result is then stated, "by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple:" so that the schism of an individual is usually followed by a wider rent than an individual could make. How shocked would be the feelings of even the babe in Christ at hearing of a Christian getting drunk or committing fornication : yet the sin of Schism is set in the same black catalogue as these sins ; and doubtless it is viewed by God very differently from what it is by ourselves. Indeed it is insubjection to God in the highest degree ; it is setting up Man's wisdom above God's, in the order of His household ; and reckoning that Man is allowed of God to choose his own ways of walking before Him, now when the exaltation is to so great dignity—when God had so specially provided for the order of that nation of which He was the King.

To many, before whom this paper may come, the question as to the sin of Schism has doubtless been practically presented. And I do feel the solemn importance of the question now so much canvassed. If the Church of Rome, its Sister of England, the Church of Scotland, and the Denominations, be bodies united together by the Spirit of the living God, and meeting in no other name than that of Christ, then it would be Schism to separate from them :—the unity of the Spirit would hereby be violated. But if this be not the case, then separation from them is bounden duty to the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to maintain the unity of the Spirit. In a day when the "Spirit of the Day" is so markedly that of Self-will, no one can too solemnly weigh such a momentous step :—a step involving either himself or the body from which he separates in the sin of Schism. And where the charge of this sin will fall, it must not be for taste or for prejudice to decide ; but for the truth of God. And if God has set up UNITY IN

THE SPIRIT, and man has substituted UNIFORMITY instead of it, then leaving Uniformity is the first step in order to obedience to God's plan of Unity.

A few extracts from Archbishop Leighton shall close this paper.

"Many there be of Gallio's temper, who "care for none of these things;" and who account all questions in religion as he did, but matter of words and names: and by this all religions may agree together. But that were not a natural Union produced by the active heat of the Spirit, but a confusion rather, arising from the want of it; not a knitting together, but a freezing together, as cold congregates all bodies, how heterogeneous soever, sticks, stones, and water: but heat makes first a separation of different things, and then unites those that are of the same nature."

"It is believed that united prayers ascend with greater efficacy. So says our Saviour. 'Where two or three are gathered together'—not their bodies, within the same walls only, for so they were so many carcases tumbled together; and the promise of His being amongst us, is not made to that, for He is the God of the living and not of the dead; it is the spirit of darkness that abides amongst the tombs and graves; but gathered in my name, one in that one holy name written upon their hearts, and uniting them, and so thence expressed in their joint services and invocations. So He says there of them who agree upon any thing they shall ask, (*συμφωνησουσιν.*) If all their hearts present and hold it up together, if they make one cry or song of it, that harmony of their hearts shall be sweet in the Lord's ears, and shall draw a gracious answer out of His hand: "If ye agree," your *joint* petitions shall be as it were our arrest or decree that shall stand in heaven, "it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." But alas! where is our agreement? The greater number of hearts say nothing, and others speak with such wavering, and such a jarring, harsh noise, being out of tune, *earthly*, too low set, that they spoil all, and disappoint the answers. Were the censer filled with those united prayers heavenwards, it would be filled with fire earthwards against the enemies of the Church.

"Is there such a thing, think ye, as the communing of saints? It is

a truth think of it as you will. The public ministry will profit little any where, where a people or some part of them are not one, and do not live together as of one mind, and use diligently all the means of edifying one another in their holy faith. How much of the primitive Christian's praise and profit is involved in the word, 'They were together (*ομαθυμαδον*) with one accord, with one mind;' and so they grew: 'The Lord added to the Church.'"

THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 63.)

HAVING followed our Lord through chapters i—iv, of this Gospel, I desire now, in God's grace, to track His further way;—and may the Lord Himself, through the Spirit, make this work the occasion of holy and thankful delight.

In chapters v—x, we see our Lord in intercourse with the Jews. But to exhibit His public life and ministry is not the great purpose of the Spirit in this Gospel. He is not seen here, as in the other Gospels, going about the cities and villages of Israel preaching the kingdom, if haply they would repent. But the departure from God of that world through which He was passing, seems to be ever on His mind; and He is seen coming forth, only at times, to act in power or in grace, on all around Him. He does not, as the social Son of man, eat and drink here as in the other Gospels. He rather in every scene takes His elevation as Son of God,—the stranger from heaven; as I have noticed already in the scene of the Marriage at Cana.

And so towards His disciples,—He appears to take a distance even from them. They are not the companions of His ministry in this

Gospel, as they are in the others. He does not here appoint the twelve, and then the seventy ; but ministry is left in His own hand. The Apostles are seen but little with Him till the 13th chapter, when indeed, His ministry has closed. And even when they are with Him, it is with some reserve. (See iv. 32., vi. 5., xi. 9.)

But, on the other hand, in no Gospel is He seen so near the sinner. He is *alone* with the Samaritan ; *alone* with the adulteress ; *alone* with the outcast beggar. And this gives its highest interest to this most precious portion of the word of God. The joy and security of being thus alone with the Son of God, as is here exhibited, is beyond every thing to the soul. The sinner thus learns his title to the Saviour ; and discovers the blessed truth that they were made for one another. The moment we learn that we are sinners, we may look in the face of the Son of God, and claim Him as our own. And what a moment in the very days of heaven that is ! The Son of God came to seek and to save sinners : and He walked as a solitary man on the earth, save when He met a poor sinner. Such alone had title, or even power, to interrupt the solitudes of this Stranger from heaven. The world knew Him not. His paths were strange and lonely among us, save when He and the sinner found their way to each other. The Leper outside the camp met Him, but no one else.

And here let me say, that this being alone with Jesus, is the sinner's *first* position. It is the beginning of his joy ; and no one has right to meddle with it. That which has called itself the Church in every age of christendom, has sought to break in upon the privacy of the Saviour and the sinner, and to make herself a party in the settlement of the question of the sinner's sin. But in this she has been an intruder. *Sin casts us upon God alone.*

And indeed, beloved, in the variety of judgment now a days, it is needful to our peace to know this. Others may require of us to join them in particular lines of service, or in particular forms and order of worship ; and may count us disobedient if we do not. But, however we may listen to them in these things, we dare not give up, in fear of them, God's prerogative to deal with us *as sin-*

ners Himself alone. We must not surrender to any the right of the blessed God to talk with us *alone* about our sins. Nor should our own anxiety on a thousand questions that may arise, righteous as that anxiety may be, be allowed to lead us for a moment to forget, that as sinners we have been already alone with Jesus; and that He has once and for ever, in the riches of His grace, pardoned and accepted us.

This solitude of Christ and the sinner, our Gospel most comfortingly presents to us. But as to all others, Jesus is here but at a distance and in reserve. And so as to *place* as well as to *persons*. The Lord in this Gospel does not seek even Jerusalem. He is there only at the bidding of one or other of the annual Feasts. For the Son of God had nothing to do *especially* with any place;—the wide wilderness of this world, where sinners were to be found, was the only scene for Him.

But I will continue now to follow the chapters in order.

V.—In the introduction to my first paper on this Gospel, I have shewn that there was, through all the stages of the history of Israel, the occasional putting forth of a special energy of the Spirit, by which, and not by the resources of their own system, the Lord was sustaining Israel, and teaching them to know where their final hope lay. From the *call* of Abraham to the throne of David, we saw this.

Now I judge that *Bethesda* was a witness of the same thing. Bethesda was not that which the system itself provided. It was opened in Jerusalem, as a fountain of healing, by the sovereign grace of Jehovah, (as indeed its name imports,) Neither was it an abiding but only an occasional relief, as the Judges and Prophets had been. Like them, it was a testimony to the grace and power that were in God Himself for Israel; and had perhaps, yielded this its testimony at certain seasons all through the dark age which had passed since the days of the last of their Prophets. But it must now be set aside. Its waters are to be no more troubled. He to whom all these witnesses of grace pointed, had now appeared. As the true fountain of health, the Son of

God had now come to the daughter of Zion, and was shewing Himself in Jerusalem.

It was a Feast-time, we are told. (v. i.) All was going on at Jerusalem, as though all were right before God. The Feasts were duly observed ; the time was one of exact religious services. But Bethesda alone might have told the daughter of Zion that she needed a physician, and was not in that rest which faithfulness to Jehovah would have preserved to her. And the Lord would now tell her the same truth. He heals the impotent man ; thus taking the place of Bethesda : but He does so in a way that tells Israel of their loss of the sabbath—the loss of their own proper glory : “ for the same day was the sabbath.”

The nation is at once sensitive of this. It touched the place of their pride ; for the sabbath was the sign of all their national distinction ; and they resent it—“ they sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the sabbath day.”

The Lord answered them, “ my Father worketh hitherto and I work ;”—words which again told them of their loss of this sabbath in which they boasted, yea, that they had long lost it, lost it from the beginning ; for that in every stage of their history, God had been working *in grace* among them ; working as “ His Father,” of which this Bethesda was the sign, and that He Himself had now come, just in the same way, to work in *grace* among them ; of which this poor restored cripple was the sign. This was the voice of these words, “ my Father worketh hitherto and I work ;” thus referring to the act of grace all through Israel’s history, which I have noticed in the introduction to my first paper on this Gospel. But on this the Jews resent Him the more ; and not being in the secret of His glory, they charge Him as with blasphemy, for calling God His Father.

To this He again answers, still as before, speaking of Himself as Son, but taking a place of subjection also. “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself.”*

* Without the knowledge of the divine dignity of His person, we cannot discover the place which the Lord here takes, to be the place of willing subjection, as it was. For it would not have been such in any mere creature, however exalted, to have said, “ I can of my ownself do nothing.” But this in the Son was subjection.

But all this is most blessed. One who came into this world on behalf of God and His honour, could take no other place. It was the only place of righteousness here. "He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him." Man had, through pride, dishonoured God. Man did an affront to the Majesty of God, when he listened to the words, "ye shall be as God." And the Son who came to honour God, must humble Himself. Though in the form of God, He must empty Himself here. God's praise in a world that had departed from Him in pride, must have this sacrifice. And this sacrifice the Son offered. But this did not suit man; this was not according to man; and man could not receive or sanction such an one. "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."

This is a deep and holy matter, beloved. By His humiliation and subjection, the Son was at once honouring God and testing man; giving the "only Potentate" His due right in this world, but thus becoming himself a sign for the making manifest of the thoughts of the heart. And the Jew, the favoured Jew, was found in this common atheism of man; for to disclose this hidden spring of unbelief in *Israel*, our Lord's discourse in this chapter was tending. It was not for want of light and testimony. They had the works of Christ, the Father's voice, their own scriptures, as well as the testimony of John. But withal they had the love of the world in them, and not the love of God; and were thus unprepared for the Son of God. How could they receive one who had no object but to honour God, while they were receiving honour one of another? How could man, apostate in pride, brook the lowly Son of man—the emptied Son of God? This was the source where their unbelief took its rise. There was no association between them and the only one on earth who then stood for God's honour before men. His form of humiliation was now disallowed, as His work and grace at Bethesda had before been refused. His brethren should have understood how that God by His hand would deliver them; but they understood not; they believed Moses, and were thus, in

principle, still in Egypt, still in the flesh, still unredeemed. Had they believed Moses, they would have believed Christ, and been led out by Him, as at this time, from under the hand of Pharaoh, (the power of the flesh and the world.) But under all that, through unbelief, this chapter finds them and leaves them.

VI.—A new scene opens here.—It was the Passover ; but God's mercy, which that season celebrated, Israel had slighted. They had still to learn the lesson of Egypt and the wilderness ; and in patient love, after so many provocations, the Lord would even now teach them.

Accordingly, He feeds the multitude in a desert place ; thus shewing the grace and power of Him who for forty years had fed their fathers in another desert. The disciples, like Moses, wonder through unbelief, and say as it were, "shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them?" But His hand is not shortened. He feeds them ; and this awakens zeal in the multitude, and they would fain come and by force make Him a king. But the Lord could not take the kingdom from zeal like this. This could not be the source of the kingdom of the Son of man. The Beasts may take their kingdoms from the winds striving upon the great sea ; (Dan. vii.) but Jesus cannot. This was not His mother crowning Him in the day of His espousals. (Cant. iii.) This was not, in His ear, the shouting of the people bringing in the head stone of the corner. All this stir among them, this following of Him across the lake, was not, in His thoughts, the symptom of His people made willing in the day of His power.* He retires from all this, and on the following day opens to them the mystery of the true Passover, and the manna of the wilderness, which they had still to learn. They had still to learn the virtue of the Cross,—the true Passover that delivers from Egypt, from the bondage of the flesh, and the judgment of the law ; enabling the sinner to say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." Yea indeed, alive because crucified with Him ; for the wages of

* I refrain from noticing the scene at sea in this chapter, though I judge it to be very significant.

sin is death : and sin thus in the Cross had its wages. Death has had its sway, and the law can return to the throne of God with its own vindication ; for it has executed its commission against us,—we are crucified with Christ. “ He that is dead is free from sin.” And now it is, “ not I, but Christ liveth in me.” This is the true Passover—the power of redemption ; in the grace of which we leave Egypt, or the place of bondage, and come forth with the Son of God into the wilderness, there to feed on manna, there to live by every word that has proceeded out of the mouth of God.

And though thus in some sense distinct, the Lord in this discourse seems to combine the virtues of the Passover and the manna. It was in the time of the Passover that He thus preached to them on the manna. For both pertained to the same Israel, the same life. The Paschal blood was upon the lintels for redemption, while the Lamb was fed upon within the house. The Israelite was in living communion with that which gave Him security. And this was the beginning of life to Him ; in the strength of which He came forth to feed on the manna in the wilderness.

And so with us. When brought out into the wilderness with our Redeemer, we get the manna and live there by every word of God. The soul of the sinner must be saved by the blood ; and the mind of the saint and the life of the saint must be formed and nourished by the word. To trust in any thing but the blood of the Lamb of God, is not after the pattern of Israel redeemed out of Egypt ; and to grow by any thing but the word of God is not after the pattern of Israel fed in the desert.

But Israel, as we here find, had not as yet so come forth out of the bondage of Egypt into God's pastures in the wilderness. They prove that as yet they knew not this life ; that as yet they had never really kept the Passover, or fed on the manna. They murmured at Him. Their thoughts were too full of Moses : “ He gave them bread from heaven to eat,” said they. But ere they could indeed eat of the manna, they must make the law fall into the paths of love, into thoughts of the Father, and not of Moses. For it is love that leads us to the Cross. While the soul shrinks from

God, there will be no going to it. There must be some apprehension of love in God ere the flesh of the Son of man can be fed upon. Moses never gave that bread. The law never spread the feast. It is love that does that; and love must be apprehended ere we can sit at it. And this is the reason why so few guests are there, for man has hard thoughts of God, and proud thoughts of himself. But to keep the feast, we must have happy thoughts of God. Communion with the Father and with the Son; communion with God in love is life.

But Israel was not in this communion. They here "go back," they thrust Him from them, and in their hearts turn back again into Egypt: their carcasses fall in the wilderness; and a remnant only feed on "the words of eternal life," and live;—a remnant, who look round on all as a barren waste yielding no bread without Him; as a dry and thirsty land from one end of it to the other, save for the Rock that follows them; and they say, "to whom shall we go?"

And whence this remnant?—"according to the election of grace," as the Lord here further teaches, shewing us the acts of *the Father* in this mystery of our life, that it is He who gives to the Son, and draws to the Son, all who come to Him; that His teachings and drawings are the hidden channels through which this life is reaching us, till it is manifested in our coming to Jesus, and saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." This is the faith and utterance of that elect remnant who coming out of Egypt, live by faith on the Son of God.

But I would pause a little here, over a subject which this chapter suggests, and which is connected with our life, of which this chapter treats. I mean the eating of blood. Here our Lord commands us to eat blood, even His own blood; but under the law blood was forbidden. Under the law all slain beasts were to be brought to the door of the Tabernacle, and their blood offered on the altar, and by no means to be eaten. (Lev. xvii.) This was

a confession that the life had reverted to God, and was not in man's power. To eat blood under the law would have been an attempt to regain life in our own strength ;—an attempt by man to reach that which he had forfeited. But now under the Gospel the ordinance is changed. Blood must be eaten—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, there is no life in you." For the life that had reverted to God, God has given to make atonement. The blood of the New Testament has been shed for the remission of sins ; and life, through that blood, is now given to sinners in the Son of God :—"In Him was life." He came from God with the life for us. "He that hath the Son hath life," And we are commanded, as well as besought, to take life from Him. And truly we may say, our God has thus perfected our comfort and our assurance before Him ; making it to be as simple disobedience in us not to take life from Him as His gift, as it would be simple pride and arrogancy of heart, to assume to take it by our own works. What a pleading of love this is with our souls. We are disobedient if we are not saved ! Death is God's enemy as well as our's ; and if we do not take life from the Son, we join the enemy of God. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might be saved," says the aggrieved Son of God. And when enquired of certain, in this very chapter, what they should do to do the works of God, He has but to reply, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." To believe and take life, as the gift of God through the Son of His love, is the only act of obedience that the blessed God claims from a sinner ; the only thing that a sinner, till he is reconciled, can do to please Him.

This is grace, wondrously and blessedly revealed. And I would here suggest, that this ordinance that forbade the eating of blood, was as the flaming sword of the Cherubim in the garden. Both that sword and this ordinance told the sinner that there was no recovery of forfeited life by any effort of his own. And Adam's faith, I judge, most sweetly displays itself here. He did not seek to put back that sword, as through he could regain the tree of life him-

self. But what did he do? He took life from God. He took life through grace, and the gift by grace. He believed the promises about the woman's seed; and in that faith called the woman, "the mother of all *living*." He took life as the gift of God through Christ, and sought it not by works of the law, or through the flaming sword.

All this mystery of the sinner's life was thus illustrated from the very beginning, even in the faith of Adam; and in this chapter is blessedly unfolded in our Lord's discourse to the people. That life begins in the power of redemption by the paschal Lamb slain in Egypt; and grows by the manna of the wilderness. But our chapter shews us that Israel was still a stranger to it—that they had not learnt the lesson of Egypt and the wilderness, in the knowledge of the redemption and life that is in Christ Jesus.

VII.—A new scene again opens here. It was the season of the Feast of Tabernacles; as the preceding scene had been laid in the time of the Passover.

This was the most joyous season in the Jewish year. It was the great annual festival at Jerusalem; the grand commemoration of Israel's past sojourn in the wilderness, and of their present rest in Canaan; the type also of Messiah's coming glory and joy as king of Israel. His brethren now urge the Lord to take advantage of this season, to leave Galilee and go up to Jerusalem; there to exhibit His power and get Himself a name in the world. But they did not understand Him. They were of the world; He was not of the world. The Son of God was a Stranger here; but they were at home. They might go up and meet the world at the Feast, but He was for God against the world. He to whom it bore witness, could not go up and claim His own there, because the world was there, because the god of this world had usurped and was corrupting the scene of His glory and joy.

But how fallen was Israel when this was so! and what was their boasted Festival when the spring of its joy, and the heir of its glory, must thus stand estranged from it! The gold had become dim. The ways to Zion were still solitary; none were *really*

coming to the solemn Feasts. In spirit the Prophet was still weeping. (Sam. i. 4.) The Lord goes up, it is true, but not in His glory; He does not go as His brethren would have had Him, but in obedience merely as one of the nation, to take the place of the *humbled* and not of the *great* one of the earth. And when arrived at this city of solemnities, we see Him only in the same character, for He goes to the Temple and teaches; but when this gathers notice, He hides Himself, saying, "my doctrine is not mine but His that sent me." He hides Himself, that not He, but the Father who had sent Him, might be seen. Like the one who had emptied himself, and taken the form of a servant, He is willing to be nothing. They who were at the Feast, manifested their utter apostasy from the principle of the Feast, and say, "how knoweth this man letters, *having never learnt?*" In their pride they acknowledged no source of knowledge or wisdom above man himself. They would have the creature in honour; but the Feast celebrated Jehovah, and was for the setting forth the honours of Him who now in righteousness had to hide His glory, and separate Himself from it all. Israel and the Feast, Israel and the Son of God, were thus utterly dissociated. They had nothing in each other. And thus, whether we listen to the Jews, or to the men of Jerusalem, or to the Pharisees in this chapter, all tell us of their rejection of Him; and He has in the end to say to them, "where I am, thither ye cannot come."

Jesus thus refuses to sanction this Feast. He tells Israel that they had now no title to the rest and glory that it pledged them—that they were not really in Canaan, and had never yet drawn water out of the wells of salvation—that their land, instead of being watered of the river of God, was but a barren and thirsty portion of the accursed earth—that they had forsaken the fountain of living waters, and all their own cisterns were but broken. And accordingly, as the Feast was closing, Jesus puts the living waters into other vessels, and dries up the wells that were in Jerusalem. He turns the fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein; and opens the river of God in other

places. "In the last day, that great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst let him come unto me, and drink : he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

And in connection with this, I would here shortly trace "the river of God" through scripture, and we shall see it owning different channels according to different dispensation.

In Eden it took its rise in the earth to water the garden, and from thence to wander in other streams over the earth : for the dispensation was one of earthly good. Man knew no source of blessing or streams of joy than such as were connected with creation. In the wilderness the smitten rock was its source, and every path of the camp of God was its channel. It followed them, for at that time they only were the redeemed of the Lord, whom His eye rested on in the world. In Canaan afterwards, the waters of Shiloh flowed softly. The land Jehovah watered from His own buckets, and made it to drink of the rain of heaven ; and for the souls of the people, every feast and every sacrifice was as a well of this water, and the current of the yearly service of the sanctuary was its constant channel. For Israel was then in that dispensation the people of the Lord, and their land his dwelling place. But the time had now come, as we have seen, for leaving Canaan a dry land, and for opening the river of God elsewhere. It was now to take its rise, as the Lord here teaches us, in the glorified Son of man in heaven ; and the channels, through which it was to flow, were to be the bellies of His members on earth. For the dispensation was now to be one "of spiritual blessings in heavenly places"—the earth was not for the present to be watered, but only the Church of God. But by and by in the kingdom, when the present age, like others, has fulfilled its course, and other dispensations arise, this same river will own other channels and springs. It will rise in the throne of God and the Lamb, and flow through the golden street of the city, for the gladdening of the multitude before the throne ; (Rev. vii. 17., xxii. 1, 2.) and it will also rise under the sanctuary in the earthly Zion, for the watering of Jeru.

salem, and the whole earth. (Ezek. xlvii., Joel iii., Zech. xiv.) For then will be the time of the two-fold blessing—the time of the heavenly and the earthly glory. Every thing will then know the grace and power of God dispensed among them—all will then be visited by “the river of God which is full of water.” The Feast of Tabernacles will then be duly kept in Jerusalem; and that nation of the earth that will not go up to keep it there, “on them there shall be no rain,” no gracious visitation of this fruitful river of God; but it shall be left to know the sterility of that soul that refuses to drink of the water which the Son of God giveth.

Upon all this, I would only further notice the connection that there is between *our thirst*, and *the outflow of this living water*. (See verses 37, 38.) The saint thirsts, then goes to Jesus for the water that He has to give; and afterwards comes with the river of God, the water of life, the flowing of the Spirit in him, for his own refreshing and that of the weary. His thirst receives the abounding presence of the Holy Ghost, and opens in him a channel for the river of life which now rises in the ascended Head of the Church, to flow through Him to others. O! that we panted more after God, as the hart after the water-brooks; that we longed more for the courts of the Lord. Then would the Spirit fill our souls, and we should comfort and refresh one another. And this is indeed the power of all ministry. Ministry is but this out-flowing of the living water, the expression of this hidden abounding presence of the Spirit within us. The Head has received the gifts for us; and from the Head, all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. And this is our only Feast of Tabernacles, till we celebrate a still happier one with the palmy multitude before the throne. For this Feast cannot now be kept in Jerusalem; the saints must have it in its only present form, by walking together in the liberty and refreshing of the Holy Ghost.

And this Feast, this “joy in the Holy Ghost,” is something more than either the Passover of Egypt, or the manna of the wilderness. Those were for redemption and life; but this is for joy

and the foretaste of glory ; those were of the flesh and blood of the Son of man, broken and shed here ; but this is the Son of man glorified in heaven. And thus it savours more of Canaan than of the wilderness, through for comfort in the wilderness : so the Feast of Tabernacles was not a wilderness-Feast at all, but altogether a Feast in Canaan.

But Israel knew as yet nothing of these things, as is here shewn to us. In the fifth chapter, the Lord had met them *as in Egypt* with redeeming grace and power ;—witness the restored cripple. That was like Moses casting down his rod in the sight of Israel in proof of his embassy. But it only ended in proving that they would remain in Egypt ; for they refuse to believe Moses, believing not Him of whom Moses wrote ; and what redemption from Egypt was there for Israel, if Moses were refused ? In the sixth He had met them *as in the wilderness*, with the manna ; but only in like manner to prove that they were not feeding there, as the camp of God upon the bread of God. In this chapter He had met them *as in Canaan* ; but all had shewn that Canaan was still the land of the uncircumcised, where the world was, and not Joshua and the Israel of God—the land of drought and not of the river of God. He therefore now stands outside the city of solemnities, and in spirit ascends to heaven, as Head of His body the Church, to feed the thirsty from thence. He says, “if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” The Jews may reason about Him among themselves, and then go every man “to his own house ;” but He, owning now His present estrangement from Israel, and consequent homeless condition on the earth, goes to the Mount of Olives.

VIII.—Thus was it in Israel now. They knew not that they were still in bonds and needed His hand to lead them out and feed them again. They knew not that they had still to reach the true Canaan,—Immanuel’s land. They had been there rejecting *the grace* of the Son of God, and of course were still making their boast of *the law* ; and now in the confidence that it was their’s, and that they could use it, and by it entangle the Lord, they bring forward the adulteress.

They had, to be sure, noticed His grace to sinners. All His ways must have told them that. And they judge it of course an easy matter to shew Him to be the enemy of Moses and the law. But He here gains a holy and glorious victory. Grace is made to shout a triumph over sin ; and so, the sinner over every accuser. The Lord does not here impugn the law. He could not, for it was holy ; and He had come, not to destroy, but to fulfil it. He does not acquit the guilty. He could not, for He had come into the world with full certainty as to the sinner's guilt. It was that which had brought Him among us. And therefore in the present case, He does not pretend to raise such questions. The sinner is convicted, and the law righteously lies against her. But who can execute it ? Who can cast the stone ? That question He may and does raise. Satan may accuse, the sinner may be guilty, and the law may condemn ; but where is the executer ? Who can handle the fiery power of the law ? The answer is—none but Himself ; none can avenge the quarrel of divine righteousness upon the sinner, none have hands clean enough to take up the stone and cast it but Jesus Himself ; and He refuses. This is the triumph of grace ; and this is the joy of the sinner. This is the song of victory on the banks of the Red Sea : the power of the enemy lying dead on its shores. The accusers go out one by one. The poor sinner had been learning that he was waiting to be gracious. She had been led of the Spirit to know what He meant by writing on the ground ; and she now calls Him “ Lord ;” and He has but to say, “ neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.”

This was full deliverance ; and the same deliverance awaits every sinner who, like the poor adulteress here, will come and be *alone* with Jesus. As *sinners*, (as I have observed before,) we have to do only with God. We may do offence or wrong to others, and they may complain and challenge us. But as *sinners*, God must deal with us alone ; and the discovery of this is the way of blessing. David discovered it, and got blessing at once. His act had, it is true, been a wrong to another. He had taken the poor man's one little ewe lamb. But he had in all this sinned against God

also. And in the discovery and sense of this, he says, "*I have sinned against the Lord.*" But the effect of this was, to leave him *alone* with God. As a *wrong doer*, Uriah might have to do with him ; but as a *sinner*, he had not. God must deal with him *alone* ; and the moment his sin thus casts him *alonewith* God, he, like the poor adulteress here, listens to the voice of mercy : "the Lord hath put away thy sin ; thou shalt not die." He suffers chastening for the *wrong* he had done ; but *the wages of sin* are remitted.

It is ever the sinner's victory, when he can thus by faith claim to be alone with Jesus. The Priest and the Levite have then passed by, for what could they do ? What heart or ability had the law to meet the sinner's case ? It is grace,—the Stranger from heaven, that must help. The poor wounded sinner is lying in the way, and the good Samaritan must meet him. And truly blessed is it when all through its further way, the soul still remembers how it thus began in solitude with Jesus the Saviour.

And He is glorified in all this, as surely as we are comforted ; glorified with His brightest glory,—His glory as the Saviour of the guilty. A vial is prepared for redeemed sinners, which is to bear an incense, the like to which can be found no where else. (Ex. xxx. 37.) Even the vials of angels do not carry such sweet perfume. They praise the Lamb, it is true ; but not in such lofty strains as the Church of redeemed sinners. They *ascribe*, it is true, "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," to Him ; but the Church has *a song* before the throne, and they sing, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Now all this blessing for the sinner, and this glory for the Saviour, we see here. The sinner is hid from her accuser, and the Saviour silences him. The officers had been lately disarmed by the holy attraction of His words ; and now the Scribes are rebuked by the convicting light of His words. (vii. 46., viii. 9.) These were not carnal weapons, but weapons of heavenly temper. Their en-

mity had now exhausted all its resources. 'They had assayed the force of the lion, and the guile of the serpent ; and all having now passed, the Son of God at once takes His elevation, and shews Himself in His place of entire separation and distance from them. He raises the pillar of light and darkness in the present wilderness of Canaan, and puts Israel, like the Egyptian of old, on the dark side of this pillar. "I am the light of the world," says Jesus ; "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness."

Such was Israel now, spiritually called Egypt. But how was Israel gone, when all this could be exhibited ! They had no association with Abraham or with God, though they boasted in them ; for they had no faculty to discern Abraham's joy, or the Sent of God. They must take their place of atheistic darkness and alienation. And this was a solemn moment for Israel, the most solemn. In St. Matthew, the Lord tested the Jews by His Messiahship, and in the end convicted them of rejecting Him in that character. But in this gospel, He tests them by other and higher proposals of Himself ; as the light, the truth, the doer of the works, and the speaker of the words of God, as the Son of the Father ; and thus convicts them, not of mere unbelief in Messiah, but of the common atheism of man. In this character Israel is here made to stand, Cain like, in the land of Nod, — in the place of the common departure of man from God. He had spoken the words of the Father, but they understood not, they believed not. As the Sent of *the Father*, He had come (as such an one must have come,) *in grace* to them ; but they refused Him. And so is it among men unto this day. The gospel is a message of goodness, but man receives it not. *Man will not think well of God.* 'That is the secret of unbelief. The gospel is "goodness ;" (Rom. xi. 22.) and man still asks, is it from God? — for man has hard thoughts of God. Doubting the truth of scripture is doubting that God is love. It rises from the secret thought that He is rather an austere one, and Satan is persuading us still to have this thought. He does what he can to obscure the sinner's title to God, that thus the sinner may look for some inheritance elsewhere.

So here with Israel. Jesus *judged* no man, but spake the word of the *Father*, which was freedom and life to them. But they understood not His speech, as He says to them. Their minds were formed by their father who was a liar and a murderer ; and “ grace and truth,” which came to them by Jesus Christ, they had no ears to hear. And now as the disallowed witness of the Father, the hated light of the world, He has no place at all in the land, no certain paths of this earth to go forth unto ; He “ passes by ” as knowing no spot or person here, but still as the light of the world, shining wherever His beams may reach, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

IX, X.—Accordingly in this character He is now separated from Israel. Israel is left in darkness ; and the pillar of God moves onward. Jesus, “ the light of the world,” goes forth and meets one who had been blind from his birth. In such an one His works could be manifested.

The Lord God, it is most true, is a great king, and acts as a sovereign. He is the potter that has power over the clay. “ Who hath made the seeing or the blind, have not I, the Lord ? ” But the Son came not from the throne of the king, but from the bosom of the Father. He came to manifest *the Father*. The blind may be in the world, but the Son came on’y as the light of the world : and accordingly, as such alone He here applies Himself to His blessed labour of grace and power, and opens the eyes of this blind beggar.

But what was this to Jerusalem ? There was darkness there, and the light may shine, but will not be comprehended. Instead of that, as we read here, “ they brought to the Pharisees him that afore time was blind.” There was a high court of inquisition at Jerusalem, which must try the ways of the Son of God. Instead of welcoming Him as of old, when the pillar of God was raised, and saying, “ Rise, Lord, let thine enemies be scattered,” they love their own darkness, and will walk in it. At first they question the man himself ; but not finding him quite to their purpose, they commit the case to witnesses who, they judge, were in their

own power. They call his parents. But again they fail ; the fact that the light had shone among them cannot be gainsayed. They then seek to divert the whole matter into such a channel as would leave untouched their own pride and worldliness ; and they say, " Give God the glory ; we know that this man is a sinner." But this will not do either. The poor soul maintains his integrity ; and then they seek to alarm him by separating him from all acknowledged ground of safety. " Thou art His disciple," say they, but we are Moses' disciples." But he is kept still, and not only, kept, but led on from strength to strength. He has, and more is given him. He follows as the light leads, till at length it so shines as to reprove the darkness of the Pharisees ; and they hurl against him the thunders of the Church, and cast him forth without the camp.

But where do they cast him ? Just where every lonely outcast sinner may find himself, where the unclean Samaritan and convicted adulteress had before found themselves—into the presence and across the solitudes of the Son of God, which is the very gate of heaven. For the Lord had gone without the camp before him. This sheep of the flock was now " put forth ;" but it was only to meet the Shepherd who had " gone before." In that place of shame and exposure, they embrace each other. " There was he found by one who had himself been shot by the archers." The meeting there was a meeting indeed. This poor Israelite, while he was within the camp, had met Jesus as his healer ; but now that he is put without, he meets Him as the Son of God. He meets Him to know Him as the one who, when he was blind, had opened his eyes, and now that he is cast out, talks with him. And, beloved, this is ever the way of our meeting Jesus as sinners, and as outcasts, in the unclean place. If He take us up there, it must be in the *full* grace of the Son of God—the Saviour of sinners. And thus our character as sinners leads us into the sweetest and dearest intimacies of the Lord of life and glory. As creatures, we know the strength of His hand, His Godhead, and wisdom, and

goodness ; but as sinners we know the love of His heart, and all the treasures of His grace and glory.

And I may notice here the changed tone of this poor beggar. In the presence of the Pharisees he was firm and unbending. He does not abate the tone of conscious righteousness and truth all through. He set his face as a flint, and endured hardness. But the moment he comes into the presence of the Lord, he is all humility and gentleness. He melts, as it were, at the feet of Jesus. O what a sweet pattern is this of the workmanship of the Spirit of God ! courage before man, but all the meltings of love, and the bowings of worship before the Lord that has loved and redeemed us.

But this unclean place without the camp, where the Lord of heaven and earth now stood with this poor sinner, was not only thus the place of liberty and joy to the sinner, but also the wide field of observation to the Lord. From this place He surveys Himself, the beggar, and the whole camp of Israel ; outside of which He had now gone with His elect one : and in the parable of "the good Shepherd," He draws the moral of it all. In the scene of the ninth chapter, He had shewn that He had entered by the door into the sheepfold ; for He had come, working the works of the Father, and had thus approved Himself to be in the confidence of the owner of the fold, the sanctioned Shepherd of His flock. He was now estranged from Israel, but like Moses in such a case, was to keep the flock of His Father in other pastures, near the mount of God. The Pharisees, because they were resisting him, must therefore needs be "thieves and robbers," climbing into the fold some other way. And the poor blind beggar was a sample of the flock who, while they refuse the voice of strangers, hear and know the voice of Him that had entered by the door ; and there do they themselves enter by Him, "the door of the sheep," and find safety, rest, and pasture.

All this had been set out in the scene before us. and is thus expressed in the parable. And thus the parable also passes a blessed commentary on the present condition of this poor outcast. The Jews, no doubt, judged, (and would have had him judge like-

wise,) that he had now been cut off from safety, being cut off from themselves. But Jesus here shews that not until now was he in safety; that had he been left where he was, He would have become a prey to those who were stealing, and killing, and destroying; but that now he was found and taken up of one, who to give him life would lay down His own.*

All this we have both in the narrative and in the parable. And it is just at this point in our Gospel that the Lord and the remnant meet together; "the poor of the flock" are here manifested, their own shepherds pitying them not; and the Shepherd from heaven takes them up as all His care, to guard and to feed them. (Zech. xi.)

But the love and care of Him who said to him, "feed the flock of slaughter;" (Zech. xi. 4.) is also seen here most blessedly. It is perhaps the sweetest thing in the parable. We learn the mind of *the Father* towards the flock. For the Lord here says, "as the Father knoweth me, so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep:" thus letting us know that one of the deepest secrets of the Father's heart was His love and care for the Church; for that He who knew Him thoroughly, knew this, and accordingly was laying down His life for the Church. The flock, indeed, was the Father's before it was committed to Christ the Shepherd. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." They lay in the Father's hand before they were put into Christ's hand. They were the Father's *by election* before the world was, and became Christ's by gift of the Father, and by purchase of blood. And all the tenderness and diligent care of *the Shepherd*, does but express the mind of the *owner* towards His flock. The Shepherd and the owner of the flock are one. As the Lord here says, "I

* I may just notice how it was that this poor weak one of God broke the snare of the fowler. We see in his ways simply two things: 1st.—his honest, faithful following the light as it was given to him, and as it shone in him brighter and brighter. 2nd.—His simple pleading of the works and ways of Jesus his deliverer and friend, in answer to all the suggestions of the enemy. This was his security; and this is our's too, whether we be pressed or entangled by Satan.

and my Father are one." One, it is true, in glory; but one also in their love and carefulness about their poor flock of redeemed sinners. Christ met the Father's mind when He loved the Church and gave Himself for it; and they rest for ever one in that love, as surely as they rest one in their own glory. This is truth of precious comfort to us. It teaches us that "our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." We learn, indeed, that God is love; and the moment we discover this, we get our rest in God; for the wearied broken heart of the sinner may rest in love, though nowhere else. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Here, then, "the poor of the flock" feed and lie down. But Beauty and Bands are to be broken. The shepherd's staves that would have led and kept Israel must now be cast away. It was only a remnant that knew His voice. Who can hear the voice of a Saviour but a sinner? The whole need not the physician. And thus in this place our Lord's dealings with Israel close. He refuses to feed them any more: "that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off." (Zech. xi. 9.)

And I may notice that His dealing with Israel closes here in a way fully characteristic of this Gospel by St. John. They seek to stone Him, as we read here, because that "He being a man had made Himself God." In the other Gospels, the soul of Israel loathes Him (as Zechariah speaks) for other reasons; because for instance, He received sinners, or impugned their traditions, or touched their sabbath. But in this Gospel it is the assertion of His Sonship of the Father, the assertion of the divine honours of His person, that chiefly raises the conflict. (See v and viii. chapters.) In this place we observe that the Lord, in answer to the Jews, pleads the manifestation which He had now given of Himself, as others had done in Israel before Him. Others set in authority had been called "gods," because they had manifested *God* in His place of *authority and judgment*, and were the powers whom *God* had ordained. And He in like manner had now manifested the *Father*. The judges and kings could have shewn that the word of

God had come to them, committing to them the sword of *God*. And so had *Jesus* now shown Himself the Sent of *the Father*, full of *grace and truth*, working now among them as the *Father* had hitherto worked, in the exercise of grace, restoring and healing and blessing poor sinners. Thus had He shown that the *Father* was in Him, and *He* in the *Father*. But their hearts were hardened. The darkness could not comprehend the light, and He has but to escape out of their hands, and take up again a position in the earth apart from the revolted nation.*

Here the second section of our Gospel ends. It has presented to us our Lord's intercourses and controversies with the Jews, and in the course of them we have seen Him setting aside one Jewish thing after another, and bringing in Himself in the place of it. And what is the bringing Him in, but a shouting of "grace, grace," for poor sinners! In the 5th chapter we see Him setting aside Bethesda, the last witness of the *Father's* working in Israel, and taking its place as minister of grace, Himself. In the 6th and 7th chapters, we see Him setting aside the two Feasts—the Passover and the Tabernacles, (the first of which opened the Jewish year with the *life* of the nation, while the second closed it with their *glory*,) and taking the place of these ordinances Himself, shewing that *He* was the only source of *life* and *glory*. In the 8th chap. after exposing the utter unsuitableness of the law to man, and that it was but death to him, *He* takes His place as "the light of the world," as the one by whom alone, and not by the

* See ii. 13., vi. 4., vii. 2., xi. 55. In this Gospel I observe, that the Feasts are called "Feasts of the Jews," as though the Spirit of God in St. John looked at them as something now estranged from the mind of God. And this is highly characteristic of this Gospel, in which, as I have noticed, the Spirit is separated from Jewish recollections, because He is tracing the ways of the Son of God, the Son of the Father, who stands above Jewish connection. Similar to this in the Old Testament, Horeb or Sinai is called "the Mount of God:" but in the New, under St. Paul's hand, it is called "Mount Sinai in Arabia." The Spirit of God no longer owning it, but leaving it simply to its earthly description.

law, sinners were to find their way into truth and liberty, and thus home to God. And then in the 9th chapter, in this character of the light of the world, He goes out from Israel. He had been casting His beams on that people, but they comprehended Him not. He goes forth therefore, and draws the poor of the flock after Him ; and in the 10th, exhibits Himself and them outside the camp, leaving the land of Israel, as the Prophet had spoken, a chaos without form and void : the word of the Lord that would have called it into beauty and order being refused, giving over the place of Jehovah's ancient husbandry, on which His eyes rested from one end of the year to the other, and which He watered with the rain of His own heavens, to become the wilderness and shadow of death.

XI, XII.—Thus was it now with Israel. They were left in unbelief and darkness, having refused the proposals of the Son of God. But these chapters shew, that though Israel may delay their mercy, they shall not disappoint it finally. God's purpose is to bless, and He will bless. In the way of His own covenant, that is, in resurrection power and grace, He will bring the blessing to Israel. It was as the quickener of the dead, that He had of old entered into covenant with their father Abraham. It was thus that He appeared to Moses, as the Hope of the nation, at Horeb. (Ex. iii., Luke xx. 37.) It was by resurrection that He was to give to Israel the promised Prophet, like unto Moses. (Deut. xviii. Acts iii) It is in this character that all the prophets speak of Him as acting for the seed of Abraham in the latter day. And our own Apostle tells us that the resurrection of Jesus is the pledge of all the blessing promised to the fathers. (Acts xiii. 33.) Jehovah will restore life and glory to Israel, in resurrection power and grace. When all their own strength is gone, He will Himself arise for their help. He will plant glory in the land of the living. The barren woman shall keep house. The Lord will call them from their graves, and make the dry bones live. And that He will ac-

compleish all this for Israel, is here, in these two chapters, pledged and foreshewn. The previous chapters had shewn Israel to be in ruins and distance from God ; but here, ere the Lord entirely hides Himself from them, He gives them in the raising of Lazarus and its results, full pledges of final life and glory.

This I doubt not is the general bearing of these two chapters ; and thus they form a kind of appendix to the previous section, rather than a distinct portion of the Gospel. I would now look at their contents a little more particularly.

The Lord had left Judah, and was in retirement beyond Jordan, when a message that one (*in Judea*) whom He loved, was sick. He abides in the place where He was, till this sickness had taken its course, and ended in death. Then He addresses Himself to His journey, for He could then take it as the Son of God, the quickener of the dead ; and in the full consciousness that He was about to act as such, He now sets forward, saying, “ our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.” He also consciously bore the day along with Him ; for “ the life is the light of men ;”— and thus He says also, in answer to the fears of His disciples, “ are there not twelve hours in the day ? if any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.” He not only *saw* the light of this world, but He *was* the light of the world—not merely a child of light, but the fountain of light. His disciples, however, are dull of hearing. They neither discern the voice of the Son of God, nor see the path of the light of life. They judge that death to Himself, rather than life to others, was now before Him ; and they say, “ let us also go that we may die with Him.” There might have been human affection in this, but there was sad ignorance of His glory. The disciples now, like the woman afterwards, would fain take their spices to the Saviour’s tomb ; but both should have known that He was not there.

Onward He then goes, the Son of God, the quickener of the dead ; and His path lies to the grave of Lazarus, His friend, in Judea. There He stands in the full vision of the triumphs of sin ; for

sin hath reigned unto death ;” and had all ended here, Satan had prevailed. Jesus wept. The Son of the living God wept over the vision of death. In another Gospel, He had wept, as the Son of David, over the city which He had chosen to put His name there, because she had refused Him. But here, as the Son of God who had life in Himself, He weeps over the vision of death. But He groaned in Himself also ; and He that searcheth the hearts, knew that groan ; and Jesus, in the full consciousness that it was heard, had only to acknowledge the answer with thanksgiving ; and in the power of that answer to say, “ Lazarus come forth.” And he that was dead did come forth, the witness that, “ as the Father hath life in Himself, so had He given to the Son to have life in Himself.”

Here did the path of the Son of God end. He had now met the power of sin at its height, and had shewn that He was above it,—the resurrection and the life.

But still this was not the destruction of him that had the power of death ; for it was not the death and resurrection of the Captain of salvation Himself. Nor was it properly a pledge to the saints of their resurrection in glory, for Lazarus came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, to walk again in flesh and blood. It was rather a pledge to Israel of the quickening power of the Son of God in their behalf, shewing them that the promised resurrection or revival of the nation rested on Him, and that He would in due time accomplish it.*

* I would here notice the paths of Martha and Mary in this scene. Martha in the bustle of the flesh, (for she was careful about many things,) goes out to meet the Lord, on hearing that He was coming. But she does not really meet Him. He was above her. He was standing in the consciousness of a glory that she as yet could not apprehend, and He speaks from His elevation, “ I am the resurrection and the life” while she answers from her’s. “ I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day,” Thus there was a real distance between them, the sense of which becomes painful to her, and she goes her way. There was then, I judge, a whisper in her soul, that her more heavenly minded and better instructed sister would understand the Lord better than she did ; and under this suggestion, she went and told Mary, that the Master had come and called for her. This, I believe, was the secret of Martha’s word to her sister. It was not that the Lord had really called for Mary, and much less was Martha the bearer wrongfully of a false report. But Martha’s heart suggested that there was a sympathy between the Lord and Mary, and this suggestion, without wrong, expressed itself thus : “ The Master is come and calleth for thee.” And so it proved. Mary goes forth to meet

But Israel had no eyes to read this sign of their mercy, nor heart to understand it. Instead of its becoming the ground of their faith, it is made the occasion of the working of full enmity. "From that day forth they took counsel together, to put Him to death." The husbandmen set themselves to cast out the heir of the vineyard. And their entire departure from their father Abraham, and thus their complete apostasy from God is now manifested. Israel had been separated out of the nations unto God; but they now deliberate, and take their place among the nations again. Unlike Abraham, they take riches from the king of Sodom, instead of blessing from the hand of Melchizedek. They choose the patronage of Rome, rather than know the resurrection-power of the Son of God. "If we let Him thus alone," say they, "all will believe on Him, and the Romans will come, and take away both our place and nation." And the judgment then comes upon them. "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." For now, having the voice of the Spirit for the last time in their High Priest, there is no ear to hear it aright; and having the doings of the Son of God among them for the last time, there is no eye to perceive Him aright.

But still He was the quickener of Israel; and in the latter day, the dry bone shall hear the word of the Lord and live; of which, as I have observed, Lazarus is here the pledge. And the remnant in Israel in that day, is also here illustrated in the family at

her Lord, and really meets Him. There is not the same distance between them as there had been between the Lord and Martha. Mary on meeting Him falls at His feet, and He, on seeing her, groans in spirit. This was a meeting indeed, a meeting between the Lord of life and His worshipper. Mary does not, like Martha, multiply words without knowledge; nor has the Lord to rebuke any slowness of heart in her as He had in Martha. But we know He loved them both. Blessed is it to have living fellowship with Him, beloved. Some may have more burning thoughts of Him, and brighter views of Him than others; but though our measure be but the Martha measure, yet there is heaven in the fellowship, wherever it is true and living. That is our peace. But communion with Jesus, such as Mary had, will enlarge our measure as it did her's. We should earnestly desire and cultivate it. She is always, when seen, seen *at His feet*. (See Luke x. 39., John xi. 32., xii. 3.) Her constant attitude was that of worship, love, and humility. And it is this that has power in it, and the peace that it brings flows on still: for "when He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" To be at His feet, is the power of knowledge, the liberty of service, the savour and life of worship.

Bethany.* Into the midst of this well loved family, the Lord comes, and there finds refreshment, and fellowship, and the acknowledgment of His glory ; as He will find these things in His remnant in the latter day. There He sits as “ the Lord of life ;” the witness of His quickening power being seated beside Him : and there too He sits as “ the king of glory ;” the homage of His willing people being laid at His feet. In these two holy dignities is He now received by this faithful household. “ While the king sitteth at His table,” (says Mary now, as the remnant will say by and by,) “ my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.” (Cant. i. 12.)

It is thus He here sits ; one family in the apostate land owning Him Lord of life and King of glory. But the city and the strangers there were soon to see Him thus as well as this house at Bethany, as by and by, the nation and the whole earth will own Him after the remnant.

Accordingly, “ on the next day,” as we read here, much people, moved by the report of His having raised Lazarus from the dead, meet Him on His coming to Jerusalem, and lead Him into the royal city, as the Son of David, the king of Israel. The time was the time of the Passover ; but the people are moved as with the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles, and take branches of palm-trees to gladden their king. And the nations, as it were, come up to keep the Feast also ; for certain Greeks come to Philip, and say, “ Sir, we would see Jesus.” *Here glory shines for a moment in the land of the living.* Here was Lazarus raised from the dead, the city receiving her king, and the nations worshipping there. The great materials of the kingdom in which, as the Son of man, He is to be glorified, had now passed before the Lord. The joy of

* But in this house at Bethany, we see also the Church. For in the Church, the witness of Christ’s resurrection-power is seen during the long age of Israel’s unbelief, and before the remnant is manifested. And in the Church also during that age, the Lord finds His only refreshment and fellowship. And in Martha *serving*, Lazarus *sitting*, and Mary *anointing the feet*, we see the members of the Church in their various graces and character of communion with the Lord : some waiting on Him in the activities of love ; some resting beside Him in the calm certainty of His favour and salvation ; some pouring forth the fulness of their loving and worshipping hearts.

Jerusalem, and the gathering of the nations, He had now witnessed, and entering in spirit for a moment into the kingdom, He says, "the hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." But it was but for a moment. This was but a passing taste of His cup of salvation. This season was really to be *the Passover*, and not *the Tabernacles* to Jesus; and His soul passes, for another moment, through His paschal trouble. But the Father again acknowledges Him. He had glorified Him as Son of God, quickener of the dead, at the grave of Lazarus; and now He glorifies Him as Son of man, Judge of the world and of the prince of the world.

And here did His path as the Son of man end; as His path as the Son of God had before ended at the grave of Lazarus. The Son of God and Son of man had now been fully displayed before His unbelieving Israel. He was glorified among them, as the Prince of life and the holder of all authority and power. The things now accomplished and displayed in these two chapters, were the fulfilling of His words to them at the beginning: these were "the greater works" at which they should "marvel." (chap. v. 20, 22.) They had now witnessed His quickening power as Son of God, and had His judicial glory as Son of man pledged to them by the voice from heaven. They should have honoured Him as they honoured the Father. But instead of this they were soon to kill Him. They were soon to disown the Lord of life and the king of glory, on whom all their hopes of life and the kingdom hung. He had now tested them by the promised "greater works:" but there was no response from Israel. The harvest was past, the summer ended, and they were not saved. The lamentation of the Prophet was now to be uttered, "Lord who hath believed our report." It was not that His works had not manifested Him as the hope of Israel. Many even of the chief rulers felt and owned them in their consciences, as we here read. But they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, as He had said unto them. (v. 41., xii. 43.) All that remained now was judgment on Israel, and the *heavenly* glory of this earth-rejected Son of God. (40, 41.) So does our evangelist himself tell us, drawing the aw-

ful moral of the whole scene. "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spake of Him." And thus all closed in judgment upon Israel, and in glory, heavenly glory, glory within the veil, for the blessed Jesus. (Is. vi. 1, 2.)

Thus our Gospel here seats the Son of God in heaven again. His way in this Gospel ends there, as it had begun there. (i. 1.) The Gospel by St. Matthew had ushered Him forth as the Son of David from Bethlehem, and closes with Him (as far as His ministry was concerned,) on the Mount of Olives. (Matt. i. xxiv.) But this Gospel had opened with His descent from the bosom of the Father, and here it closes (as far as His ministry is concerned,) by His return to heaven. And there He still dwells in the high and holy place, and the humble and broken hearted are there with Him. He speaks from heaven; and His voice must be in the power of all that finished work which has taken Him there. He has forced His way (for He is the "violent" one) into the Holiest through the outer courts, throwing down all enmities, all middle walls, and has again come forth from thence, in the power of the Holy Ghost, to preach peace to all. (Eph. ii. 12—22.) He cannot but speak of all that is there, and not of what is here. He cannot but speak by His Spirit of the peace, and gladness, and glory that are there, and not of the accusings that our sins still committed here would fill our hearts with.

His path thus ends in full grace to sinners as it had begun. All through His divine ministry in this Gospel, the Lord had been acting in grace, as the Son of the Father, and as "the light of the world." His presence was "day time" in the land of Israel. He had been shining there, if haply the darkness might comprehend Him. And here at the very close of His ministry (xii. 35,

36.) we see Him still as the light casting forth His last beams upon the land and people. He can but shine, whether they will comprehend Him or not. While His presence is there, it is still day time. The night cannot come till He is gone. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." But here "He departs and hides Himself," and then God, by His Prophet, brings in the night upon the land. (v. 40.) But the Son of God, the light of this world sets in Judea, *only to rise in other spheres.* (v. 44—50.) For His cry in these closing verses is not addressed to Israel merely, but to the whole earth. It is but the same "light of the world," that had lately run His race in Judea, coming forth out of His chamber to run a longer race. And this race He is running still. "The *day* of salvation" is still with us. The night of judgment on the Gentiles has not yet come. We may still walk without stumbling, we may still know whither we are going. The light still says "awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Such are thy ways, blessed Saviour, Lamb of God, Son of the Father!

(TO BE CONTINUED, IF THE LORD WILL.)

EPHESIANS I. 9, 10.

“ Having made known unto 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.” (Eph. i. 9, 10.)

ALL the fulness of God is well pleased to dwell and manifest itself in Christ the Son. Such was the counsel, the blessed counsel, of the Holy one. The manner in which this is manifested to us, and in which we are associated with it, is to us, infinitely interesting. After all, but a small and, as it were, external part is treated of in the following pages ; still a part deeply interesting. The manner of its accomplishment is, on God's part, designedly external, and so by truths ; but by these truths the child of God enters into communion with Him who is the power of them ; and moreover is guarded by them, poor feeble creatures that we are, from substituting his own imaginations in place of the holy manifestation of God.

The subject spoken of here is that contained in the prayer of the Apostle, at the close of Eph. i. There is a deeper matter whence it flows, at the close of Eph. iii, to which I have alluded above ; nor can the subject of Eph. i, be really enjoyed without, in some measure, the power of Eph. iii ; but I respond feebly to the desire of some in communicating this ; trusting that God will supply the rest.

There are two great subjects which occupy the sphere of millennial prophecy and testimony :—The Church and its glory in Christ, and the Jews and their glory as a redeemed nation in Christ—the heavenly people and the earthly people. The habitation and scene of the glory of the one being the heavens ; of the other, the earth. Christ shall display His glory in the one ac-

according to that which is celestial ; in the other, according to that which is terrestrial :—Himself the Son, the image and glory of God, the centre and sun of them both. And though the scene and habitation of the glory shall be the heavens, wherein He hath set a tabernacle for the sun ; the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. It shall be manifested suitably on earth ; and earth shall enjoy its blessing. When all is accomplished God shall be all in all : and the tabernacle of God shall be with men ; not *descending*, so to speak, but *descended* out of heaven. The principles and the manner of the accomplishment of this are fully detailed in the scriptures. Though the Church and Israel be, in connection with Christ, the centres respectively of the heavenly and the earthly glory, mutually enhancing the blessing and joy of each other ; yet each has its respective sphere, all things in the heavens being subordinate and the scene of the glory :—angels, principalities, and powers in the one ; the nations of the earth in the other.

But to confine myself now to the history and condition of the Church on the one hand, and to that of Israel on the other :—"In the beginning," I read in the Old Testament, "God created :—" "In the beginning," I read in the New, "the Word was." The latter the foundation of a higher and an abiding glory on which the former, ruined in man's weakness and man's sin, should rest and be restored. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." All were made and fashioned very good : sin entered, and they were defiled. (Compare Col. i. 20., Eph. i. 10.) God, for a moment, as it were, rested in them : and His rest passed away. Of the defilement of the heavens little is said : we know only that the angels fell. But on earth, and by man, the great scene of divine working and redemption was to be manifested ; and of this, full account is given. The sabbath of God in creation was short. The sabbath of man with God was not so to pass. That which passed away in the first Adam in weakness, was to be restored in infinitely fuller blessing in the second Adam ; sustained and displayed in His strength : God gathering together in one,

as we have seen in Eph. i, all things in heaven and in earth, in Him. On this reheading of all things, as the scripture expresses it, in Christ, hangs the constitution and substance of the Church's hope, until "God be all in all." "Christ manifested," is spoken of in this respect as the heir of all this; the Church as co-heirs with Him. It is, so to speak, the formal character which He receives as to all things; that we may understand our place with Him.

Thus in Heb. i. 2, "Whom He hath appointed heir of all things." Eph. i. 11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance:" and Rom viii. 17, "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." The source of this great title is yet in greater glory. "He is the first born of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth;" all things were created by Him and for Him. Then we have seen the Church, the children, are co-heirs with Him. The manner of this we have to develope. Christ takes it as man. He takes it as the risen man; being previously the fellow-sufferer in respect of the evil; afterwards the head and chief, and source of the blessing.

First, we have in the "image of Him that is to come," the type and picture of this, and used as such in Eph. v. That is Adam, Adam hidden in sleep, as it were; and Eve, the Church, taken out of his side, and presented to him by God as the helpmeet for him, as the co-partner with him in the dominion over and inheritance of all things which God had given him in paradise. So the Church, taken as it were, out of Christ, He, being God as well as man, presents to Himself awoke up in His glory, partner with Him in the glory and dominion which was already His in title and in the gift of God. "The glory which thou hast given unto me, I have given unto them." And Adam and Eve together are called Adam as one, though Eve was in a sense inferior to Adam, and subsequent: and so with the Church and Christ,—one mystic person. This type, familiar to the readers of scripture, presents very simply all the force of the truth; save that the second Adam, being the Lord from heaven, is Head and Lord of heavenly things also. The texts which speak of this dominion of man, the union

of the Church with Christ in it, and its not being yet accomplished, very particularly follow. They have their rise as the Apostle uses them, in the 8th Psalm. "Thou hast crowned Him (man, the Son of man,) with glory and honour; thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet." This we learn in Heb. ii., is not yet to be seen; but Jesus is crowned with glory and honour, the designation to the Church of Him under whose feet as man, all things are to be put. Meanwhile, till His enemies, who unrighteously hold the power till God's purposes be accomplished, be made His footstool, that He may hold all things in power of blessing; He sits (that is, in the present economy,) on the right hand of the Majesty on high, set down, as having overcome, on the Father's throne; as He will give them who overcome to sit down on *His* throne when He takes it—takes His power and reigns. In Eph. i. at the close we have the union of the Church in all this, according to the exercise of the power in which Christ was raised from the dead. Read from the prayer of the Apostle in chap. 1, to the end of ver. 6 in chap. ii. The glorious cause or reason is in ver. 7. In chap. i. 22., we have the 8th Psalm again quoted, "and hath put all things under His feet, and hath given Him to be head over all things to the Church which is His body; the fulness of Him 'who filleth all in all.'" Here the Church is the body of Christ, the Head over all things, put under His feet. He is Head over all things to the Church as His body. This is as risen, as is there fully stated. This point is taken up specially in the 15th chap. of 1 Cor. where the same passage is referred to." For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive: but every man in his own order. Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end when He shall have delivered up the kingdom, (the kingdom held thus as the risen man, which is the subject of this chapter,) "to God even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority; for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But

when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject, (i. e., as the risen man—the second Adam, in which character He is ever spoken of here,) “unto Him that put all things under Him; that God,” (not Christ in His mediatorial kingdom,) “may be all in all.” Here then, we have this reign of Christ as man in resurrection, in a kingdom which He delivers up that “God may be all in all.” All administration and human dominion being given up, that the divine glory simply may be universal. As to the manner in which this is accomplished, other passages instruct us. Christ, we have seen, was the heir in title as Creator; “all things were created by Him and for Him,” the Son, and also by the counsels of God in appointment, and so God acting by way of promise, all promises centre in Him. To Abraham and to his seed were the promises made; not seeds, as of many, but as of one; and to thy seed which is Christ. And in 2 Cor. i, “all the promises of God are in Him yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us.” Thus Christ was the heir, the seed to whom the promise was made. As regards the earth, Israel, the seed after the flesh, were the best situated of all men to receive the Lord in a world that knew Him not:—Israel, His own—whose were the law, and the promises, and the covenants, and the oracles of God;—and amongst whom, according to the flesh, He was to come:—and who amidst a ruined world had, through their relationship with God, the sabbath, the sign given to them of the hope of God’s rest. But though coming according to all which their own Prophets had said, they received Him not. They said, and justly, this is the heir; but they hated Him saying, come let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be our’s. Here the last hope of the rest of God on the earth was gone. After all that had passed, He had yet one Son. It was tried; but man was found in his best estate altogether vanity; wholly wanting when all was done. But it only made way for the revelation of a far deeper and more glorious economy. The earth and Israel were set aside for a time: though

the gifts and calling of God were without repentance. The counsel hidden from ages and generations was now to be revealed—the counsel stated in Eph. i, and the embodying in one the remnant of Jew and Gentile in Christ; to set them in heavenly places, the companion and spouse of Him who was rejected and risen; gathered while He sat on the right hand of God; and to appear with Him in the same glory when He shall appear. (Col. iii. 4., 1 John iii. 2.) Christ, as the seed of Abraham, was heir of the promises; had He taken them alive here, He had taken them alone. Thus after His vindication of His glory as Son of God, in the resurrection of Lazarus, and as king of the Jews, in His entry into Jerusalem, when the Greeks also came to seek Him, it was evident the hour was come, though the Jews might have rejected the promised seed, that the hour was come that the Son of man should be glorified; but, adds the Lord immediately, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Christ was to take the inheritance in resurrection with the Church, born upon this plant from the tomb of death. The Church therefore perfectly justified; that is, Christ takes the promises, not as on earth incarnate, but as risen; that is, after He has done all needful to redeem the Church, and in the power of that life in which He associates them, quickened into fellowship and association with Himself; when born of the Holy Ghost, they are viewed as raised together with Him. In a word, He is heir as the risen man, the risen head of the Church. The confirmation of the promise to Christ, referred to by the Spirit in the Galatians, accords exactly with this. It is in Gen. xxii, where we find the promise of blessings to the nations, made to Abraham in the 12th, confirmed to the seed consequent on his reception from the dead in a figure, as the Apostle speaks in Heb. xi, “Because thou hast done these things, &c., and in *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Thus we have seen under various lights this blessed truth: how the Church was redeemed into union with Jesus, that in taking the inheritance He might have a help meet for Him, entirely associated and made

like to Himself glorified. For this it was necessary not only that the Church should be redeemed, but that He should go and prepare a place for it.

The resurrection was both the accomplishment of the redemption of the Church, and also set Jesus in the place in which He could establish the sure mercies of David; (Acts xiii. 34.) that is, establish in His person all the promises to Israel; but He had yet to take the heaventies, that the kingdom of heaven might be established, that He might fill all things, and associate the Church in that new yet everlasting glory prepared before the worlds, yet hidden from preceding ages. for which the rejection of Messiah by His people, by the Jews, in the wisdom of God made the way. There were two things in this, the preparation of a place, a heavenly place of abode, and the gathering out of all nations those who were to be the-joint heirs,—to call the bride who was to inherit it.

Thus in John xiv. the Lord says, “ I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” (See John xvii.) “ Father I will that they 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,” and “ whom He foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren.” And Col. i. “ The head of the body the Church, the first born from the dead.” But now is this, not as “ bearing the image of the earthly; but as we have borne that, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.” This is in 1 Cor. xv. where the subject is entirely the resurrection, and in Romans viii. it is pursued not to sanctification here but to glory, “ whom He justified, them He also glorified;” “ who shall change,” as we read in Phil. iii. “ our vile body, and fashion it like His glorious body.”

The time of this is clearly taught in scripture. Christ now is hid in (God.) Col. iii. 3.) Our life is hid with Him there. It is a

time of gathering by the Holy Ghost, the members of His body, the co-heirs, while He sits on Jehovah's right hand, till His foes be made His footstool." "Having," says the Apostle," Heb. x, "by one offering perfected for ever them which are sanctified." He sat down from henceforth, "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." He has finished all He had to do in redemption for us His friends, and which we are actually gathering by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down by Him, and revealing Him and the Father by Him; He sits there expecting, not taking the earth till this, the gathering of His bride, His co-heirs be accomplished, seated on the Father's throne, there the Church know Him now. But while He waits, we, yea, the whole creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God: as to when and how, the scriptures are plain. If we are to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, it is plain it must be by resurrection and glory, because He is risen and glorified. Accordingly it is said in Rom. viii. "The whole creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God; and not only so, but we ourselves also who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body." And in Col. iii., "When Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory." (1 John iii.) We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." As we have seen before, the Lord saying, "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And the circumstance of this, the resurrection or change, "for we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed," which is the Church's entrance into glory, are particularly told us. (1 Thes. iv.) "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The description of this, "the marriage of the Lamb" and the consequent judgment of the earth or at least of the leaders of anti-

christian wickedness, may be found in Rev. xix. The judgment described in yet wider terms in Jude, where "the Lord cometh with myriads of His saints to execute judgment." Or as in Zechariah, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," when He shall have presented this spouse to Himself, a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Her own beauty and glory that is, proper to herself, seeing in her Lord the beauty and glory of the Father, and with Him in His own glory, and in the power of that love in which He has loved her and given Himself for her, that she might be perfectly purified and glorious with Him where He is; and then brought forth in glory with honours such as His, the participator in all His glory, the glory given Him of the Father, that the world may know that she has been loved as He was loved, to judge angels and the world; companions in all His glory, and the ministers and instruments of the light and blessing of His reign over a refreshed and solaced earth, renewed out of its miseries, where Satan is not. "For to angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak." "They that are counted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, die no more," "neither are hurt of the second death, but live and reign with Christ a thousand years." Blessed are they. Risen already as regards their souls, they now when Christ appears are raised as regards their bodies, on account of His Spirit dwelling in them, to a resurrection, not of judgment but of life, (John v. 29.) a resurrection which belongs to the Church by virtue of its union with Christ, through the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, and with which therefore the wicked can have nothing to do, though raised by the word of Christ in their own time for judgment. "But they that are Christ's at His coming," the rest when the kingdom being given up as Son of God, He, on the great white throne, shall judge the dead; heaven and earth being fled from before His throne. So the word of God instructs us. The taking of this kingdom by Christ is described in Daniel; but as this would lead us into the second part of the earthly glory, I do not yet enter it, having only here sought to shew the place

which the Church holds in this scene and the scriptural connection of it with all the most sweet and fundamental truths, which, in their true light, rejoice and fill the heart of the true believer.

There is one point of this scarcely touched on here, but I should be too long, and depart too far from the immediate subject, so as to distract the minds of others; that is, the place of the Father's love in it. But this is very blessed also. It is the *Father's* kingdom we pray for. In the *Father's* kingdom we are to shine as the *Sun*, that is, as Christ the Sun of righteousness. (Matt. xiii.)

In the Father's glory Christ is to appear, and this is a sweet part of it, for it passes into deeper and yet calmer waters, where eternity unruffled is found, that wide and boundless ocean of infinite joy, the length, and depth, and height, and breadth, of which we know unknown. I say passes into, for it is learned there. We learn glory there; grace, perhaps, more deeply here. We witness it there. But the passages referred to and this may suffice to lead those who search into this simple and blessed truth and revelation also. They will soon find they have every thing to find there. The fulness of Him who without beginning began, and without end shall endlessly fulfil all the joy which itself enables us increasingly to apprehend. There are great lessons to learn in glory with Him, the Lamb, in whom we have all the Father revealed. The life we have received makes it ours now. Here I have simply traced the place of the Church, when Christ takes the glory and the power, and it is, and it is manifested as His consort and companion in the same glory in love, all things blessed through it as the medium and sphere of the display of His glory and blessing.

THOUGHTS ON THE TABERNACLE.

Exodus xl. 17.

EGYPT, the wilderness, and the land, are the three several spheres in which we learn the dealings of God with the people whom He had redeemed and made His own; and if we ask which of these three places belongs to us as the Church of God, the answer is, "All things are ours." The types of Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, are alike fulfilled in Christ as the Apostle, the Priest, and the Captain of our salvation. In Him the Church has passed the waters of Jordan; and with Him has been raised up from them, and made to sit together with Him in heavenly places: so that, in the language of faith, Egypt and the Red Sea, the wilderness and the Jordan, are alike left behind through Him who hath overcome.

But what God hath made true in Christ, is frequently a very different thing from that which our souls realize in their own experience. He may, in His own goodness and grace, have set us in the land, and yet, in the experience of our souls, we may perhaps be conversant only with the wilderness, if not with Egypt. And here is our need of the Spirit, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. The natural tendency of our hearts is always to receive the blessings which come from God and to keep them without relinquishing Egypt; to retain as far as possible the circumstances which we naturally love, and yet to have God's redemption. Perhaps this has been the prevailing tendency of the Church of God: to know Egypt and the blood which saves *in* Egypt, but to shrink from realizing anything beyond. But the Spirit, when He does teach, must teach according to that path which Christ has trodden. If we are indeed His through faith in His blood, He has carried us over the waters of death, and they separate us for ever from Egypt. And in propor-

tion as we learn of Him, through the Spirit, will He cause us to prove the blessings, as well as the trials, of the wilderness.

The wilderness was the place where Israel learnt hunger and thirst and weariness. They learned too what was in their hearts,—rebellion and fretfulness and unbelief. But the book of Exodus, which contains so many instances of their ingratitude and evil, furnishes us, at its conclusion, with a fresh instance of the unwearied and faithful love of God, in the completion of that Tabernacle, which was at once the witness of present grace in their necessities, and the pledge of future glory. It is said that Moses finished the work, and then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle: that is, after all had been reared up in the appointed manner, and after the candlestick, and the mercy-seat, and all the furniture of the Tabernacle, had been set respectively in their appointed place, then the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle; and thus, in the midst of their sorrowful wanderings in the wilderness, was this type vouchsafed them of that yet future day when the holy places not made with hands shall be finally ordered by His faithful love, and shine with the presence of His glory.* It is only in the wilderness that we learn the blessedness of that day. It is as we feel the painful dissociation from all that we once valued in the flesh, and learn to see that ourselves and all creation groans, that we begin to wait and to hope for that future day. And hence, often the need of chastisement, lest we should sit down to eat and drink, and rise up to play, instead of being companions in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

But though the Tabernacle thus furnished the type and pledge of future blessedness and glory, it was also the present meeting place between God and Israel, and that in the knowledge of trespasses and sins. Israel had learned redemption in Egypt;

* It has often been noticed in this work, how minutely the courts of the Tabernacle, with their respective furniture, typify the arrangements of the millennial glory:—the most holy place, the holy place, and the outer court, respectively answering to the heaven of heavens, the heavenly city of the saints, and the earthly Jerusalem.

but they had not learned the humbling lesson of what was in their hearts—a lesson more humbling and terrifying than all the outward circumstances of the waste and howling wilderness.

But the altar and priesthood, sacrifice and intercession, belonged to the Tabernacle; and there it was that Israel might see sin in the light of the grace which puts away sin; and thus the very knowledge of themselves and their ways supplied the links which could bind their souls in abiding fellowship with His grace. Else, where could there be any peace? As the Spirit of God enables us to detect what sin is, whilst verse after verse in the word of God unfolds to us the danger we are in, even from sins of ignorance and unconscious defilement,—whilst we learn the truth of that word “in many things we offend all,” where should we find any peace, if there were not ever before us the altar and the Priest, where we find **MERCY** (pity) as well as grace to help in time of need? Yet how often do our souls, after having recognized the grace and the need of it, which first remits sin and reconciles us when enemies, through the cross of Jesus, fall short in their estimate of that continued and equally marvellous grace which follows them in the wilderness, and thus become unconsciously hardened, both in their estimate of sin, and in their apprehension of love.

But there is other truth which we as the Church of God, (looking back upon the past in the light since afforded by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus,) are able to learn in the Tabernacle. It was furnished, we know, in its different courts with various vessels and instruments of service, all primarily typifying Him in whom the completeness of all truth is, and is exhibited. But many types refer to Him in connection with the Church, for as “He is so are we;” and of these I should regard the golden candlestick as one, for it is the type of union; and, as placed in the heavenly court, refers to that time of glory when He and all who are in Him will together shine in the presence of the Holy One of *Israel*; for the glory of that holy place will not be unconnected with Israel and with Israel’s service. Whilst therefore the furni-

ture of the holy place shews us the high standing of dignity and glory into which the Church is brought as associated with Him in what He will be to Israel, and in His ministrations for them in heavenly places at the GOLDEN altar, we find in the outer or earthly court the BRAZEN* altar, and the laver representing those blessings which His service upon earth, His death, and resurrection secured to the Church, before He entered as Priest within the veil. And hence His words to Nicodemus, "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how will ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" If ye believe not in the things effected by my manifested service upon earth, how will ye believe in the unseen things of my ministrations above? And again in His conversation respecting the manna. Doth this offend you?—this, which is a thing manifested and seen on earth? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?

The death and resurrection of the Lord were finished upon earth; and thus He secured to us those needed blessings which the altar and the laver respectively typify. At the altar we find the blood that maketh atonement and purgeth the conscience from the remembrance of sin; in the laver we find the type of Him who cleanses and frees us from all that unfits us for the holiest of all. And what unfits us for the holiest of all? Not merely sin: for suppose all taint of sin were abolished, and we were restored to the purity of Adam before he fell, yet even Adam in his purity would not have been fit for fellowship with the glory of God in heaven. He was perfect indeed, perfect as flesh and blood; but he was natural ($\psi\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ †) and earthy, and in every sense it is true

* The metals, (gold, silver, brass,) as being strong and capable of enduring the action of fire, are used in the Tabernacle to represent the divine nature and character of the Lord Jesus. But there is difference: silver and brass, though metals, have not the splendour and excellency of gold; and, therefore, gold is appropriated to the inner courts, for there Jesus will be known as He is; but brass and silver are used in those courts and vessels which refer to His manifested service on earth, where His divinity, though equally strong, equally real, was not manifested, as in the heavenly courts, in all its own intrinsic excellence and glory.

† This word $\psi\chi\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ which in 1 Cor. 46. is translated "natural," and in Luke 19, "sensual," is always opposed to $\pi\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$, "spiritual."

that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. But it is Christ, known as the laver, which enables us to say that we are "new creatures;"—that all with which we came into the world, as earthy and natural, in body, soul, and spirit, has been in God's estimate put away; and that as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

The construction too of the laver is remarkable. It was made of the mirrors of the women of the congregation. A mirror, we know, is that in which we behold our own natural features; and if we can rest happy and satisfied in the contemplation of them, it is well; but if not, if the mirror reflects only deformity and blackness and sin, we need something different from the mirror, or we shall never know peace. Accordingly the mirror is taken away, and the laver is substituted in its stead. In a word, we see ourselves no longer as ourselves, but as in Christ Jesus. If any man be in Christ, he is a "new creature." Old things have passed away, behold! all things are become new.

It belonged to the Priests only to wash themselves at this laver, for they alone were concerned with entrance into the holy place. And in this there was a marked difference between it and the altar, to which any of the congregation of Israel might bring their sacrifice or their gift. The Priests, when consecrated for their proper i. e., their heavenly service, were washed at the laver, and afterwards, whenever they went within to do the service of the inner courts, they were commanded to wash their hands and their feet at the laver. This act, like that of laying the hand on the head of the victim, or waving the sacrifice, signifies, I believe, the use in communion, the intelligent use and appropriation, of the blessing given. When our souls recognise that we have died and are made new creatures in Him, we are able happily to set our affections on things above, and to walk as in fellowship with heavenly things. The laver was ever ready: at any time the Priest might recur to its waters, and renew his conscious fitness for the services of the holy place, even as our souls need continually to recur in their remembrance to that "newness of creation" in Him which is so contrary to all the feelings which the circumstances of the wilderness would engender.

But there is yet another thing. The Tabernacle was also the place of Israel's *service*. It was not only the place where, in the knowledge of trespass or of sin, they might bring the appointed sacrifice, but it was the place of free and willing service. They might offer of their own voluntary will at the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation; and the Priest was appointed to offer **GIFTS** as well as sacrifices for sin.

And here is the happy and blessed way of approaching to that altar. It is the place of welcome and accepted service: we find an altar which sanctifies the least and most trifling of our gifts; for it is not the gift which sanctifies the altar, but it is the altar which sanctifies the gift. And thus, whilst we are able to look at it and say in remembrance of our sin, "He hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour," we can also, as conscious of acceptance, say that the little offering of love offered through Him who is at once the altar, and the sacrifice, and the Priest, is an "odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God."* (Phil. iv. 18.)

It is this which brings life into the wilderness. If there were only death to Egypt and sojourn in the wilderness, these things, however necessary, could yet only be regarded as the consequences of sin: but we find in the wilderness a Tabernacle where we may live unto God. "I have died," says the Apostle, "that *I might live unto God*. I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless *I live*." All who believe, even the feeblest, have this life—all who believe are alive in the Spirit; (Gal. v. 25.) but it is the exercise of this life which alone gives healthfulness and strength and blessing. And in every sense it is true that God is the God of the *living*, and that the *living* praise Him.

But there is one more distinctive mark of the Tabernacle. It was

* The similarity of the expressions in these two passages is remarkable:

Προσφοραν και θυσιαν τω Θεω εις οσμην ευωδιας. (Eph. v. 2.)

Οσμην ευωδιας, θυσιαν δεκτην, ευαρεστον τω Θεω. (Phil. iv. 18.)

The first is applied to Christ's offering Himself; the second to the little contribution sent by the Phillippians to the Apostle Paul.

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not stationary, but it moved according to the movement of the cloud which was over it; and it was the part of Israel obediently to follow. So must it be with all who would value and cleave to the Tabernacle; at least, till the time of rest in glory comes. Our desire, as men, naturally is, to establish and preserve in settlement and order any thing which may commend itself to our judgments as good. But establishment and rest, save when the Tabernacle rests, is contrary to the principles on which the Lord is still guiding His people. That which is here to day may be removed to morrow; and the place and circumstances of our service may be greatly changed. It is ours in these things to follow and obey; to be controlled by, and not to control, the course of His working: nor can it be whilst our enemies are strong and lively, whilst the David-season of conflict and struggle lasts, that the Tabernacle can be exchanged for that glorious temple which in due season the Prince of peace will establish in beauty and majesty for ever.

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 "TIME SHALL BE NO LONGER."

THE mind of man is so narrow that it would ever attempt to reduce the revelations of God to a few heads, which it might retain even when occupied about many other things. And hence we find "Systematic Divinity" perfectly compatible with worldly-mindedness. And this must ever be the case when the end of God in Revelation is put out of sight, and another which meets man's selfishness is put forth for it. Even if we put forth the Church itself, an object confessedly dear to God's heart, as the end unto which God is working, rather than the Glory of His own great name, we, by this substitution, not only promote our own self-

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complacency and high-mindedness, but destroy the present use of the Church as the repository of God's counsels. One of the most painful and alarming features of the day in which we live, is the existence of so much doctrinal truth together with very great ignorance of the scriptures. The whole effort of men seems to be to bring all that is stated in scripture into a certain number of propositions. And it is by no means believed that in scripture are laid out to the spiritual apprehension all the divine counsels and arrangements: so that we can look *back* and discover, under God's own comment, that His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth; and *forward* and assert, upon God's own declaration, what is coming to pass. The relation which the scriptures bear to the christian Church is very remarkable. These *writings* occupy the place to the Church of God's *actings* unto Israel. "The things that happened unto them for ensamples, are *written* for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the* world are come." We have first, by direct inspiration of God, a narrative of facts—of facts so selected and arranged as to manifest a purpose of God: many material things—material, as man would judge, are either entirely omitted or but slightly touched on; and many apparently immaterial and trifling circumstances are largely expatiated on. Hence the man who would regard the narrative of the scripture as mere history, would find it, to his apprehension, very imperfect; whereas he who reads it in order to the ascertainment of God's purpose and mind, finds it complete and perfect. For the Spirit of God gives prominence to those facts which are in pursuance of God's purpose. But we have further the comment of God Himself on those facts; and this forms a material part of the *Prophecies* as well as of the New Testament. And as we stand at the ends of the Dispensations or Ages, before they are all wound up, and their great results are fully brought out in the day of the appearing of Christ, all the truths that they severally teach con-

* Τα τελη των αιωνων κατηντησεν.

The ends of the ages are met.

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verge and bear on *us*; and therefore are said to have been written for *our* admonition. Scriptural accuracy becomes therefore of the greatest importance to us: and when we see how the Apostles of old used a single scriptural quotation, as warrant for the assertion of a principle; and that our Lord has said "the scripture cannot be broken;" this certainly demands much more attention than we have been ready to bestow. On reflection also it will appear, how much of scripture we have received traditionally. There are numerous phrases in almost every one's mouth, which, from their having been received in this manner, carry no force with them, and are almost absolutely unmeaning. And constantly we find the soul of a saint resting on a promise of the Old Testament, when the same promise, with the addition of all the blessed relationship in which we stand, is given to us in the New Testament, in connection with Him "in whom all the promises of God are Yea and Amen unto the glory of God by us." As a familiar instance, we constantly find Isa. xxxiii. "bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure," used as a kind of traditionary promise; when the same security, with the blessed addition of the loving care of a Father's hand and a Father's heart, is given us in Matt. vi. 25—34: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Surely the other promise may be rightfully used, but how much more fully do we get it when it comes to us in our proper place—as children. Another instance where tradition has led to perfect mis-statement, is in the confusion of quoting Col. iii. 11, as though it were 1 Cor. xv. 28, "Christ is all in all." The truth is not denied; but it is "Christ is all *and* in all;" that is, in the day of the manifestation of the Church all that will appear will be Christ—nothing of the old Adam, and Christ will be *in* all: and we are called on to act on this truth now: to recognize Christ as every thing and in every believer, be his condition what it may, as his grand characteristic. And this is quite different from God being "all in all;" which will not be manifested till after the millennium.

Now I believe that such phrases as "the Fulness of time," "the

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Fulness of times," "time shall be no longer," convey for the most part very vague ideas to the mind of christians, when at the same time, they are pregnant with meaning and instruction.

The passage in which the first phrase occurs is Gal. iv. 4. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law." In all that God has done, He has revealed Himself to those who are in fellowship with Him, as abounding "in all wisdom and prudence." So that if it be asked why so long a period elapsed before the promise made to the woman was fulfilled in the Babe at Bethlehem, the answer is, the time was not fully come. Much instruction needed previously to be given to man—much was to be taught him, through his painful experience of his real standing, before the great truth could be brought out that creature unupheld by the Creator must fail—that tendency to fail is the very essence of creature, stability, the attribute of God alone. And what is the proof of both but man's failure under every possible advantage, and his stable standing only in and through his union with the Son of God? The first great lesson taught was the instability of man, though coming forth from God's hands in all the perfection of creatureship. By disobedience he became independant of God; and being left to the trial of all his powers, he was unable to reinstate himself in the place of blessing which he had originally occupied. He had become as God to know good and evil; as God to assert his own will as his rule; but that will had not power equal to its pretensions: and could never open the way for him back into Paradise. "God drove out the man," and the condition into which man had fallen was impotence of will:—yes, had man had power equal to his will, he would actually have done that to which he will yet and shortly pretend—hurl God from His throne, and occupy it himself. (See 2 Thess. ii.) But God has many times proved Himself to be the blessed and only Potentate: and the creature man has, whenever left alone, proved himself to be wise and powerful only to do evil, and to corrupt his way on the earth. How deeply important is it to recognize that the trial of man's power has been made; and that it has : and that all the activity and energy of the present day is but

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the busy bustling of that power which had failed before the flood ; and that man, notwithstanding his toil and efforts, has not regained Paradise.

In the setting up of Noah as the head of restored creation, man was not similar circumstanced as before. He had now had experience of the power, and justice, and grace of God. He was therefore called upon to acknowledge himself, not as creature standing in his own strength, but as having found grace with God as one lost, and this, by God's own prescription as to Blood ; and to acknowledge God as the righteous Judge, in His punishing murder with death—a punishment not hitherto appointed. But God was recognized neither in His grace nor in His justice ; and men became "vain in their reasonings, and their foolish heart was darkened, and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man:" and thus all the world went into idolatry. Thus man furnished a proof of his inability to sustain the new standing in which God had put him.

And now we meet with a new feature in God's dealings—"Calling out ;" and as this is connected with the purpose of God, it rises above failure : and the proof that the security rests, not in him called, but in Him that calleth, is immediately afforded. The condition in which man was when we are made acquainted with this part of the divine procedure, is thus given us of God. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor ; and they served other gods. And *I took* your father Abraham from the other side of the flood." Now here we see a certain fulness of time for the interference of God in this special manner. Previously to the flood judgment had not been tried ; nor had man been *ostensibly* set as a sinner standing in grace, and acknowledging God as the Judge of all the earth. But now all had gone into idolatry, as previously all flesh had corrupted its way on the earth. There was therefore the opportunity for God thus to interfere, and to show the irremediableness of the condition of man :—the only blessing being to rescue him *out of*

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his condition: and further, to show that the standing of the one so called out was not in any communicated strength, (for this standing had been tried in the case of Abraham and it had proved man's failure, for Abraham went down into Egypt;) but in the unfailingness of Him who called him. “Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.” Now this principle of “Calling out” thus established, has been the principle and basis of God's blessing unto whomsoever: although, after its establishment, man was put under further advantages of trial, in order to prove that this basis alone could ensure the blessing of the creature. “The gifts and callings of God are not repented of by Him.” God might create and destroy, and again create innumerable beings for the display of His glory: He might too uphold creature, (as he has upheld the elect angels.) by His sovereign power, so that the creature might keep its first estate. But then the great lesson of the failingness of the creature, and of the unfailingness of the gift and calling of God, would not have been afforded. Therefore is it that the promise made to Abraham in the way of grace was, four hundred and thirty years after, proposed to Abraham's descendants to be realized by their own competence. Such conditions they undertook; and, accordingly, the law was introduced:—a system originating from Divine wisdom, having for its end the present blessing of the nation of Israel: yet, so absolutely did it fail in that it was weak through the flesh, that the possession of the land of Canaan was gotten, not by Israel's obedience to the Sinai-covenant, which was broken as soon as made, but for His name's sake who could say, in spite of all failure, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”

Now I do not think it is adequately considered that the law as given by God, was in truth an experiment to determine what moral training under all the advantages of the consummate wisdom of the giver, and of present interest to those receiving it, would effect: and it is not duly considered that the result was

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failure most manifest. “There is none that understandeth—none that seeketh after God : they are all gone astray ; there is none that doeth good, no not one.” And this the law says of them who had been under its discipline. The failure was not in the law. No alteration *of that* could have produced a different result ; for “the law was holy, just, and good.” The importance of seeing the law in this more extensive bearing is very great and practical, in an age of advanced intelligence, putting forth all its moral as well as physical energies. And the attentive reader of St. Paul will find that he, in speaking of law, argues on it in the abstract, showing its necessary insufficiency and failure ; for if the law of God failed of producing a desirable end, *a fortiori*, the law of nature, and every other law must fail :—because the material to be worked on by it has in itself a principle opposed to law altogether. The great truth brought out is, that moral training, as a means of leading man unto God, has been tried on him under the most favourable circumstances ; and that it has signally failed. Not to the impeachment of His wisdom, who gave the rule of training, but to show how entirely man had departed from God, and to open the way for the introduction of a new power to bring him back to God.

But before this was introduced manifestatively, trial was made of what Moral Suasion would effect towards bringing back disaffected and revolted man :—there were proclaimed, as immediate consequences, judgment in the case of refusal to hear, and blessing in the case of hearing. This formed the ministry of the Prophets :—“Therefore have I heard them by the Prophets :” (Hos. vi. 5.) “I have also spoken by the Prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the Prophets :” (Hos. xii. 10.) But the Prophets, whilst they were thus a witness against man, were also a witness for God ; and by reiterated declarations of God’s faithfulness, they turned the faithful from considering the failure of that which was before them, to rest upon the promises which they brought in.

The concluding words of the 2nd book of Chronicles show to

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us the failure of this ministry also. “And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people till there was no remedy.” It is this very ground which our blessed Lord Himself assumes, when opening in parables the divine counsels in mercy and judgment. “Again he sent another, and him they killed and many others, beating some and killing some.” “There was no remedy.” “Having yet therefore one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also, saying, they will reverence my Son.” (Mark xii. 6, 7.) The intermediate judgment and restoration appears to be passed over, although the same ministry* is reckoned as being carried on during the whole period:—“the Law and the Prophets were until John.” Then something new was to be introduced; but the very newness testified the complete failure of man. He had been tried before the flood, whether, left to himself, he could find his way back to God; but, instead of this, he only corrupted his way on the earth. He had been brought under the discipline of fearful judgment, the vestiges of which were all around him;—but he went into idolatry. He had been tried by being brought into special favour with God in all outward blessings, and by a law being given him to secure him in the possession of them;—but he lost them all. He had been tried to be reclaimed by the ministry of the Prophets, that he might return and be blessed;—but he mocked and murdered these messengers of God’s love. “There was no remedy.” Here the history of man as a moral and intellectual being might close; and, as to remedying his condition by any moral means, it does close. The statement made by the Apostle in the first two chapters of Romans is to this point:—the Gentile given over to a reprobate mind;—the Jew, no understanding in

* It is important to notice the place which Prophecy occupies in the dispensation of God. It is introduced *upon failure*; of the fact of which it has to testify, and, where the testimony is received, it has to sustain by promise.

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seeking God ;—none doing good ; no fear of God before their eyes. And this too at a period of very advanced civilization among Gentiles, and of great external religion among the Jews.

It was when man was in such a condition, so that there was no remedy, that the Fulness of time was come, and God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law. Under these two conditions the Son shows forth unswerving dependance and perfect righteousness ; vindicating God in never departing from Him, in the midst of the most trying circumstances, and in carrying His obedience to the uttermost. Here was the one in whom God was well pleased :—yet this bright example, His gracious words, His devotedness of life to cure man's misery, and His mighty miracles,—all failed of producing in man's mind any emotion correspondent to the love declared in "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Surely if moving appeals to the feelings, if MORAL SUASION could have reclaimed man, here was the opportunity ! It is important to trace the personal ministry of the blessed Lord in this point of view, and to note the result of it ;—not the *improvement* of man, but the manifestation of man's entire inconsistency with God. It is a striking word, "the husbandmen said among themselves, this is the heir ; let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." There wanted apparently only such an opportunity as the love of God afforded in the gift of His Son, to evidence the latent enmity of man's heart, and to shew forth the fulness of its evil. And thus the rejection of the Son of God was the demonstration that the Fulness of time was come for God to bring forth His wisdom and power in triumphing over such manifested failure. And this He did in the Cross—at once the evidence of man's total failure as man, and of the necessity of setting up a new creation in resurrection ; to be sustained in one as a Head who had proved Himself to be above failure. What a mass of moral truth there is contained in that expression "the Fulness of time." And how constantly need we now to recur to where we are, when God addresses us, preaching peace through the blood of the Cross ;—even as having been already proved to be irreclaim-

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able by any other means than by being brought into union with one who can uphold us by His own power. And surely after this, for any to go back to Moral Improvement as the way of bettering the condition of man before God, is only to manifest, through protracted bitter experience, that which He, who knew what is in man, has fully brought out and manifested already.

The expression “Fulness of times” occurs Eph. i. 10; and it is so distinct from that of “Fulness of time,” that the one is applied to a *past* fact, the other to one yet *future*:—“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.” There is a connection between this expression and that which declares our standing, “upon whom the ends of the world are come,” (or rather, the ends of the ages are met. See note p. 181.) These ages or dispensations had all been cut short,—each *αιων* had failed in man’s responsibility; and before God takes them up again, He has (so to speak) left them: as it is written, “For, said the Lord unto me, I will take my rest, and consider in my place:” and before He sets to His hand the second time to prove His superiority to failure,—whilst we stand at the end of these ages,—there is a secret process going on of gathering out from every nation a body for Christ. When God takes up again these ages, then are we introduced into “the dispensation of the Fulness of times.” On this expression I would dilate a little. This is the *time* of God’s long-suffering and bearing with evil, instead of judging it. It is a limited period: “*Once*” the long-suffering of God lasted one hundred and twenty years, and then came the Judgment. But now it may be said, speaking generally, that God’s long-suffering has been from the Flood to the present day, and will be limited only by Christ’s taking His power and putting His enemies under His feet. This period therefore becomes the period of testimony, corresponding to the times before the Flood;* for although the long-suffering began at the Fall, yet

* It is important to mark the parallel that God has not interfered in such manner in judging the living of the world and the things of the world, since that time, and that He will again so interfere at the coming of Christ. (Luke xxii.)

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is it specially marked at its close, as a period of testimony, when Noah was a preacher of righteousness. So now when man is despising the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, it is the period or *time* of testimony to the Cross and Resurrection to all the world; because all the world will be involved in Christ's coming to judge it in righteousness:—therefore the testimony is to every creature. The command is "Go ες παντα τα εθνη, and when the Son of man shall come in His glory, before Him shall be gathered παντα τα εθνη. Connected with this is another time, and that is "*the time of misrule*" because power is in the hands of men, and not directly exercised by God. (Compare Ps. lxii., Rev. xi. 17.) Consequently, it is *the time* of the Church's suffering; for the Church being righteous and faithful to God in the midst of an evil age, and God not as yet interfering in judgment, suffering is necessarily its portion. But to speak more definitely, it is "*the time of Israel's blindness and rejection*, which is the Mystery made known to us in Rom. xi. "blindness in part is happened unto Israel until," &c. and it is co-extensive with the period of "preaching unto the Gentiles." Again there is *the time* of Gentile supremacy, that is, their being the head and Israel being the tail. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Once more, it is *the time* of Creation's thralldom. "*We know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now.*" And this groaning is limited by another "until," as we read in Acts iii., "Repent therefore and be converted that (or unto the blotting out of) your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive *until* the times of the restoring of all things. There is *a time* also for Satan to "deceive the nations," (Rev. xx. 3.) "to be going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;" and the limit of this we find thus stated.—"He laid hold of Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him

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into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." But all these aforementioned *times* depend upon one yet to be mentioned. The Lord Jesus occupies His present position only for a definite period, according to that scripture, "sit thou at my right hand *until* I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now "the dispensation of the Fulness of times" is that in which *all these several times* will have run out, and into which they all are now running : and when the Lord Jesus leaves the right hand of God, then will God visibly interfere with all that is measured by these times. The threads of them had been cut off at the rejection of Christ, and now they are resumed again. "The time of misrule" ends by Christ's taking His power and reigning. "The time of testimony" ends by judgment. "The time of the Church's suffering" ends by her being glorified with her Lord. "The time of Israel's blindness" ends by the vail being taken away : (2 Cor. iii.) when the Lord Christ shall say, "hear ye deaf, and look ye blind." (Is. xlii. 18., comp. ver. 6, 7.) "The time of Gentile domination" ends by the Stone cut out without hands smiting the Image. "The time of Creation's thralldom" ends by the manifestation of the sons of God, (Rom. viii. 21.) and this we know is when Jesus shall be manifested. (1 John iii.) And Satan, who had in the ministry of our Lord asked not to be tormented before the time, will then know that the time of his restraint is come, though his judgment will even then be in prospect. Surely a dispensation so marked is of the deepest importance !—a dispensation in which all the apparent failures of God will be proved to have been but the means of displaying His power and wisdom. And so far from time *being done with*, as men say, at that period, it would be more proper to say that God is not *now* interfering in temporal things, but is only gathering to an eternal state, and that *then* He will interfere with things both temporal and earthly. This is of great importance ; because the saint has now to do only with things *heavenly* and *eternal*, except so far as the present evil circumstances of the world afford occasion for his learning obedience through suffering.

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And this leads me to notice the other expression, "Time shall be no longer." It is usual to say that time ends and eternity begins—a statement very vague and unmeaning, and involving much practical error. For the believer in Christ has *already* entered on eternity, and has begun to look, not "at things which are seen, which are temporal, but at things which are not seen, which are eternal." The expression is found Rev. x. and the context fully explains that it has no such signification as that "time ends," but that it means no more time shall be allowed to elapse before the interference of God, and that God will no longer allow man to go on to the apparent frustrating of His purposes. "The angel, which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things which are therein; that there should be time no longer, (no longer any lapse of time; *but that in the days* of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the Mystery of God should be finished *as He hath declared to His servants the Prophets.*" Now if we have at all attentively considered how much of the prophetic testimony is yet unfulfilled, we shall immediately see that many of the declared events require a course of time when once the action begins; and more than this, that the prophetic testimonies have most expressly to do with things connected with time. The expression therefore clearly does not mean that time is no more, but that the strangeness of God's ways, the Mystery, as it is here said, of letting man go on without God's interfering in judgment, is now finished,—in other words, God's long-suffering has reached its limit.

It would appear from this expression that the whole period (of which we are so boastful) of modern history is but as a blank before God; that His history of the earth and the things in it is already written in the scriptures of truth: and whatever revolutions may take place, God's purpose of introducing earthly blessing is very definitely arranged, and all man's efforts will only tend to illustrate the completeness of his failure. "Behold is it not of the

Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 13, 14.)

THE TRUTH WHICH IS AFTER GODLINESS.

TITUS i. 1.

WE are insensibly led by the spirit of the age in which we live ; and that which characterizes our own age is a craving desire after the improvement of existing things. Much of the desire for the improvement even of Religious communities is nothing more than this very principle, which is acting in the world, carried into them. The result doubtless will be the manifestation of that lawlessness which is expressly foretold as marking these last days : for self-will (and self-will is lawlessness,) in the Church is not less sinful than it is in the world. But while the spirit of the age is undoubtedly working unto this end in Religious communities, it is no less true that the Spirit of God is working very markedly in the saints : and it may be profitable to notice the order according to which He works, lest we should be confounding a reckless spirit of innovation with the awakened desire of the re-assertion of the unchangeable holy principles of God's order. It is written " God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions." And still are man's powers being put forth on the same materials, moral or physical, to try to produce comfort and happiness from them. At this time his object appears to him more near of attainment than at any period heretofore ; for never were his energies so unhindered, or the field so open before him for the trial. Now the spirit of this

age is characterized especially by this—the expectation of something that never yet has been : but where the Spirit of God is at work, it is in the humbling sense of the loss of that which has been, and in the earnest striving after its recovery. Wherever God works He at once shows absolute perfectness : in man, on the contrary, perfectness, which after all is but relative, is always of slow growth. Thus in the Church as originally constituted of God there was the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. Any alteration of this would in fact be deterioration.* *The* faith was only once delivered unto the saints ; and *the* truth is ever the same, because Jesus, who is the centre of all truth and the great object of faith, is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. Now it is the recognition of an unchangeable standard which will alone prevent our being carried about by “divers and strange doctrines.” The faith may be departed from, and the truth which is according to godliness be unacknowledged ; but neither the one nor the other can progress either with the mind or with the condition of mankind. Amidst all revolutions the doctrines and laws of Christ must remain stationary. They are superior to improvement : to suppose them otherwise would be to impugn the perfectness of the work of God. It is surprising how slow our minds are in recognizing so simple a truth ; and how much of real learning as a disciple of Christ is unlearning what one has been taught even as a Christian. “The truth” sternly refuses any admixture with error : it is most exclusive in its character. “He that gathereth not with Jesus according to it, is scattering abroad.” He is not labouring for gathering wheat into God's garner, but only for chaff which will be burnt up with unquenchable fire. Jesus being the truth, we are enabled to discover what man really is in the sight of God. And what is the great lesson thus taught, but that where God sent forth one in whom He was pleased—one man acting in perfect consistency with Himself—He was found a singular character, the

* Hence the danger of appeals to any secondary authority, such for example as the early fathers.

righteous *One*, to the exclusion of all others, the Holy One of God. In Him we see the truth which is after godliness: and God's estimate of man now is his consistency or inconsistency with Jesus. And into what an awful position does infidelity plunge a man! Man may deceive himself as to his not having sufficient evidence, but it is not so before God; he places himself before God as choosing *himself* in preference to *Jesus*; and forces, as it were, God to judge between the two. But the truth specially taught by the manifestation of Jesus to the world was the total failure of man—the utter profitlessness of the Flesh. It was put under the greatest advantages:—the Son of God for its teacher, and the power of Him felt and acknowledged so much that even devils were subject unto the disciples in His name;—yet, after all this instruction, when the hour of trial came, it failed completely. “They all forsook Him and fled:” and the one to whom special revelation had been made concerning the dignity of Jesus, was the one to deny with an oath that he knew Him at all. Surely the Flesh, that is, human nature—man, simply as man, had never been placed under advantages so great; and, until this last trial, *the* truth was never brought out into demonstration, “that the flesh profiteth nothing.” Now this is the fundamental point, the very starting point of christianity:—the faith of God's elect is grounded on it: real godliness has no existence at all until this truth be acknowledged. There may be much desire after the improvement of man; but every attempt must end in failure and disappointment until the truth be acknowledged, that man, as the creature of God's hand, endued with intelligence, man, as a moral being put under the discipline of God's own most holy law, has entirely failed of sustaining his standing. Now what have all the attempts of human wisdom effected, but the demonstration of the truth, by making the failure more signal. It is most important to recognize that there can be no godliness but as connected with the truth; and that it is the truth which leads into godliness. There may be much zeal, but if it be not of the truth, the result will be either most unwarranted expectations, or such a spirit as would

call fire down from heaven on those who receive us not. There may be much of religious sentiment, but it becomes superstition where the truth is not acknowledged. There may be busy activity in service, but it may really tend to strengthen the power of Satan's delusions; because the truth is our especial power against him who is a liar from the beginning. The first principle therefore in christian ethics is, that Jesus is the truth, and real sanctification is through the knowledge of Him. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Before we move a step in christian morals, that is, in real godliness, how much is necessarily assumed, I mean recognized by faith, which hence becomes the medium of producing this godliness. "Sanctified by faith that is in me." There is the total failure and ruin of man:—there is God's most righteous judgment on the old man in the Cross:—there is union with Jesus as risen so as to become a branch in the true vine:—there is the Holy Spirit constantly supplying from the fulness which is in Jesus wisdom and strength unto the new man:—and hence the Grace of God which bringeth salvation is alone able to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.

Here is another important feature of the truth, that the age or world, in which christians are placed, never changes its character before God. The great blessing is to be kept from the evil of it: and whilst man is using his power in order to mitigate or keep down the evil of it, the believer knows of a present deliverance *from it*, through Christ's having given Himself for his sins; and thus, though in it, he walks, through the power of grace which the world knows not, as being *not of it*. Now it is here especially that Satan works by his power of blinding; hiding the evil standing of this present world before God, and causing the improvement of it, instead of deliverance from it, to be proposed as the object of endeavour. There can be no godliness when the goodness of the world is the assumption, because there is no truth in it: and if God be looking at the world in one light, and we in another, how can our relation to it and our conduct in it be according to His mind? Now if the

truth be that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever ; and that He has not altered His relation and standing since His ascension :—if God be still exercising forbearance and long-suffering towards the world, the sentence of whose judgment was passed at the rejection of His Son :—if the world be recognized as only evil unto the end of the present age :—if man's condition before God as a lost and ruined sinner, remains the same :—if this be the truth, then godliness and improvement of the world are not the same thing. It is true that the grace of God will teach us to live soberly and righteously, as well as godly, in this present world. But the ever-inventive genius of man to remedy his own evil, would still believe that the evil condition of himself and of the world are susceptible of a remedy short of the mighty one of our Saviour God in His grace that brings salvation. And it is one of the characteristics of the present age which must alarm the soul which is sensible of the value of truth, that many christians are using the Gospel as a mere platform for erecting a moral machinery of their own, and thus at once (unintentionally perhaps) overlooking its present blessing and its object. Its present *blessing* is peace through the blood of the cross : its *object*, to be thereby secured, is holiness unto the Lord. “He gave Himself for us that He might deliver us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” Now the necessary effect of going back to schemes for improvement is to take the soul away from acknowledging the truth which is according to godliness, and to substitute moral restraint in the place of the grace of God. If there be one thing that the saints have need to guard against in the present day, it is this ; for truly the blessed gospel is in much more danger of being neutralized by such means than by the most open attacks of infidelity ; and real liberty, real obedience, and real service are all and alike hazarded. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,” and there only ; unless it be the fearful liberty of self-will. But real liberty is the liberty of truth : “if the truth shall make you free, then shall ye be free indeed :” and this alone is the portion of the disciples of Christ.

(John viii. 31, 32.) This alone is real deliverance from the dominion of sin; and the turning back from this to moral restraint is going back to bondage.

The attempt which is now being made to substitute moral restraint for the liberty of truth, is very clearly manifested in a series of tracts published by the Temperance Society, designated the tee-total series, with the text "Let your light shine before men." The tract No. 7, is an appeal to christian principles in behalf of total abstinence, &c., addressed to mechanics who are members of Christian Churches. Now, whilst the Temperance Society professedly stood on mere philanthropic ground, it might, as it made no pretensions to be considered christian, have been suffered to pass unnoticed, soon to yield its testimony to the failure of the combined force of self-interest and moral restraint against the evil which is in man. But since it has come to tread on the hallowed ground of christianity, and to propose itself as subsidiary to, if not a substitution for, the grace of God, such attempt, whether in ignorance or intentional, to subvert the truth needs a plain exposure. And in this one tract there is hardly a precious truth left untouched. The invitation is to christian friends.

"We are anxious to obtain your support; and when we assure you that our sole object is "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will to men," we are sure you will attend while we urge a few reasons why you, as christians, should come forward in this glorious work. Statesmen have legislated for the suppression of this vice; ministers of Christ have exposed the sin and its awful consequences; and benevolent men have exerted their influence in public and private life, to stem the torrent; but all has been in vain."

Now the first question is, was the object of God in the incarnation, and the cross, and the resurrection, to reform drunkards? Was this the *glorious work* which God proposed to Himself in this marvellous display of His own wisdom and power? Assuredly not:—it was to bring, through this mighty means, man, who had fallen, into a degree of blessedness even higher than that from

which he fell—even into fellowship with Himself and His Son, by virtue of the blood which cleanseth from all sin, and through the indwelling of the Spirit. It is quite true that the drunkard, or the whoremonger, or the covetous man, who knows the power of this redemption, and is brought to know this glorious work, is thereby delivered from his iniquity, and, through grace supplied, is kept from relapsing into it. This assuredly includes reformation; but reformation is not salvation. And if every drunkard in the world was to put himself under total abstinence, it does not follow that God would be glorified, or that there would be peace to the soul, or that God would rest in complacency upon him:—but if Christ be received these results *do* follow. And surely it is well nigh approaching to the giving of God's glory to another, to lower the whole work of Christ to the reclaiming of a drunkard or of any other sinner. The angels who sang that song saw a much mightier result—a result which leaves moral attainment far, far behind.

Again, it is said, “Ministers of Christ have exposed the sin and its awful consequences.” And this surely they should do, showing that the drunkard cannot inherit the kingdom of God; but they do not stop here, but they go on to the root of all sin, even the heart; and whilst they show the necessity of a perfect cleansing from all sin, as well as the absolute necessity of renewed will and affections; they leave not man to his own power to effect this, but hold up God's most effective remedy—the blood of the Lamb and the promise of the Spirit. What fearful presumption then is it to assert that the ministers of Christ have failed! and that now man has found something more powerful to produce reformation than the ministry of reconciliation! Surely, if this statement be made soberly, it amounts to the assertion, that moral restraint will effect that which the grace of God and the foolishness of preaching cannot effect. The Lord Jesus has said, “He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” He is now, by the ministry of reconciliation, gathering fruit unto eternal life; and whatever may now be the apparent success of other means, all will appear *in that day* to have been but scattering.

There is another paragraph in this tract which seems to destroy the foundation on which the whole of redemption rests ; and it needs to be set in its true light that christians may be aware of the principles which many of them are ignorantly advancing. “ We shall cordially agree with you that a remote cause of drunkenness lies in the natural depravity of the heart. Here doubtless is the source of all human misery. But this is not all. The depravity of the heart *alone* could never make a drunkard. The moral cause requires some physical one as a medium through which to operate : and this medium is intoxicating drink. Without this the depravity of man would never make him a drunkard ; and you will at once see that by abolishing the use of these liquors we should cut off the spring of a stream which has flowed for ages.”

How simply does one word of our Lord expose all this wicked and wretched sophistry. “ There is nothing *from without* a man that, entering into him, can defile him : but the things which come out of man, those are they that defile him.” “ If any man have ears to hear let him hear.” (Mark vii. 15, 16.) And again, “ a good tree bringeth forth good fruit ; and a corrupt tree, evil fruit.” The Lord says the source of the evil is *within*, the philanthropist, that it is *without*. The Lord begins with the heart—“ make the tree good, and its fruit will be good :” the philanthropist would remove the bad fruit and be content to leave the tree just as it is. It is one of the most refined delusions of Satan to make sin appear an accidental or circumstantial thing, rather than the corruption of the whole moral constitution of man—the very law of death. And when once this is affirmed, the atonement, regeneration, and resurrection are necessarily surrendered. Sin may be dormant, but it is still sin ; and if a man were in the desert all his life long, and never saw any thing but water, drunkenness would exist in embryo in the sin which is in the heart. The cause of one sin and of ten thousand sins is one and the same—Sin that dwelleth within. It will be apparent to all who know the truth of God, that every attempt to make sin to consist only in the outward act has led to the nullifying of the atonement and to the substitution of morality for christian holiness.

As might be expected, these statements are followed by anecdotes of the falling away of christians, in order to make out a case against the sufficiency of Divine Grace to keep a man, without the adjunct of self-imposed restraint. But what saith the scripture? "How shall we who have died to sin live any longer therein"—invariably bringing in the judicial act already executed in the cross as involving and conveying the uttermost moral power. Again, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not *under law*, but under grace." Surely to be under law is to be under that very restraint under which this Society would put a man: yet man would still be left before God under the dominion of sin. It is confessedly true that there has been a great failure in christians in this respect,—in their not having more plainly exhibited a mightier power in action than moral restraint—even the power of grace. "Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus."

We have surely to be deeply abased for having given so distorted a picture of christian grace. The end proposed has often been merely the maintenance of the standard of worldly decency even in christian communities; and the principle too often acted on in them has been the summary righteousness of the world, rather than the reclaiming power of grace. Christians have not sufficiently recognized that whilst godliness is the guarantee for morals, it is something much higher,—something leading the soul into association with God in all things, judging God's judgment on them, and walking in them according to that judgment. The Apostle says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." This is the great point, a walk which necessarily presents the daily recognition of all the fundamental doctrines of the gospel:—a walk which necessarily leads into separation from the world:—in other words, a "walking with God," walking in the light as He is in the light, and thus exposing or convicting the unfruitful works of darkness. The attempt to make christianity subserve worldly morality is a special product of the craft of Satan at this present day, in order to obliterate

the distinction between the Church and the world. It is doing that in practice which he so early attempted in doctrine,—to cause men to turn again unto the weak and beggarly elements of the world. He does not now deny the value of the cross; but he completely nullifies its power where he succeeds in making it to be thought that a certain something has been effected for all, which still throws us back upon moral restraint for security. Until the cross is known as the actual power of present deliverance from the world and sin and Satan, and as the introduction of the Life in the Spirit, there is not the acknowledging of the truth which is according to godliness. But where these truths are practically acknowledged, the unwilling confession is forced even from the world, that our principles are not the same as theirs. Let indeed the light of christians so shine before men as to prove to them the utter failure of their righteousness and the scantiness of their morality. Let it be with well doing that they put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. And let them show that liberty and obedience are to them, strange as it may appear, one and the same thing. “They are led of the Spirit and are not under the Law.”

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THE SENT ONE.

"My Father is greater than I." (John xiv. 28.)

How sadly different is the measure of intelligence which men display when occupied with the things of God and with the things of man. Who, when bade study some plan proposed for the bettering or renewing of any thing upon earth, is there who would not endeavour, whilst studying it, to mark the adjustment of the various parts of its machinery, and their suitability to accomplish the object proposed. Say that his intelligent sympathy and co-operation through a wearisome course of labour, were supposed by the proposed plan, would any one feel it enough, merely to have read the proposal, or would he feel that he might read it carelessly, that the having read it was enough, that he had nothing to do with the suitability of the machinery or with the object to be accomplished thereby? Surely he would rather feel that unless the object were distinctly known to him and kept before his mind, all his study would be in vain; the whole question being, is this course capable of producing such or such a given effect? But alas! when man comes to the things of heaven and of God, he has, by nature, no intelligence to exercise; and that which he receives in Christ, "the mind of Christ," (1 Cor. ii. 16.) he is too prone to neglect. Satan avails himself of this; and the saints are found oft reading

the bible with preconceived thoughts of what they will or ought to find there, as opposite from what they will find as possible. Happy are the few who find grace to correct themselves and their own notions, by subjection to the blessed contents of God's scriptures. Many an infidel rejects the bible because it contains no systematic proof of the existence of a God. Surely his own existence is no great assumption for any one to make when sitting down to write a book. How much more when the living God was the party. Alas! the naughty pride of the flesh which sets man up to judge his Creator, and leads him to count everlasting misery in his own way better than the fulness of blessing in God's. It is the same pride of the flesh and independance of mind concerning God's object, which leaves the minds of so many to be exercised upon the question of the Deity of the Son and the Deity of the Spirit. The questions are taken to Scripture, as though God's *object*, or one of them at least, in writing the book, *must* have been to advance proofs of the Divine nature of the Son and of the Spirit. And then some are stumbled because the evidence they can collect, is of so *indirect* a nature. Indirect! to be sure it is indirect; and this indirectness is its strength. In writing the bible God had no such thought as to make man judge of Deity. Neither was it even one of His objects to bring out proofs of the Divine nature of the Son and the Spirit. He writes in and from His own circumstances. And the Divine nature of the Son and of the Spirit, are as much assumed in what He has written, as is even the existence of a God. God's object in the bible was just to unfold the way and glory of Redemption. And they who humbly follow it out as traced in the Scriptures, will find thousands of collateral points taught them; but if they get upon these collateral points separately from their connexion with the object for which they are revealed, let them take heed: "what God hath joined together let not man put asunder." I do *not* say that direct proofs weighty and abundant cannot be brought forward in proof of the unqualified Deity of the Son and of the Spirit: there can be I know; but what I *do* say is, that if we try to prove truth according to the good pleasure of our own minds, and not according to the way God teaches it, we are in danger;

as not being led by the Spirit therein. Just so is the way in which men look at the Saviour ; either they will look exclusively at His being the Son of God, or they will forget this and look at Him as the Son of man : but the whole virtue is lost if we regard Him in any other way than in the double nature—God manifest in the flesh. This will appear plain if we consider what Redemption is.

God's purpose in Redemption is to glorify Himself by the exceeding riches of His grace and power and wisdom shown in Christ Jesus. The substance of the Gospel was and is just this, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Cor v. 19.) And the blessing of them that know the truth in the love of it is, they have been reconciled to God by Jesus Christ; (ver. 18.) they have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus; (iv. 6.) they have acknowledged the mystery of God, even of the Father and of Christ. (Col. ii. 2.)

The work and object of our Lord was to reveal the Father. There were riches and glories in God most suited for man's fallen state ; but how should they be made his ? God could not come in contact with the sinner even to bless him, and the sinner could not come into the presence of God, as God, even for a cure. Jesus was the way of infinite wisdom, grace, and truth. His sufficiency for the work was just this, that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii. 9.) The perception of "God in Christ" is the turning-point of blessing to man. To know Jesus, but not to know the Father in Him, is not faith. Unless "God in Christ" be seen and rested upon, there can be no cleansed conscience, no repose, no assurance or obedience. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon our minds, that the only place in which we can find light and truth as concerning God the Father,—the only place in which we can make sure of the Spirit's power and teaching, is whilst beholding by faith "the glory of God in the face of Jesus;" and that this was the object of the revelation of the Son—not to reveal Himself, but to reveal the Father.* The

* It is this and this alone which gives us the clue to the folly of Arians and others. God writes a book to show His own Son *in service* for the Church's sake. They read the book and discover the service, and argue

Son is presented to us, not that we may know Himself; for it is written, no man knoweth the Son but the Father only.—He is presented *simply* to declare the Father. (John i. 18.) “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. (xiv. 9.) In every position in which the Son is presented to us, He is presented as being the servant of the Father, and of the Church for the Father’s sake. Appointed by the Father to office, fulfilling all the duties of office as *the servant*.

I will endeavour to show this,—that Jesus is presented in Scripture as the servant of the Father, first, from those Scriptures which present to us the works and offices proper and peculiar to Himself; and then, secondly, by quotations exhibiting the posture of His heart and mind while found occupied therein.

His High Priesthood was service, and Jesus received it at the Father’s hand. “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who WAS FAITHFUL to Him that APPOINTED Him. (Heb. iii. 1, 2.) “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” (iv. 14.) “No man taketh this honour unto himself, (i.e. High Priesthood,) but He that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.” (v. 4—6, 10.)

Can any thing be clearer than that our adorable Lord was the Father’s *servant* for the Church’s sake in this High Priesthood? And if *called to, instated in* the High Priesthood by the Father, and *faithful in it* to Him that appointed Him, then all its duties and offices present Him as the servant also. And thus accordingly we are taught to look at Him while entering into heaven itself,

thence, that He was not the Son. The whole of the grace shown, is, that it is God manifest in the flesh. They qualify and limit the meaning of this, and thereby qualify, limit, or destroy grace altogether. And what the plea? but the *very* thing on which the whole of the appeal turns, that though a Son, He was a servant. They turn inferiority of estate and work into inferiority of person and nature.

now to appear before God for us: (ix. 24.) having appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, (26) we are taught, I say, to look upon Him as *the servant* of the Father, and of the Church *for the Father's sake*. For as it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins, when He came into the world He avowed this, saying to His Father, (and therein bearing witness before all, of His being the Father's servant,) "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not.....in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O GOD:....by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." (Heb. x. 4—10.)

The blood that He presented, when by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, that blood (needed in our case, at once both as to the heavenly things themselves to which we are called, and for the purging of our consciences from dead works to serve the living God,) that blood, I say, He presented to us in the character of the servant of the Father. More than this, both the glory and the weakness which are presented to us in the first two chapters, as being His in connection with the office of Daysman, to stand between God and us, and between us and God, are represented as taken upon Himself in sympathy with and subjection to the Father's will.

That which commends Him to the Church, as a sure resource in every time of trouble, is, that He is such an one as can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities; one who knows what temptation, and crying, and tears mean; one that "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." But the provision of this suitability in Jesus we find attributed to the Father, "For 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:" (Heb. ii. 10.) and from ver. 11, I judge that it was the perception by the Son of such loving union in the mind of the Father to these sons, that led Him, as it were, to greet them as "my brethren," and then associate Himself with them in all their circumstances of misery.

“ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil ; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.” (14, 15, ver.)

But not only was it the Father’s will which guided Him into that which meets our minds, and gives us liberty of soul in drawing near to God through Him, but also the Father’s good pleasure which conferred upon Him the glory proper to Him as Mediator—the rank, estate, dignity, and glory, in which He should stand in the courts of the Lord’s house as the Mediator provided and appointed of the Father. Let me not be misunderstood, His *fitness* for the office was one thing ; the glory and estate proper to the office in order that its duties should be fulfilled, was another. The *fitness* of Jesus for the Mediator was just “ that He was God manifest in the flesh,” essentially one with the Father, Jehovah, Lord God of Sabaoth, from before all worlds. This and this alone could suffice ; this and this alone could give virtue, and character, power, weight, and value to the blood. It was the blood of God’s own Son. Of whom else could the blood speak from the mercy-seat of God in the Holiest of all ? Whose blood else could silence Satan, or still the accusing consciences of ten thousand times ten thousand, whose robes were to be washed in the blood of the Lamb ? Such alone was His *qualification* for the office. But when ushered into it by the Father, He found a new glory in it, proper and peculiar to itself. This glory is opened to us in Phil. ii. 6—11, Eph. i. 10, as what it shall be hereafter : the blessedness of it we know in that by faith we see Jesus in the midst of the Father’s throne as the Lamb once slain, but now alive again. There He is, all things under His feet, and Himself given to be the Head over all things to the Church ; heaven opened and we in Spirit and affection gathered there unto Him and the Father. A study of the ten last verses of the 1st chapter of Hebrews, in connection with the Scriptures whence the quotation is made, opens much of the riches of the glory *appointed* unto the Mediator ; as also other Scriptures. And furthermore I would observe, that on ourselves all

this is pressed *in detail*, by the Holy Ghost, with peculiar emphasis, in the Scriptures, so that we are taught to read our Father in the works and doings of our blessed Lord. See this as to

1.—PROPITIATION FOR SIN. (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) Christ Jesus “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.” (Rom. viii, 32.) “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” (Gal. iv. 4.) “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,” &c. &c.

2.—THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. (Acts xiii. 33.) God has fulfilled . . . the promise made unto the fathers . . . in that He has raised up Jesus again ; And as concerning that He raised Him from the dead, &c., (Rom. iv. 25.) if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was raised again for our justification. (Eph. i, 20.) The Father is represented as having raised Christ from the dead, and His object in so doing is stated I Pet. i. 21, “who believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God, &c. &c.

3.—HIS PRESENT POSITION IN HEAVENLY PLACES FOR THE SAINTS. (Eph. i. 20—23.) “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.” See also (Heb. 2. 5—9. Col. 3. 3.) “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

4.—THE DISPENSER TO THE CHURCH OF BLESSING. (Acts 1. 4.) “Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me.” (2—32.) “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear,” &c. &c. &c.

5.—THE SECOND APPEARING OF JESUS which is the Church's hope. (1 Tim. vi, 14.) "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, &c." (1 Thess. iv, 14.) "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

Secondly.—I will now endeavour to quote a few Scriptures exhibiting the posture of our Lord's heart and mind while found on earth occupied with these works, as presenting Him in the same most blessed position of the servant of the Father for the Church's sake.—As the One who, though the Son, and not thinking it robbery to be equal with God, yet emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, took on Him the form of a servant, and put His trust in God, and all this for the Church's sake, to shew her the Father. The gospel of John, as it opens to us more than the other gospels, the glory of the *person* of Jesus as the only begotten Son of the Father from before all worlds, so likewise is more full of proofs of His subjection to the Father. From it and it alone will I now quote a few of the many passages adducible on this most deeply interesting subject.

Chap i. 18. He is presented as the revealer of the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, *He hath declared Him.*"

The names of the Lamb of God Chap i. 29—36. The Messias or Christ (ver. 41.) both present Him, if considered attentively, as in subjection to the Father. So also will He appear in the 3rd Chapter, when considered as the One *given* "to be lifted up." (ver. 16.)—"The One sent not to condemn but to save. (ver. 17.) ("The One whom heaven *had honoured above* John. 27.) The One of whom alone it could be said." He whom God hath *sent* speaketh the words of God: for God *giveth* not the Spirit by measure unto Him.—The Father loveth the Son, and hath *given* all things into His hands." (ver. 34, 35.)

In Chap. iv. We find Jesus speaking of Himself thus, as the *gift* of God (ver. 10.)—Again, "my meat is to do the will of Him that *sent* me, and to finish His work." In Chap. iv. ver. 19

—24. He says distinctly 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. For the Father loveth the Son and *sheweth* Him all things that *Himself* doeth : and He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them : even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath *committed* all judgment unto the Son : that all should honour the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life." (Ver. 26.) "As the Father hath life in Himself ; so *hath He given* to the Son to have life in Himself ; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." (Ver. 30.) "I can *of mine own self do nothing* : as I hear, I judge, : and my judgment is just ; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath *sent* me." (Ver. 36.) "I have greater witness than of John : for the works which the Father hath *given* me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath *sent* me." (Ver. 38.) "Whom He hath *sent*, Him ye believe not." (Ver. 43.) "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."

Again.—CHAP. VI. He speaks of Himself as the One *sealed* by God the Father. (ver. 27.) *Sent* by the Father. (ver. 29.) *Given* as bread from heaven by the Father. (33.) "All that the Father *giveth* me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that *sent* me. And this is the Father's will which hath *sent* me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life : and I will raise him up at the last day." (37—40.) "As the living Father hath *sent* me, and I live by the Father : so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (57.)

CHAP. VII. "My doctrine is NOT MINE, but His that *SENT* me ;"

(16.) . . . "he that seeketh his glory that *sent* him, the same is true." (18) "I am not come of myself, but He that *sent* me is true, whom ye know not. But I know Him ; for I am from Him, and He hath *sent* me." (28, 29.) "I go unto Him that *sent* me." (33.) CHAP. VIII. "I am not alone, but I and the Father that *sent* me : " (16.) "the Father that *sent* me beareth witness of me." (18.) "He that *sent* me is true ; and I speak those things which I have heard of Him." (26.) "I do nothing of myself ; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And He that *sent* me is with me : the Father hath not left me alone ; for I do always those things that please Him." (28, 29.) "I speak that which I have seen with my Father ;" (38.) "neither came I of myself, but He *sent* me." (42.) "I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me." (49) "I seek not mine own glory." (50.) "I know Him (the Father) and keep His saying." (55.) CHAP. IX. 4. "I must work the works of Him that *sent* me." CHAP. X. "This *commandment* have I received of my Father ;" (18.) "the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." (25.) "My Father which gave them (the sheep) me, is greater than all." (29.) "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." (37.) CHAP. XI. "Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always : but because of the people . . . I said it, that they may believe that thou hast *sent* me." (41, 42.) CHAP. XII. "What shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour ; but for this cause came I unto this hour : Father, glorify thy name ;" (27, 28.) "Him that *sent* me." (44.) "For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which *sent* me, He gave me a *commandment*, what I should say and what I should speak ;" (49.) "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (50.) CHAP. XIII. "Jesus knowing that the Father had *given* all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God." (3.) "He that receiveth me receiveth Him that *sent* me." (20.) CHAP. XIV. "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." (10.) "I will pray the Father : " (16.) "the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which *sent* me." (24.) "My Father is greater

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than I." (28.) "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." (31.) CHAP. XV. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." (1.) "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." (10.) "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (15.)

I have quoted the words illustrative of the subject, just as they occurred, without regard to their connexion; in conclusion, let any one read carefully the 17th chapter of the gospel of John, and it cannot but be observed how prominent and important a place this same truth held in the mind of our blessed Master at the time of His prayer. His whole desire seemed to be to mark Himself as the one who was the sent Servant of the Father and of the saints for the Father's sake.

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I HAVE followed the Lord through chapters i--xii, of this Gospel, noticing His ways as the Son of God, and also His intercourse and controversies with Israel. His path on earth had been that of the stranger from heaven. A path of deep sorrow and lowliness, and much in the track of the Prophet Jeremiah, so that some said, "it is Jeremias." Like Jeremiah, the Lord had been the witness of the sin of the daughter of Zion: like him, He had warned her, and taught her, and would fain have healed her. But like him, He had seen the stubbornness of her heart, had suffered rebuke and rejection from her, and had now only to weep for her. He had, as in the words of Jeremiah, said to her, even to the end of his ministry, (see chap. xii. 35.) "give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness; but if ye will not

hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." (Jer. xiii. 16.)

Jesus had now thus wept over Jerusalem, for she had not repented. The Boar had now again left his woods to devour her; the "Destroyer of the Gentiles" was again on his way, as in the Prophet's day. The captivity in Babylon had no more purged away the dross of Zion than the waters of Noah had sanctified the earth; and all was again ripe for another judgment. But as in the midst of all this, Jeremiah of old, had had his Baruch the companion of his temptations, (Jer. xxxvi, and xliii.) to whom from the Lord he pledges present life, (chap. xlv.) and with whom he deposits the sure evidence of final rest and restoration; (chap. xxxii.) so now, Jesus has His saints, the companions of his rejection, to whom He gives the present certainty of life, and the sure promise of future rest and honour.

And now we get our Lord in secret with His Baruch, His chosen ones. We have done with His public ministry: and we have Him now with His own, telling them, as their Prophet, the secrets of God.

And being here about to listen to Him as the Prophet of the Church, I would observe that what the Lord gives us as *our Prophet* is our *present* riches. It is not with us, as with Israel of old, "blessings of the basket and of the store," nor is it with us now, as it will be by and by, "authority over cities,"—but "we have the mind of Christ." Treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Christ are our *present* treasures. (Col. ii. 2.) And accordingly having now turned away from Israel towards His elect, and looking at them alone apart from the world, He makes known to them all things that He had heard of the Father. (xiii—xvii.) By and by, as the King of Glory, He will share His dominion with the saints; but now He has only the tongue of the learned for them, that He may teach them the secrets of God. It is only as their Prophet, that He now enriches them. As to other riches they may count themselves poor. As one of them of old said (and said it, beloved, without shame), "silver and gold have I none."

And all the glory that He himself had while He was on earth,

was the glory of *a Prophet*. He is now, it is true, glorified as a *Priest*, (Heb. v. 5.) and He will be hereafter glorified *as a King*. (Matt. xxv. 31.) But the only glory He had when He was here, was that of *a Prophet*. “He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.” And so with us. Our present treasure is that of “scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.”

Our Lord Jesus is the Prophet like unto Moses, who had been promised of old. God saw Moses face to face. He spake with him, as a man speaketh unto his friend, saying of him, “with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold.” In all this high prerogative, Moses was the shadow of the Son of God. Moses had access to God. First he was on the heights of the hill with Him beyond the region of thunder and tempest ; then within the cloud of glory, as it stood at the door of the temporary Tabernacle ; and lastly in the very holy of holies, when the Tabernacle itself was reared (Ex. xxiv. xxxiii. xxv. 22.) And he stood in all that nearness to God, whenever he pleased, and without blood—though even Aaron, we know, could be there only once a year, and that not without blood—all this telling us in affecting and intelligible language, of the divine personal worthiness of our Prophet, of the Godhead-glory of Him, whose shadow Moses was, who was then in the bosom of the Father, and has now spoken to us.

And what Moses learnt on the top of the hill, or within the cloud of glory, or from off the Mercy Seat in the Holiest, was just the secret which the Son has now brought out from the bosom of the Father. Moses learnt there the *grace* of God, and saw “the glory of goodness.” (Ex. xxxiii. 19.) Blessed vision? And so the only begotten Son was among us “full of grace and truth.”

But the services which the Lord renders us as our Prophet are various ; and in this variety, we shall find the special character of this Gospel by St. John fully maintained.—In the opening of St. Matthew there the Lord, as the Prophet, revealed the mind of God touching the conduct of his people, interpreting the law in its extent and purity, thus determining the divine standard, and apply-

ing it to the conscience. He prescribed the order and ways of the Saints, so as to make them worthy of the regeneration and the kingdom, calling the soul into exercise towards God, and giving it its due ends and objects. (See Matt. v.—vii.) But in our Gospel, He is the Prophet in a higher character. He declares “the Father,” and reveals the “heavenly” things. He speaks as the One who had “ascended into heaven,” and was “from above.” (John iii. 13. 31.) It is not so much our conduct, as God’s thoughts that He here tells us of. He tells us of the mysteries of life and judgment ; He declares the love of the Father, the works and glories of the Son, and the place and actings of the Holy Ghost in and for the Church of God. He is, in this Gospel, the Prophet of the secrets of the Father’s bosom, disclosing the most hidden ways of the Sanctuary. He here speaks as the Word, who was with God, and was God, giving us such knowledge as a mere walk on the earth in righteousness and service, would not have needed, but such as makes us nothing less than “friends.” (John xv. 15.) And gives us communion, in knowledge, with the ways of “the Father of glory.” (Eph. i. 17.)

Such is the variousness of the Lord’s exercise of His prophetic office, and such, I judge, the peculiar exercise of it, which we have in this Gospel, the exercise of it in its *highest* department, again making this Gospel so peculiarly precious to the Church. And when the gathering of the Church in this present “day of salvation” is over, and *all* have come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, we shall not lose our Lord as our prophet. We shall listen to Him as such, even in the kingdom. His lessons will feed us for ever. Solomon was *a Prophet* as well as *a Priest* and *a King*. His servants stood continually before him, and all kings of the earth sought his presence to hear him. The Queen of Sheba came to prove him with hard questions, and he answered her in all her desire. When she beheld all his ways, the *king’s* magnificence, the *priest’s* ascent to the house of God, and the *prophet’s* wisdom, these were altogether more than a match for her heart—the half had not been told her—“there was no more spirit in her.”

And so in the coming kingdom, we shall have that which shall fill the eye with glory, give the heart its satisfied affections, ever feed the still enlarging thoughts of our minds with the treasures of wisdom that are hid in our divine Prophet, and withal give our ears the music of his praise for ever. And blessed are they who *now thirst* after Jesus, for *then* they shall be *filled*.

But let me here say, for my own admonition as for my brethren, that we should constantly suspect and dread all mere effort of mind, while listening to the words of our Prophet, that is, while reading the Scriptures. I am never conscious that God is my Teacher, when I am putting my mind to an effort. The Spirit is a *ready* Teacher, as well as a *ready* Writer. And the light of the Spirit, though it may shine at times through our darkness but dimly, yet it will always evidence itself with more or less certainty. And let us remember also that it is a *Temple* light, a light that suits the Sanctuary. It was in the holy place, that the candlestick stood; and so the intelligence that is awakened in the soul by the Holy Ghost, is attended by the spirit of devotion and communion. It is a *Temple* light still, it leads us to God Himself. And O that we may know nothing, beloved, but *by* His teaching and *for* His glory!

I have already noticed the Lord's different exercise of His prophetic office in St. Matthew's Gospel and in this. In His *final* discourses with His elect, after His public ministry is over, as given us by these two Evangelists, the same characteristic difference is still to be clearly discerned. In Matthew He talks with them in the *Mount of Olives* about *Jewish* matters, (xxiv—xxv.) but here He leads them in spirit into *heaven*, to open to them the Sanctuary there, and to tell them of *heavenly* secrets. (xiii—xvii.) For Matthew all through presented the Lord in Jewish connection, but this Gospel, as we have seen, concerns itself immediately with the Church, whose calling and glory are heavenly. And accordingly the Lord now takes His seat, not on the Mount of Olives to tell His remnant of Israel's sorrows and final rest, but in heaven, to disclose to His saints the actings of their High Priest there, and their own peculiar sorrows and blessings as the Church

of God, during the age of that heavenly Priesthood. The heavenly Priesthood is the great subject throughout these chapters, and on them I would now somewhat more particularly meditate, remembering that it is the Lord only who teaches to profit.

XIII—XVII.—All these chapters form one section of our Gospel ; but I will consider them in distinct portions, as their contents seem to me to suggest.

XIII.—Here at the opening, the Lord's action—*washing the disciples' feet*, is an exhibition of one great branch of His heavenly service.

His service, as our High Priest, the Lord did not enter on, till He had accomplished His passion on earth, and ascended into the heavens ; and thus it was not, as we read here, till “ after the supper was ended,” that He took a towel and girded Himself to wash His disciples' feet. For “ the supper ” was the exhibition of His passion and death, as He had said, “ take, eat, this is my body.” And accordingly the Lord seems to go through the whole of this mystic scene, in the consciousness that He had now finished His sufferings—had ascended and was looking back on His saints—for it is introduced by these words, “ having loved His own *which were in the world* ”—words that suggest the apprehension He now had of His saints being still in the world, while He had left them for higher and holier regions. And in the sense of all this, and that He was still, though glorified again in and with the Father, the gracious servant of their need and infirmities, He girds Himself with a towel and washes their feet—thus giving them to know that He was abiding in the heavenly Sanctuary, just to impart to them the constant virtue of the “ holiness ” which, as their High Priest, He ever carried for them on His forehead before the throne of God.* (Exod. xxviii.)

Thus there is a difference between the mystic import of “ the supper,” and of this subsequent “ washing of the feet,” and the

* The supper is not noticed in this Gospel, save by reference. And this is in beautiful keeping with its general character ; for it is, as we have already seen, the Gospel of the Son, the Gospel of the *glory* rather than of the *humiliation* of Jesus. And therefore we get Him, as here in this chapter, in His Priesthood, but we do not see Him in His passion as at the supper.

difference I judge, to be the same as between "the day of atonement" and "the ashes of the Red Heifer," under the law. The day of atonement like the supper, set forth the virtue of *the blood* of the Son of God, the ashes of the Heifer like this washing, the virtue of *the intercession* of the Son of God. The day of atonement was but one day in the Jewish year, a great annual day of reconciliation, on which the sin of Israel was put away once for all; the ashes of the Heifer were provided for every day's transgressions, for all the occasional defilements which any Israelite might contract, while passing through the year. So with the blood-shedding first, and the priestly intercessions of the Son of God afterwards: as a scripture says, "for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the *death* of His Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His *life*."

And we have the same blessings in the same order in another form, viz.—*the paschal Lamb* had once and for ever redeemed Israel out of Egypt, but in the wilderness, it was *the intercession of Moses* that turned away wrath from the occasional trespasses of the Camp of God. And so the blood of Jesus our Passover, and intercession of Jesus our Mediator—the *supper* first and then the *washing of the feet*, the *death* here and then the *life* in heaven for us. He that is once washed in the blood needeth not save to wash his feet, and that washing of his feet, that removal of the soil which the saint gathers in his walk along this earth day by day, the High Priest who is in heaven for him accomplishes by his presence and intercession there. He is the *Mediator* of the new covenant as well as the Blood of it.

Thus the love of the Son of God for the Church, as it had been *from* everlasting, so must it be *to* everlasting, as it is here written, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them *unto the end*." Every age and scene must witness the same love in some of its services, and in its abiding fervour and truth. No change of time could affect it. The dreariness of this world and glories of heaven found it in His heart the same. Neither sorrow nor joy, suffering nor glory, could touch it for a moment. His death here and His life in heaven alike declare it. Nay much

more. He had served her in this love before the world was, when He said, "lo I come"—and in the kingdom after the world, He will serve her still in the same love, making His saints to sit down to meat, while He waits on their joy. (Luke xii. 37.)

Such *was* the Lord, such *is* the Lord, and such will He be in His unceasing service of love towards His saints, and He here tells them to be His imitators. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." He expects to see among us on earth, the copy of that which He is daily doing for us in heaven. He is there daily washing our feet, bearing our need, and meeting our defilements before the throne; and He would have us daily washing one another's feet, bearing one another's infirmities, and helping one another's joy, here on the footstool.

This action and teaching of the Lord was thus a taking of the Church, like Moses before, up into the Mount to shew her the patterns, according to which the things on earth were to be made. Moses then stood above the Law, beyond the region of fire and tempest, and so the Church here. The disciples here are called up in spirit into the heavenly Sanctuary, and there shown the ways of the High Priest in His daily love and care of them, and they are told to go down and do likewise. As was said to Moses, "see thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount." The time for the taking of Moses into the Mount to *abide there*, had not then come. He was then only to visit it, that he might see the patterns, and receive orders. And so here. The Church was not yet ready for the glory, and for the Father's house. "Where I go," says the Lord to the disciples, "thither ye cannot come." They shall follow afterwards, as the Lord here further promises, but for the present there was to be only a sight of the patterns on the Mount, that they might copy them on the earth. But *love* alone can fashion those copies, for love is the artificer of the originals in heaven. As the Lord here again says, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one to another." It is not as of old, the skill of such as "work in brass" that will do now, but the skill of such as "walk in love," The

fashioning of any kind thought in the heart toward a brother, the arming of the mind with power to bear and forbear in love; the goings forth of the soul in sympathies, and the moulding off or softening down of any hard or selfish affection : these are the copies of the heavenly patterns. It is only as "dear children" we can be "imitators of God." (Eph. v. 1.) And what comfort is this. When the Lord would appoint on earth the witnesses of His own ways in heaven, He tells us to love one another, to wash one another's feet! What a sight of Him, though within the veil, does this give us! "He shows His thoughts how kind they be." What manner of daily occupation of our Priest in his Sanctuary on high is here disclosed to us!

And, beloved, let me here admonish myself and you, to seek to walk more amid these witnesses of the Lord than we do. For this would be our assurance before Him, and our joy among ourselves. If our ways were steady unwavering ways of love, we should be ever walking as in the Sanctuary, in the midst of the shadows and emblems of Christ; we should have the Lord's thoughts in all their kindness and constancy ever before us, and what joy and assurance would that give us. No suspicions of His love, no cloudings of doubt and fear, could then gather on the soul, but we should hear Him with our ears, and see Him with our eyes, and handle Him with our hands, for all that ear, or eye, or hand, met from one another would thus witness as well as savour of His love. This indeed, beloved, would be a sweet dwelling "in the house of the Lord," a blessed beholding of "the beauty of the Lord," which Prophets and righteous men of old so desired. (Ps. xxvii. 4.) But all this display of *glorious* love, the poor heart of man is not prepared for. Peter expresses this common ignorance. He does not yet understand this connection between *glory* and *service*. He follows his human thoughts, and says, "thou shalt never wash my feet." But Peter was to know all this by and by, as His Lord here promises, for Peter and His Lord were one. But Judas must be separated. "I speak not of you all," said the Lord. The presence of the Traitor in the midst of the Church up to this solemn moment, was needed, for

the Scripture had said, "he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." Judas must receive the sop from the Lord's own hand. The pledge of love must be given and despised, ere Satan could enter; for it is the rejection of love that matures the sin of man, as the remaining unmoved by this signal mark of kindness from the hand of His Master perfected the sin of Judas, and Satan then entered. Satan's indwelling is not here noticed till the sop was refused—as man in this dispensation of ours, has despised love and thus matured his sin—as the Lord afterwards says, "if I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." (xv. 24.) But having now resisted the love of the Gospel, man has "gone his way," as Judas here, having received the sop, "went out" to betray Him who had given it. And our Evangelist adds—"it was night." Solemn words—night *in* man, and night *for* Jesus.

But He at once looks beyond this night, for dark as it was to be to Him, it was to open into the perfect day. Jesus would be glorified in God *at once*, for God was glorified in Him. Indeed He was the only Son of Man in whom God ever was glorified. He had kept the nature without spot, and was now about on the cross to present it to God a sheaf of untainted human fruit, fitted for God's garner. Man in Jesus had been glorified, for all that had proceeded from Him, all that had been drawn out of Him, was according to God. (xiv. 30, 31.) Not one speck sullied the moral beauty of man in Jesus. Man in Jesus had not come short of the glory of God. And God who had thus been glorified in Him, would therefore glorify Him in Himself. But as to all beside, it was altogether otherwise. Jesus could go *at once* to God, by virtue of all this moral glory, but as to all beside, it matters not whether saints or unbelievers, whether Peters or opposing Pharisees, there could not be this. A place with God must be *prepared* ere even the saints could be gathered into God's garner (xiv. 1); and therefore the Lord here says to them, "ye shall seek Me, and as I said *unto the Jews*, whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say *to you*."

This day of His own glory in God, Jesus here anticipates,

saying, as soon as the Traitor was gone out, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." And so, by and by, there will be room again for the display of the glory, when the Son of Man shall have gathered out of His kingdom all things that offend, and all that do iniquity, when the Traitor shall again "go out," then shall the glory be witnessed, and the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the kingdom of their Father. The floor once purged, the sheaves of glory will be gathered into the garner.*

XIV—XVI.—Having thus passed, in spirit, through the night, and taken His place in the day that lay beyond it, the Lord now turns to His disciples, and in these chapters, as the Prophet of the heavenly things, instructs and comforts them, telling them of the mystery of His own heavenly Priesthood, and of their calling, and duties, and blessings, as the Church of God still sojourning on earth during that Priesthood.

The heavenly Priesthood of the Son of God, in other words, the present Dispensation, during which He is on the Father's throne, and we in "the kingdom of God's dear Son," was a secret with God hidden from the thoughts of Israel altogether. "The little while," was a stage in the divine procedure, of which both the Jews and the disciples were equally ignorant. (John vii. 36. xvi. 17.) They had all thought that Christ was to abide for ever, for their prophets had chiefly spoken of Him in connection with earthly dominion. There were however many intimations, both from prophecy and from history, which might have prepared them for this. Thus, Joseph's residence and glory in Egypt, and during that time his forgetfulness of his kindred in Canaan, till stress of famine brought them to him, had clearly typified this mystery.—So had Moses' sojourn in Midian. (See Acts vii.) We may judge, no doubt, that both Joseph and Moses had constant recollections of their own people, and many a desire towards them, while separated from them—but it was an *untold* desire.

* I would notice here the assurance of heart which the consciousness of love at all times gives us. Peter and John are not at all alarmed at the Lord's solemn hints about the Traitor, but they rather take counsel together to search and find out the meaning of those hints, and who it was that should do this thing. Could our hearts so stand, beloved, before the searchings and discernings of the Spirit of judgment? Conscious love is bold as a lion.

So we know that the Lord is now mindful of Jerusalem, her walls are continually before Him, engraven on the palms of His hand. But apparently He is to them as a man astonished, and as a mighty man that cannot save.

And beside those typical histories, or allusions, the Prophets had spoken directly of this mystery. They had foretold Jerusalem's *widowhood*, which was to continue for a season. Moses at the beginning had left a standing testimony with Israel, that the Lord for a time would hide His face from them, and provoke them to jealousy by those who were "no people." (Deut. xxxii.) David had said that Messiah, as his Lord, should for a while sit at the right hand of God. (Ps. cx.) Isaiah had a vision of Christ in the heavenly glory during a season of judgment on Israel. (Is. vi.) Ezekiel saw the glory leave the city, and then *after a season* return to it. And the Lord had said by Hosea, "I will go and return unto my place, till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face : in their affliction they will seek me early." In his own ministry the Lord Jesus had already referred to this same mystery. In St. Matthew, he corrects the thought that Christ was to abide for ever, by a recital of those scriptures, which spoke of the rejection of the Stone by the builders. In St. Luke he had shewn, by the parable of the Nobleman going into a far country, that there was to be an interval between the *first* appearing of Messiah, and his appearing *in His kingdom*. But now in our Gospel, he treats of this matter more fully, shewing the character of this interval, or of His session for a while at the right hand of God in heaven, for it is in this that the Church has her immediate interest, and this Gospel, as we know, especially deals with the calling and interests of the Church.

Having therefore, now closed His public ministry, and being in retirement with the Church, he occupies himself with this subject. In the action of the 13th chapter, in the teaching of these 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters, and again in the action of the 17th, it is *the heavenly Priesthood* that He is variously either exhibiting or teaching. And thus does He shew that His present interval of separation from Israel, He is blessedly occupying for the Church.

Jerusalem was to know a season of orphanage, but not so the Church. (Lam. v. 3, and John xiv. 18, Gr.) In sympathies, in intercessions, in the diligence and wakefulness of one whose eye is over them, He is all action towards His saints now. He is separated from His brethren according to the flesh, it is true, but He is, the while, like Moses tending the flock of his Father at the Mount of God.

And I have been much struck with the whole expression and tone of that scene of Moses in Midian. (Ex. ii. 18—iii.) There is such an air of holy solitariness, and yet of family joy about it—nothing is allowed to appear, but the father, the wife, the children, the flock, the Mount of God, and God himself. In the midst of those beloved ones, and far away from the pollutions of Egypt, and the unbelief of Israel, we see the man of God. We see him there, like the Son of God now, cast in among strangers, first giving them *deliverance* from their oppressors, and then *life*, (i.e. opening to them the well of water, the constant symbol of life), and then tasting among them the sweet comforts of a beloved home and family, in holy retirement. O beloved, would that his family now were refreshing the solitudes of the Son of God better than they do! O that there was a more “beautiful flock” for His care and tendance at the Mount of God! A more joyous scene to compensate Him for His present loss of Israel! But He has laid down His life for them, He has given Himself for the sheep, and in His love He abideth faithful. But this only by the way. These chapters do, however, lead me further to say, that the ministry of the Son had done nothing that was effectual upon the hearts of His disciples. For so the divine order ran—the Father had worked hitherto, the Son was now working, but the Holy Ghost had also to work, ere the Church could be set in her place. And thus it is not until now, we get the name of God fully revealed. The revelation of it shines gradually brighter and brighter as dispensations advance.

In Genesis i. it is simply “God” that we see and hear. It is “God who there goes through the six day’s work, and then rests on the seventh.—But in Genesis ii. it is “the Lord God” that we

see and hear. We have the creation of the heavens and the earth again given to us, but all is now under the hand of "the Lord God," and not of "God" simply.

And these are thus two stages in God's revelation of Himself. In the 1st chap. we see Him coming forth as God simply, for His own *delight* and *glory*. He takes His full delight in the work, beholding it all to be very good, and He glorifies Himself by the work, setting over it one in His own image, the representative of Himself. This is what we get here in the 1st chapter, where "God" only is seen, and seen as having respect thus to His own *delight* and *glory* in the works of His hands.

But in the 2nd chapter we see "the Lord God," that is, God in a covenanted character, God entered upon purposes and plans for the blessing of His creature. And therefore much of the previous detail of the work, as it proceeded under the hand of "God," is here omitted, and many things are here brought into view which had no place before. Thus we have here in strong relief, and which we had not at all in the 1st chapter, the Garden, and the River, the manner of creating the man, of investing him with dominion, of forming the woman, and of instituting their union—and we have also the mystic Trees, and the Commandment with its penalty—for all these concerned the place and blessing of the creature in covenant with "the Lord God."*

Thus did He begin to unfold His name to us; and after these first notices of "God" and "the Lord God," we get the name, "God Almighty" published to Abram. This was a further revelation of Himself. And this was done, when Abram was "past age," and had nothing to lean upon, but the almightiness, or all-sufficiency of God. (Gen. xvii. 1.) And in this name, which declared this needed sufficiency, God led him and Isaac and Jacob after Him, for they were all strangers and pilgrims on the earth, having nothing but the promise of an Almighty Friend for their stay and staff. (Gen. xxviii. xxxv. xlviii.) But in process of

* The title, "the Lord" or "Jehovah," clearly expresses *God in covenant*. This we learn from Ex. vi. 1—6. And we are conscious, when we utter the word "Lord," that we speak of one nearer to us, more our own, than when we say simply "God."

time, God was known to their children by another name. Bringing them into the covenant, into the promised inheritance, He calls Himself "Jehovah," that is, the covenant God of Israel. (Ex. vi. 1—6.) And under God as Jehovah, Israel take their seat in Canaan.

But still all this did not communicate God in the full glory of His name. There was *grace* in God, and gifts by grace, which these ways of His did not fully unfold. But this is done in the name which is now published to us, the name of "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." This is the full name or glory of our God, and grace and the gifts of grace are effectually brought to us by that dispensation which publishes it to us.*

Thus it was not until the present age that the full name and glory of our God was published. The Father had been working, it is true, (as was observed under chapter v. see p. 136.) in all ages of the Jewish times; but still Israel was put nationally under God simply as "Jehovah." The revelation of "the Father" had to wait for the ministry of the Son, and certain dispensations had to finish their course, ere the Son could come forth. The Son could not have been the minister of the law—such ministry would not have been worthy of Him, who dwelt in the bosom of the Father. It was committed to Angels; and the Son did not come forth in ministry, till the "great salvation" was ready to be published. (Heb. ii. 1, 2.) So the manifestation of the Holy Ghost waited for its due time. The Holy Ghost could not wait on the ministry of the law, any more than the Son. Smoke, and lightning, and the voice of thunder were there, (Exod. xix.) but the Holy Ghost came forth with His gifts and powers to wait on the ministry of the Son, on the publication of the great salvation. (Heb. ii. 4.) The Spirit of God could not be a spirit of bondage gendering fear—the law may do that, but the Holy Ghost must gender confidence.

* The believer will ever take his sweetest delight in the last or fullest revelation of God. And in this, the believer, and the mere man of science are distinguished. The merely philosophic man will allow the divine hand to be displayed in creation; he will own "God" in the plants and the cattle, for instance, but the garden and the river, and the married pair which "the Lord God" has do with, have no attractions for him; but these are the objects that chiefly engage *the believer's* thoughts.

“As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.”

Thus till the Son had finished His work, the Holy Ghost could not come forth. For the heart must first be purged from an evil conscience, so that the Temple might be sanctified for the indwelling Spirit, and the Holy furniture (that is, the spirit of liberty and adoption, and the knowledge of glory) must be prepared for this Temple, and all this could be done only by the *death, resurrection, and ascension of the Son*. And thus the revelation of the Holy Ghost waited for these things. He had been, it is true, the Holy power in all from the beginning. He had spoken by the Prophets. He was the strength of Judges, and of Kings. He was the power of faith, of service, and of suffering, in all the people of God. But all this was below the place which He now takes in the Church. His indwelling in us, as in His Temple, had not been spoken of, of old, but now He does so dwell, spreading out within us a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. As the spirit of wisdom, He gives us “the mind of Christ,” spiritual senses for the discerning of good and evil. As the Spirit of worship, He enables us to call God “Father,” and Jesus “Lord,” and makes intercession in us with groanings that cannot be uttered. He sheds abroad in the heart “the love of God,” and causes us “to abound in hope.” He is *in* us a well of water springing up into everlasting life, and He is the source also of “rivers of living waters,” flowing forth *from* us, to refresh the weary. And He forms the Saints together as “a spiritual house,” where “spiritual sacrifices” are offered, no longer admitting “a worldly sanctuary,” and “carnal ordinances.” For they are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit, and gifts causing them all to grow up into Christ in all things, are dispensed among them.

In these ways and for these services, the Holy Ghost was now to dwell in the Saints, telling them “plainly of the Father,” and “taking of the things of Christ,” and shewing them unto them. And this would give the Church her full form and standing, having thus communion in knowledge, through the Holy Ghost,

with the Father and the Son. And thus it is *God* and not *ourselves* that we have now *immediately* to do with. In the law it was otherwise. The law dealt with *us* immediately, saying “thou shalt, and thou shalt not.” But now it is *God* we have first to do with. We are absolutely summoned away from ourselves, and are not to remember whether we were Jews or Greeks. We have *God* to look to, *God* to hear, *God* to do with. And this is the highest possible point of blessing for a poor sinner to apprehend—so blessed is it, that Satan does what he can to keep us short of it, to make the ear heavy to the voice of God, the eye dim to the ways and works of God, and the heart unresponsive to the heart of God. He would fain busy us with anything, that the light of the glory of the Gospel of Christ, *who is the image of God*, may not shine in. He makes some busy with thoughts of their *righteousness*, and others busy with thoughts of their *sins*, that He might keep them, either through vain glory or fear, apart from God Himself.

Now to draw the disciples out from a mere Jewish place into this elevation of the Church of God, and by this to comfort them under the sense of His absence, is the Lord’s great purpose in the discourse which He holds with them in these Chapters—the like to which never passed between the sons of men—the heart and mind of God had never before so largely and blessedly communicated their treasures to the desires and thoughts of his people, as now the Lord was doing. Most sacred moments indeed of communion between heaven and earth were these.

At the beginning the Lord says, “let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.” This at once gives them notice of another object of faith than what they as yet had. God, in the sense of these words, had been already known by Israel. The disciples, in their Jewish place, were already believers in *God*. The Lord here allows that, as He had before asserted, speaking to the woman of Samaria, “we (i. e. Jews) know what we worship.” The Jews had God; their faith was not wrong, but only defective; and the Lord would now fill it out. He would now have them to know the *Father through the Son*—

and the whole of this discourse with his disciples furthers this design. He speaks particularly of the Father, and promises the Comforter to make these things, (the things of the Father, and the Son) known to them.*

This was the character of grace which this gospel at the beginning intimated, when St. John wrote—"to as many as received him, to them gave he to become *the sons* of God." And this early notice of the value and power of the Son's ministry, is here in these chapters largely unfolded. But while this is doing, we have several forms of Jewish ignorance brought out—necessarily so, I may say, for Israel did not stand in this knowledge, into which the Lord was now leading them. *Peter* expresses ignorance of the infirmity of the flesh, and boasts, "I will lay down my life for thy sake." *Thomas* is ignorant of Christ's departure, and separation from this earth, and says, "Lord we know not whither thou goest," for Israel had been taught to say that Christ was to abide for ever. *Philip* betrays his unacquaintedness with the Father, for it was not the knowledge of the Father in the Son that Israel had been led into. *Judas* wonders at any glory, but the manifested worldly glory of Messiah, for such was Israel's hope. And they *all* stand amazed at the mystery of "the little while." But out of these thoughts, the heavenly Prophet is here leading them. They had been already drawn out from the apostate nation, as God's remnant accepting Jesus as Messiah come from *God*, but they had

* The Saints generally, have somewhat lost the *filial* affection. Thoughts of *the Father* are not so familiar to their souls, or so prominent in their confessions of faith, as the New Testament would inspire. And I see this rebuked by the Spirit of God in one very affecting instance. St. Paul was *the Father* in the faith of the Saints at Corinth—for in Christ Jesus he had begotten them, as he says, through the Gospel. But they had listened to others, and been drawn away somewhat from him. He then pleads with them, as a Father, and claims from them as from children. (See 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15.) But in this, he presents our heavenly Father, as we see in (2 Cor. vi. 13—18.) And thus we can now use all his pleadings with the Saints at Corinth, as expressing the desires of our Father towards all his Saints. He watches with gracious jealousy over any decline of the *filial* affection towards himself. He says "my *Son* give me thy heart," it is the heart of *children* that He desires, as Paul did among the Saints at Corinth. As the Lord Jesus is jealous over us, that we walk before Him as His *espoused* one, so is the Father jealous over us, that we walk before Him as His *adopted* one. What joy should it be to our hearts, that we are the favoured objects of such love as this, dear brethren. But these hearts of ours are dull to apprehend it.

still to know the Son as come from *the Father*, who had, while He was with them, been shewing them *the Father*, who was now about to return to *the Father*, and would come again to take them home to *the Father*. These were the great things of His love, that their divine prophet here reveals to them, but they were as yet strange things unto them. Truths, however, they are, upon which all that is peculiar to the Church rests.

But I may observe, that the course of our Lord's own thoughts through this conversation, is only for a while interrupted by these defective Jewish thoughts of His disciples. His purpose was to elevate them to the sense of their calling as the Church of God, and thus to comfort them ; and that purpose He steadily follows, however He may for a time have to rebuke their slowness of heart. Thus in the interruption occasioned by Peter, (xiii. 33., xiv. 1.) the Lord, in answering Peter, is called to contemplate and foretell his faithlessness, and denial of Him ; but this does not turn out of their course the thoughts of kindness about him and the rest of them, which the Lord was pursuing. "Let not your hearts be troubled," says the gracious Master, *immediately* after forewarning Peter of his baseness. So at the close of the conversation. He had to tell His too confident disciples, that the hour was then at hand, when every one of them would go "to his own and leave Him alone ;" and yet, without allowing an interruption of His flow of love towards them for a single moment, He at once assumes His own thoughts, saying to them, "these things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace—in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And so, beloved, with His saints ever since. We may, through our own folly, have to listen to the "cock crowing"—have to receive rebuke and go out and weep ; but the heart of Jesus does not repent of His purposed kindness toward us. His purpose is to save, and He will save—His purpose is to bless, and who shall hinder ? He has not beheld iniquity in them. They are to have *peace* accomplished for them by His death, *life* brought to them by His resurrection, and *glory* to be hereafter theirs at His return.

These are their blessings, and of these He tells them here, for their comfort under the sense of His going away.

The works that Jesus did, in St. Matthew's gospel, are owned to be those of the Son of David. (xii. 23.) They are there as the seals of His Messiahship; but here the Lord offers them to His disciples as the seals of His *Sonship of the Father*. He would have them looked upon, not merely as tokens that He could *order the kingdom of Israel* according to the promises of the prophets; (Is. xxxv. 5, 6.) but as witnesses that He was the dispenser of *the Father's* grace and power, for He says "believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very work's sake." And this is in full consistency with our gospel. And the "greater works" which He immediately afterwards promises that believers in Him should do, were to be, as I judge, works of the same character, works that were to savour of *the Father's* grace, such as the bringing poor condemned sinners into the liberty of children of God. As St. Paul says, "in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." And so it is still. Sinners are still brought into the liberty of dear children. "I will not leave you *orphans*," says the Lord in this place, "I will come to you, because I live, ye shall live also." No orphanage for them, no lamentation from them as there was from Israel, that they were fatherless. (Lam. v. 3.) The *adoption* of the saints during the *orphanage* of Israel, is here brought out by the Lord in terms of deep and wondrous meaning. They were to know that "He was in the Father, and they in Him, and He in them." The Father, the Father, is the holy burthen here?

And there is a little action of the Lord's here that I must notice. At the close of the 14th chap. He says, "peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" by this telling them, that ere He left this world, He would leave His peace behind Him, peace for them as sinners, accomplished by His death. And after thus telling them of *peace*, He says "arise, let us go hence."—Upon which we may assume that they all rise from the paschal table, and walk forth toward the Mount of Olives, and then it is that He at once presents Himself to them, as in resurrection, their life, the source

of quickening power, saying, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches."

Thus there is a beauteous significancy in the whole action. He sits at the paschal table till *peace* had been pronounced, for on that table the pledges of their peace were at that moment spread, but as He rises from it, He tells them of their resurrection-life, life that they were to know as united with Him risen above the power of death, the true vine. And He tells them that there is no other life but this, saying, "if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is *withered*." And having thus disclosed to them the root of life, He shews them the joys, and holy prerogatives of this life, teaching them that they were to have His own joy, the joy of the Son, fulfilled in them, and were also to enter into the dignity and grace of friendship with their Lord, and to assure themselves that His glory and their blessing were now but one interest. And the Lord here tells them that the Father's great purpose now was, to glorify the Son as this Vine or Head of life, that having planted it as the only witness of life in this earth which is the scene of death, the Father would watch over it with the care and diligence of a husbandman. This the Lord here shews to be the Father's *present* care, to have the vine in beauty and fruitfulness, to glorify Jesus as the HEAD OF LIFE, as by and by He will glorify Him on the throne of glory as HEIR OF ALL THINGS. In old times God's eye, as her husbandman, was upon the land of Israel, (Deut. xi. 12.) but now it is watching over this vine, which His own hand has planted.

All this told the disciples of exceeding riches of grace, but withal He tells them, that this union with Him was to separate them from the world, this friendship with Him was to expose them to the world's hatred. The world was soon to express its full enmity to God, and then to them. The revelation of God in love, the revelation of the Father in and by the Son, was soon about to be fully refused by the world. This was hatred indeed, hatred "without a cause," hatred for love. The Cross of Christ was soon to present man's fullest hatred meeting God's fullest love. Ignorant of *the Father*, it might be still zealous for *God*,

and think to do God service by killing the children of the Father. For there may be zeal for the synagogue, yea and for the God of the synagogue, with entire separation from the spirit of that dispensation which publishes riches of grace and reveals the Father in the Son.

But this view of the sorrows which his Saints might endure from the world, leads the Lord to exhibit the services of the promised Comforter in them and for them, still more blessedly. He tells them that the Comforter would stand *for* them *against* this world, convicting it of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, but at the same time dwelling in them the witness of their Father's love, and their Lord's glory. This comfort He provides for them against the day of the worlds hatred.

And here let me observe, that the Spirit was to be received of *the Father*. God had approved Jesus of Nazareth: (Acts ii. 22.) but it was of *the Father* that the Holy Ghost was to be received and He would approve His presence according to this. Look at the character of His presence in the Church immediately on His being given. (Acts ii.) What an oil of gladness, what a spirit of liberty, and largeness of heart, is He in the Saints there? Jesus had received Him in the ascended place, where He Himself had been made full of joy with God's countenance, and giving Him forth from such a place, He manifests Himself here accordingly, imparting at once something of that joy of God's countenance into which their Lord had then entered. They *gladly* received the word, ate their bread with *gladness* and *praised* God. And this joy could easily dry up other sources. They parted with what might have secured *human* delights, and provided for *natural* desires. The Holy Ghost in them, was joy and liberty and largeness of heart. It was the Spirit "of the Father." It was the reflection on the Saints here of that light which had now fallen on Jesus in the Holiest—the oil had run down from the Beard to the skirts of the clothing.

Indeed we can form but a poor idea of the value of such a dispensation as this which the Comforter was now to bring, to a soul that had been under the spirit of bondage and of fear gendered

by the law. What thoughts of judgment to come, were now bidden to depart from the soul! what fears of death were now to yield to the consciousness of *present* life in the Son of God! and what would all this be but the anointing as with an oil of gladness. And the disciples, by this discourse, were under training for this joy and liberty. The schoolmaster was soon to give up his charge—his rod and his book of elements were now to be dispensed with, and in this discourse the Son is leading the children on their way home to the Father, from under such tutors and governors, and they are soon to reach it, there to know, through the Holy Ghost, the liberty and joy of adoption.

Such was this interesting hour to the Church. The Holy Ghost, the witness of the Father and the Son, and thus the Spirit of adoption, was soon to be imparted, and they were now led forth from the school of the law, to wait for it. With thoughts of the Father and of the Son, and of the Church's interests in all their love, the Holy Ghost was now soon to fill the Saints. And this accordingly He now does in our dispensation. He tells us, as the Lord here promises He should, of the delight that the Father has in the Son, of His purpose to glorify Him, and He tells us also of our place in that delight and that glory. He takes of these things, and the like, and shews them to us. This is the service which the Holy Ghost is now rendering to the Church. And I may here notice how sweetly this is typified in the intercourse that passed between Abraham's servant and Rebecca in (Gen. xxiv.) The whole of that scene set forth the election of a Bride for the Son by the Father—but the place which the servant occupies in it, is just the place of the Holy Ghost in the Church, ministering (as in divine grace) to the joys of the Son, and the Church, in perfecting the purposes of the Father's love.—In that scene the servant of Abraham tells Rebecca of the way in which God had prospered his master—what a favoured and beloved one Isaac was, how he had been “the child of old age,” and how Abraham had made him the heir of all his possessions. He then discloses to her, the counsels which Abraham had taken touching a wife for this much loved Son of his, and lets her see clearly her own election of God,

to fill that holy and honoured place. And at last he puts upon her, the pledges of this election and of Isaac's love.

How exquisite all this is. Nothing could be more touching and significant than the whole scene. Would that our hearts knew more the power of all this, under the Holy Ghost, as Rebecca knew it under the hand of Abraham's servant. It was because he had filled her with thoughts of Abraham and of Isaac, and of her own interest in them, that she was ready to go with this stranger alone across the desert. Her mind was formed by these thoughts, and she was prepared to say to her country, her kindred, to her father's house, "I will go." And the thoughts of our heavenly Father's love, and of our Isaac's delight in us, alone can give us holy separation from this defiled place where we dwell. Communion with the Father and the Son through the Comforter, is the only holy way of distinguishing the Church from the world. There may be the fear of a coming judgment working something of *actual* separation from it, or the pride of the Pharisee working *religious* separation from it, but the present knowledge of the Father's love and the hope of the coming glories of the Son, can alone work a *divine* separation from its course and its spirit.

The Father's love, of which the Comforter testifies, is an *immediate* love. It is the love of God that has visited the world in the gift of the Son (see iii. 16), but the moment this love of God is believed, and the message of reconciliation which it has sent forth is received, then are believers entitled, through riches of grace, to know *the Father's love*, a love that is an *immediate* love, as the Lord here tells us. (xvi. 26, 27.) It is of this love of the Father, as of the glory of the Son, that the Comforter tells us by the way homeward. He is our Companion for all the journey, and this is the theme of His discourse with us. How did the servant, I doubt not, as he accompanied Rebecca across the desert, tell her further of his master, adding many things to what he had told her in Mesopotamia. For he had been the confident of his master, and had known him from the beginning. He knew his desire for a son, and God's promise, and God's faithfulness. He knew of Abraham's victory over the kings, of his rescue of Lot, and

meeting with Melchisedek. He knew of the covenant, the pledge of the inheritance. He knew of the dismissal of Ishmael from the house, and of Isaac's walk in it without a rival—of the mystic journey up Mount Moriah, and of Isaac being thus alive from the dead. All this he knew, and all this doubtless he told her of, as they travelled on together, with these recollections and prospects delighting her, though her back were now turned, and turned for ever, upon her country and her father's house. And, beloved, were we more consciously "on the way" with the Comforter, the way would to us in like manner be thus beguiled by His many tales of love and glory, whispering of the Father and of the Son to our inmost souls.—Be it so with us, thy poor people, blessed Lord, more and more !

XVII.—After thus comforting them with the knowledge of their standing, as the Church of God, and thus, as it were, making gracious amends to them for His own present absence from them, and the hatred they were to suffer from the world, the Lord again exhibits, in this chapter, one of His priestly services, as He had done (as we have already seen) in the 13th. But the services are different, both, however, together constituting a full presentation of His ways as our High Priest, or Mediator, in the Heavenly Temple. In the 13th chapter, He had, as it were, laid one hand on the defiled feet of His saints, here He lays the other on the throne of God—forming thus a chain of marvellous workmanship reaching from God to sinners. In the 13th chapter, His body was girt, and He was stooping down towards our feet—here His eyes are lifted up, and He is looking in the face of the Father. What blessing that is asked for us, by One who fills up the whole distance between the bright throne of God, and our defiled feet, can be denied ? all must be granted—such an one is heard always, and all of joy and of glory is here claimed for us by Him.

Thus we get, beloved, the sufficiency and acceptance of the Advocate, and the fulness of His pleading. But we may notice an order in which he here makes His requests, and lays His claims before the throne.

First.—He makes request in behalf of the Father's own glory.

H H 2

“Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that *thy Son also may glorify thee.*” His first thought was thus upon the Father’s interest; as He had before taught His disciples, ere they presented their own desires and necessities, to say, “Our Father which art in heaven, *hallowed be thy name.*”

Life eternal the Lord here lays in the Father’s hand; saying, “as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him.” By this, our Mediator bows to the truth of God, which Satan of old had traduced, and which man had questioned. (Gen. iii. 4.) But He then adds, “and this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent”—by this, owning that life is now to be had only through redemption, that it is not the life of a *creature merely*, but of a *ransomed creature*, a life rescued for us from the power of death by the grace and might of the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour.

Secondly.—He claims His own glory. “Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” And this claim He then grounds upon His having finished the work, that had been given Him to do; saying, “I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” For this was a work, into which no blot had entered, in which, therefore, God could rest and be refreshed, as in His works of old;—a work which the Father might behold and say of it, “it is all very good,” in which He might again find a Sabbath.

And this I would here say, is the Believer’s comfort, that he sees his salvation depending on a finished work, in which God “smells a savour of rest.” At the beginning, on finishing the work of creation, God sanctified the seventh day, resting in full satisfaction in all that His hands had formed. But that rest man disturbed, so that God repented that He had made man on the earth. Again, in due time, the Lord provided for Himself another rest, erecting another Tabernacle in Canaan, and offering to Israel a place in that rest, giving them His Sabbath. (Exod. xxxi. 13.) By the sword of Joshua, this rest in Canaan was first made good to Israel (Josh. xxi. 44. xxiii. 1.) and then under the throne of

Solomon. (1 Chron. xxii. 9.) But Israel, like Adam, disturbed this rest—the land did not keep her Sabbath for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.) The blessed God has now found another and a sure rest. In the work finished by the Lord Jesus Christ (and which the Lord here presents to Him,) He again rests, as in His works of old, with fullest complacency. This finished work is altogether according to His mind. By the resurrection of the Lord, the Father has said of it, “behold it is very good.” It is His rest for ever, He has an abiding delight in it, His eyes and His heart are upon it continually. *The work of Christ accomplished for sinners has given God a rest.* That is a thought full of blessing to the soul. And the faith that duly estimates that work, gives the sinner entrance into the same rest. When faith sets a right value on the blood, there is rest, God’s own rest for the soul. “We which have believed do enter into rest.” But it is then that the Saint, or believing Sinner, begins his toil. The moment I rest as *a Sinner*, I begin my labour as *a Saint*. The rest for the Saint is a rest *that remaineth*; and therefore is it written again, “let us *labour* therefore to enter into that *rest*, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Thus the Sinner rests now, the Saint labours still, and will till the kingdom come.

Thirdly.—He prays for His people. He asks that they might be kept through the Father’s name, and sanctified through the Father’s truth, so that they might be one in the communion of the Son’s joy *now*; and He asks that they might be with Him where He is, and there behold His glory so that they might be one with Him in that glory hereafter. As it is written, “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” And these requests for his people He grounds simply on this, that they had received the Son’s testimony about the Father, had believed surely in the Father’s love. “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”

But how full of blessing it is, to see that we are presented before God simply as believing that love. How surely does it

tell us that the pleasure of our God is this, that we should know Him *in love*, know Him as the Father, know Him according to the words of Him who has come from His bosom. This is joy and liberty. And it is indeed only as having seen God in love, seen the Father, and heard the Father in Jesus, that makes us the Church of God. It is not the graces that adorn us, or the services we render, but simply that we know the Father. It is this which distinguishes the Church from the world, and gives her her standing, as here, within the notice of the throne of God. It is simply *this*, that the Mediator here tells the Father about us, that we have received His word, received the Son's testimony of love brought from the Father's bosom. And in this there is something most precious and comforting to the soul.

Thus does the divine Intercessor plead before the Throne. The Father's glory, His own, and His people's, are all provided for and secured ; and having thus poured forth the desires of His soul, He just commits "the world," the great enemy, to the notice of the *righteous* Father. "O righteous Father," the world hath not known thee." For it had now proved itself to be a world that indeed knew not the Father, that hated Him whom the Father had sent, and out of which the Lord was now sanctifying himself, and drawing his people. He does not here call for judgment upon it, but leaves it (as something with which, as our High Priest, he had nothing to do) simply under the notice of the "righteous Father," to whose judgment it belonged. It is merely as *being ignorant of the Father*, that the Lord here presents the world. He does not arraign her sins before the Throne, but simply presents her as thus ignorant of the Father ; as before when presenting the Church, He did not speak of her graces or services, as we saw, but simply this, *that she knew the Father*.

And as the knowledge of the Father makes the Church what she is, so this ignorance of the Father is that which makes the world what it is. The world is that which refuses to know God in love, so as to rejoice in Him. It will make up its own pleasures, and draw from its own resources ; it will have any thing, but the music and the ring and the fatted calf of the Father's

house. The world was formed by Satan of old, in the Garden of Eden. There the serpent beguiled the woman, and being listened to and spoken with, he formed the human mind according to his own pattern. We have the history and character of this evil work in Genesis iii. God's love and God's truth were then traduced by the enemy—man believed the slander and made God a liar. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, were then planted in the soul as master-powers (verse 6) ; and then conscience, and fear, and avoidance of God became the condition into which man was cast. The man and the woman began to know themselves that they were naked ; and then they hid themselves among the trees, retreating from the voice of God. And then from the covert where they lay, they send forth excuses for themselves, and challenges of God. “The serpent *beguiled* me and I did eat,” says Eve—“the woman whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat,” says Adam.

Such was man then, and such has the world been ever since. Man's own lusts are ruling him, with fear of God, and desired distance from Him, and the secret whisper of his soul within him is this, that all this mischief must lie at God's own door.

From such a world the saints are in spirit and in calling delivered, and the world itself left, as here, for judgment. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” The world had no place in Jesus. The prince of it came and only drew forth from Him the full witness of this, that He loved the Father, and would do as He had commanded. (xiv. 30, 31.) So the saints have left it. They have come forth from their covert at the voice of the Son ; they have heard of the Father's love, even towards them vile rebels ; they have believed it, and have walked forth in the sunshine of it. The promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, drew Adam forth from behind the trees of the garden ; though dead in sins, he believed this promise of life, and came forth accordingly, calling his wife, “the mother of all *living*.” And so, as we have seen in this chapter, it is just the believing the message of love, which the Son has

brought to us from the bosom of the Father, it is just this, that makes the Church what she is, an election out of the dark and distant regions, where the world dwells, and where the spirit of the world breathes. And it is, as we have also seen, the refusal to listen to this message of love, that keeps the world the world still. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." For men have only to receive God's word of reconciliation, to believe His love in the gift of His Son, and then to take their happy place in His Church among His chosen ones.

Here the third section of our Gospel ends. It has shown us Jesus as the High Priest of our profession doing His constant services for us—it has shewn us also Jesus, the Son of the Father, revealing the Father to the children. The blessed God had got Himself a name, the name of "Jehovah," by His signs and wonders in Egypt and Israel. (Jer. xxxii. 20.) But now was He getting Himself another name, a name of still richer grace, the name of "Father." This name He gets in the person and by the work of the Son of His love, and the power of it is now made effectual in the hearts of the children by the Holy Ghost.

Lo, these are parts of thy ways, our God and Father, but how little a portion of thee do our narrow souls understand and enjoy!

(TO BE CONTINUED IF THE LORD WILL.)

THE EARTHLY RELATIONS OF THE HEAVENLY FAMILY.

All that the mind of man naturally knows of the Gospel of the grace of God, it knows only to pervert from God's object in order to subserve its own interest. There are those who perceive in the Gospel a conservative principle and it becomes associated in their minds, with the preservation of the present order of things, and so far they will use it and uphold it. Others again perceive in it a

destructive element,—one which levels the existing order of things, and they will also use it as an engine to promote the ends they have in view. Now both these elements are assuredly to be found in the truth as it is in Jesus, and it is the spiritual mind which alone knows them, not as conflicting elements, but one as introductory to the other.

The personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was in many instances an inroad on all that was fair and orderly in the eyes of men. It was cast as a reproach upon Him that He associated with publicans and sinners, thus invading the social order which He found; and when He was in company with those who esteemed themselves wise and virtuous, by the neglect of some one of those conventional rules by which such society was upheld, He cast contempt upon it. “A certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him, and He went and sat down to meat; and when the Pharisee saw it he marvelled that He had not washed before dinner; and the Lord said unto him, now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye *Fools* did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also?” The ties of natural relationship were so dealt with by our Lord, as to lead the thoughts to those of another kind, founded on that which would secure permanent blessedness by virtue of union with Himself. “Then one said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee. But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? and He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.”

The character also in which Christianity was presented to the minds of the heathen, was as that which subverted the present order of things. We can and do see that it so acted on Judaism as a social system, but we do not so readily acknowledge that it so acted as a general principle. When Paul and Silas were dragged before the magistrates at Philippi, the charge against them was, “These

men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive *being Romans*."

This is a valuable testimony from impartial witnesses of the uncompromising character of Christianity; it could not amalgamate with Romanism; it must subvert the order established by the masters of the world, that it might establish its own blessed order on the ruins of the other. The same testimony as to the light in which the Gospel as preached by the Apostles, was received by those who heard them, is again afforded at Thessalonica. It was not received merely as a scheme of future salvation, but as an innovation on existing things. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, that there is another King, one Jesus."

But then on the other hand there are most explicit directions given to Christians as to their conduct in the several relations of life; entering very minutely into the relative duties of husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants. As subjects to earthly rulers, the directions are no less explicit, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work; to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." "Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour;" these and similar directions abounding in the practical application of the Epistles, most clearly show that there was room for proud men to raise questions and strifes of words as to subsisting relations being so entirely subverted by Christianity, that the believer had nothing to do with them.

Surely the possibility of the thought that a Christian was free from the authorities of the world, must have led to the oft repeated precepts with regard to submission. The danger ever would have been to have used our liberty for a cloke of maliciousness. The assertion that "in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, bond nor free," would necessarily have led to the conclusion in the minds of those who savoured the things that were of men and not the

things of God, that the Gospel had so broken in upon the natural order of things, as to leave men to self-will, independence, and misrule. Hence we find in the Apostolic writings the most minute directions given for the sustainment of those relationships which only subsist whilst we are in the flesh, and have no place at all in the glory in heaven. There Christ is "all and in all" and every other relationship is swallowed up in the relationship to Him, and to all saints as one with Him. This is known to faith now, but the exhibition of the manifold grace of God comes in here, in meeting all these natural relationships so as to sustain them by grace, and to make them spheres of service to the Lord.

There is *nothing* which shows real present deliverance from the world, more than walking in grace in these relationships, whilst realizing our oneness in Christ. Many have even been deterred from following on into the unity of the Spirit, by seeing Christians so little able to walk in grace, as to make unity in their eyes to be nothing more than the depressing of others in order to exalt self. Now I believe there has been an impatience which has prevented our minds from searching into the real principle on which these relations stand to a Christian. There is a great depth of truth at the bottom of them, and it has been thought a readier way on the one hand to assert Christian union as equality in the flesh ; and on the other to sustain the natural order by mere human arrangement or authority.

The whole natural order is disorganized by sin, and God must first separate from it to Himself, and then as He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. This was the principle of Judaism. (Lev. xx. 26.) This separation from existing things to Himself is the principle of the Church. But Christ is the power of separation as we see Luke v. 11. "They forsook all and followed Him." "And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother in a ship with Zebedee their Father, and he called them and they immediately left the ship and *their father*, and followed Him ;" and then we have the general doctrine, "he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me," "and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

The ruling principle of man's order was human convenience; and when that was interfered with, the relationship was sacrificed to it. The ruling principle of the new order, is subjection to God, and that brought about by the introduction of a new relationship paramount to all subsisting ones, even union to Christ; so that the sustainment of all natural ones becomes subordinate to this, and this subordination is their true preservation, in sustaining them, we are simply subject to Him. When the Lord was exercising His ministry here, He found how easily man had set aside the most solemn sanction of God, for the preservation of the natural order, thus shewing the entire unsoundness of the principle of human convenience, or merely conventional righteousness. "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition, for God commanded saying, honour thy father and thy mother, and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death; but ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father or mother. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." So again, we find the Pharisees came unto Him tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? and He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning, made them (a) male and (a) female, and said for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh." Now in both these instances, we find the law (weak through the flesh) utterly inefficient for the preservation of these relationships, beyond the claim of mere convenience and deference to the opinion of men.

Until therefore the principle of self-denial was introduced as flowing from union with Jesus risen, and of deference to His will in every respect, there would be no secure ground for the sustainment of even these relations.

Jesus in resurrection is set up as the Head of the new order of things, in which nothing below the righteousness of God is taken as a rule. As united with Him, we are made the righteousness of God, and therefore become fitly subject unto it. "Be ye holy,

for I am holy.”—“ Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” It is introduction into this order which really delivers out of this present evil world—answering the thing for which Jesus gave Himself for the Church, according to the will of the Father. But having been taken out of the world, they are again sent into it. “ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so also have I sent them into the world.” It is therefore as risen that we are sent into the world, and even the natural relations which we are called upon to sustain, we are not to sustain as natural, but having been freed from all by union with Christ, to show our deliverance in those very things, by subjection in them as unto the Lord. The realizing the end of the flesh in the cross, and the glory to be manifested in the Church, will effectually hinder either assumption on the one hand, or insubjection on the other. And these very relationships become the very occasion of exhibiting the manifold grace of God. We are naturally *born into the world*. By regeneration we are taken out of it, and then sent into it, so that the world itself becomes an entirely new scene, and our end in it to shew the exceeding value and blessedness of God’s own order. For if knowing in its full extent its constitution, that it is the place of death, sorrow, crying, and pain, we are still able to triumph over it, and to pass harmlessly through it ; surely men seeing our good works, will glorify our Father which is in heaven. *In the world*, not of the world. How hard indeed practically to exhibit this truth, and to shew forth that whilst risen out of all fleshly distinctions, seeing their end in death, we yet do own them, not as those who are subject to them, but as those whose place is subjection to the Lord in every thing.

It is in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, that we find the relative duties most minutely laid down ; and it is in these Epistles in which we find the glory of the Church, as associated with its risen Head, most minutely set before us. How suitable is this, for we should naturally have thought that there was something incongruous between such glory and things so homely. But it is in this that the power and wisdom of God are rendered so manifest. It is His ability alone to bring down the largest principles of His

own blessed rule to the most minute circumstances. How marvellous that the same regulating power which is to introduce the ultimate blessing, and bring glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and God's complacency in men, is capable of adaptation to the ordering of a family. The realizing this would be the means of taking away that which is so constantly irritating the minds of Christians, and lead to much more of that which is ornamental in the sight of God, a meek and quiet spirit. It would greatly tend to distinguish between real spirituality, and the mere excitement of the flesh. In looking more particularly into these details, we shall find first, a general principle laid down; secondly, the party in subjection is first and most largely addressed with special suitable promises of reward; thirdly, that the party in authority is addressed, rather in the way of warning.

In Ephesians v. we have first some general rules, "as walk circumspectly"—"understanding what the will of the Lord is"—"be filled with the Spirit;" and all this brought practically out in the general principle, "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Christian circumspection is contained in understanding the will of the Lord, and acting not under any excitement, but by being filled with the Spirit. The place of submission is the place of blessing, because it is the place of the Church. "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord," as the Church submits unto Christ. (ver. 24.) The natural order or rather disorder taught subjection, (for in the beginning it was not so) "unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, (subject to thy husband,) and he shall rule over thee." And this order we see pervading, for it runs its course, a painful memento of sin; but in Christ Jesus, the authority is changed from rule to Headship; and subjection instead of being the memorial of sin, leading to fretfulness and impatience, becomes associated in the soul with redemption, and all the intimacy of union subsisting between Christ and the Church. He is Head to the Church, and associates the Church with Himself in rule, at the same time that it acknowledges Him as its Lord, and

gives Him his rightful honour. Thy desire shall be subject unto the Lord, and thus to thy husband. As it is written, "Submit yourselves or be subject to your own husbands as unto the Lord." And how blessedly and in strict keeping with this is the exercise of the authority of the husband. Christ is the Saviour of the body, unto which He is Head and over which He exercises authority ; therefore it is,—“husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it, so ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.” It is thus that both authority and subjection are placed on a new basis, even that of love and mutual interest ; and the very nearest of earthly relationships made a school of Christ and an opportunity of serving Him. Thus it is said to husbands, dwell with them *according to knowledge*, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.” The very basis of the direction is the *knowledge* of the love of Christ to the Church, the comeliness and honour which He puts upon it, the common inheritance of life and glory to the Church with Himself, “heirs together of the grace of life, heirs together with Christ.”

With respect to the next relation of subjection, that of children to their parents, we have the direction “Children obey your parents *in the Lord* for this is *right*.” Disobedience to parents is marked as one feature of Gentile corruption, (Rom. i. 30.) and also of Christian apostasy. (2 Tim. iii. 2.) But how may we draw the line between disobedience to parents, and “whoso loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.” The acting on the latter injunction might appear to involve the sin specified. Here we immediately discover that we could not act on the natural order, which would make the obedience depend on convenience or interest, and so long as it was convenient, obedience would be rendered, but it would cease when it was attended with trouble or expense ; this was the way it acted during the time of the Lord’s personal ministry. “Ye say it is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father or mother.” The will of God being ascertained, is that which alone can guide us through the difficulty.

The obedience claimed from children to their parents is in the Lord, for this is right ; here is both the sanction and the limit. It is not right (or righteous) for a child to render obedience to a parent in an act which would be sin against the Lord. In such a case father and mother must be forsaken for the Lord's sake ; for the new relationship with Him, is both higher and nearer than any of these which we have as men. And God never requires obedience in the lower relationship, which would be disobedience to Himself ; neither has He given authority to any relationship to be set up against His own. If subjection be not subjection to God, it must be either from interest or self-will, and both these are to be denied in order to follow Christ. But wherever obedience to a parent can be rendered by a child without involving disobedience to God, even though it be in that which is vexatious and capricious, there is the place of service for a child. "Children obey your parents *in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*"

The one in this world who pleased God, was an obedient child, —confidence in His love, wisdom and power, and unhesitating submission flowing from it. "He that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please Him." And how fully He maintained this relationship, even in its subordinate character was shewn in His early life, as well as exhibiting the needful limit in every earthly relationship, that it must be subjection to the will of God. "His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us ? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing, and He said unto them, how is it that ye sought me ? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business. And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them. The value of that in the sight of God which was shewn in the law, by having a special promise attached to it, (Eph. v. 1.) was thus also shewn in the example which Jesus has left us to follow, obedience to the will of God in every thing. It is thus especially that these relationships become occasions of service to the Lord, there will be always perplexities in carrying them out, and cases of conscience arising, till we clearly recognize as the principle of action,

“ I must be about my (heavenly) Father’s business.” The word to parents is that of admonition, “ Ye parents, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ;” thus throwing them on the recognition of God’s holy discipline with themselves as His children, as their only ability rightly to train their children. If the husband was to learn the exercise of authority from the manner of the exercise of authority by Christ towards the Church, the parents were to learn the exercise of their authority towards their children by the holy discipline of their heavenly Father towards themselves.

But the most difficult of all relations to sustain would be that of a slave to his earthly master, and especially to an ungodly one. It would, according to human judgment, appear to be a condition so irreconcilable with the liberty of God’s children, that unless it were placed on an entirely new basis, either the occasion would be afforded for the most painful irritation, or christianity would be taken hold of for its present advantage by those who supposed gain to be godliness. Hence it is that slaves are most largely addressed, and so addressed as to remove even the irksomeness of slavery, by shewing it to be service to the Lord. In 1 Cor. vii. 20. 23. we have the general statement. “ Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called ; art thou called being a servant, *care not for it* ; but if thou mayest be free use it rather, for he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the *Lord’s freeman* ; likewise also he that is called being free is the *Lord’s servant*. Ye are bought with a price, *be ye not the servants of men*.” Here the slave and the freeman meet on equal grounds, both bought with a price (the evident allusion to redemption from slavery), both equally servants, not of men, but of Christ. And henceforth, the slave unchanged in his condition, to the human eye, would, in the consciousness of his own soul, forget the irksomeness of his natural bondage in doing his service to his master as unto the Lord. It is in being the servants of men, that the degrading sense of inferiority comes in, and such a relation as that of master and slave, must have arisen out of the condition of man as a sinner. In the beginning it was not so. But there is no

degradation, but real exaltation in being the servants of Christ, and our relative condition becomes only circumstantial as to the manner in which our service is to be performed. Brethren, "let every man wherein he is called, *therein abide with God.*" And here again we find the slave in the discharge of his daily duties, entering on them in the blessed power of redemption, so that as in the case of the wife, even felt subjection was necessarily associated with feelings of blessing. "Ye are bought with a price." It is here that divine wisdom so conspicuously shines forth: men have been anxious to mitigate the rigour, or to do away with the degradation of slavery altogether, but how miserably short do their efforts stop of the reality of Christian liberty—"The Lord's freeman." Who so really free as that man who can use even the natural degradation of servitude as service to Christ—who can see by virtue of his real liberty, that all present circumstances are but temporal; and if our relation to them were to be altered, we should be only placed as servants to Christ in others. The details of direction to slaves and servants will, I think, fall under the preceding general principles.

Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as *unto Christ*, not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the *servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men.* (see also Col. iii. 22—24.) But there are two things worthy of notice with respect to the detail of service in this relationship, and that is the occasion they furnish of bringing out in the strongest way, the service which Christ served; (for He was the servant whom Jehovah upheld, as well as the elect in whom His soul delighted;) by leading the soul to follow Him into patient suffering, unto the fulness of blessing resulting to us from His sufferings. And secondly, the special care taken to mark that common acceptance, and common brotherhood does not disannul the relationship of master and servant, but makes room for the exhibition of the manifold grace of God, that grace which brings salvation. Thus in 1 Pet. ii. "servants, (domestics,) be subject to your masters

with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, for this is thankworthy (grace) if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully ; for what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? but if when ye do well and suffer, ye take it patiently this is acceptable (grace) with God, for even hereunto were ye called : because also Christ suffered for us leaving us an example that *ye* should follow His steps : who did no sin neither was guile found in His mouth, who when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Who His ownself bare our sins in His own body on the tree ; that we being dead to sins should live to righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed : for ye were as sheep going astray, but we are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” What a marvellous power of adaptation to circumstances is there in the saving grace of God ; when the most injurious treatment was capable of being made the occasion of leading the soul into the most vivid perception of what the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ really is. We find a similar order in the Epistle to Titus, running on from the direction to the slave, into the fullest statement of the present blessing, and of the glorious hope of the Gospel. “ Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters and to please them in all things, not answering again ; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of * God our Saviour in all things, for the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, (even to slaves,) teaching us, &c. Man would use even the truth of God to aid his own selfishness, but how loudly does it bespeak the wisdom and grace of God in being able thus to bring before man in His most degraded natural condition, that which can so bless and exalt him. The thoughts of human wisdom and the prospect of human glory have ever been for the few ; but to the poor the Gospel is preached—and it meets them where they are,

* “ Our Saviour God”—this is the subject of this Epistle. (See Titus i. 4. ii. 10. iii. 4.) And the knowledge of God in this character becomes the basis of the relations we sustain.

in the fulness of blessing without altering their present circumstances.

But secondly, the danger of acting on oneness in the Spirit, as if it were equality in the flesh was provided against by the Apostle. Oneness in acceptance in the beloved, equally washed in His blood, and receiving of the same Spirit through Him, is our blessed portion—"ye all are brethren." But herein is grace exhibited, that whilst asserting this, the distinct relations which subsist only here, but have no place in Heaven, are maintained inviolate, so that the occasion shall not arise for the thought, that "gain is Godliness"—and that the Gospel is made to serve present advantage, which is the characteristic of Apostasy—as we find in the second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude. In 1 Tim. vi. we have this very fully stated, and of all the relations to sustain in grace, this is the most difficult; and one in which we have seen Satan taking much advantage of the Saints. How often have we seen those who have tasted of the blessedness of the communion of Saints find themselves under painful restraint by being brought into the relation of servants, even to believers—a proof at once of the mistaken ground of communion (since it is only in the Spirit in Heavenly things that the Church is really one,) and likewise of failure in grace, both in master and servant. "Let as many servants as are *under the yoke* count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed; and those that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren, but rather do them service; (the expression is very strong in the original, the more be their slaves,) *because* they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort; if any man teach otherwise (see 2 Pet. xi. 18, 19. Jude xvi.) and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is Godliness: from such withdraw thyself." It is in this relation that

we see the party set in authority simply addressed in the way of warning and caution, "Ye masters do the same thing unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that *your master* also is in heaven—neither is there respect of persons with Him." "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in Heaven." The manner of thus addressing masters and servants shews the estimation of the Spirit of Christ as to the place of blessing being in subjection and not in authority; "I am among you as he that serveth."

Subjection to the civil powers, does not properly come in the place of relative duties, because the Ruler is not addressed as such, as being of the household of God, and no rule or warning is given to him for the exercise of his authority. But the obedience to the civil magistrate on the part of a Christian, is grounded on the same general principle as that of the wife to the husband, the child to the parent, the slave to the master, viz. subjection to the Lord. The power itself might own another source; but to the believer there is no source of power but God, and he must own God in everything, and this is the only limit to his subjection, no present interest must be allowed to interfere with obedience to the powers that be; but when obedience to them, would be disobedience to God, then God is owned by disobedience to them. "We ought to obey God rather than man."—"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." But, in every question short of this, the rule is very simple, carrying us on still in that school into which we are brought, learning obedience by the things we suffer. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the *Lord's sake*, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by *Him* for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well: for so is the *will of God*, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men—love the brotherhood—fear God—honour the king." I would only remark further on our condition as subjects, that it is made by the Apostle, the introduction to a statement

of the fulness of the blessing of the gospel, leading from the thought of present subjection, to that of being heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus iii.) "If we endure with Him, we shall also reign with Him."

There are directions given in the scriptures for another relative condition, which has no place in heavenly glory, that of rich and poor. But this does not stand on the same ground as those previously considered, neither indeed is it a *necessary* distinction even here; because we have seen the power of the resurrection operating so graciously on the rich in the Church of Jerusalem, as to cause the distinction to cease. They were led to view heavenly and earthly things in the light of God's truth, and to see their respective ends. But still the scriptures fully recognize the distinction as existing, because its cessation must be the effect of personal grace and not of constraint. The rich, like those in authority, are addressed in the tone of very solemn warning, "*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches.*" But in the household of faith, this relative condition may be happily sustained, when union with Jesus risen is fully realized. Taking our standing here, we can see through this medium, and from this eminence, the vanity and fleeting character of this distinction, which affords so large a field for pride or for fretfulness, when looked on merely through the flesh; but equally large a field for the display of the grace of Christ Jesus our Lord, when looked on as risen with Him. Viewed in the power of the coming glory, the poor brother would not be fretful under the sense of poverty, the rich would not be exalted by the possession of riches. The power of the glory would act on their respective circumstances: it would exalt where exaltation was needed; it would depress where bringing down was needed. And when once resurrection was realized as our portion, it would be equally of the flesh, not to endure that a brother should be richer than we are, as it would be for one to presume on that accidental superiority. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich brother in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away,

for the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth ; so also shall the rich man fade away *in his ways.*" James i. 9—11.

It is thus that it has pleased our heavenly Father to shew us all the relations on the earth which He can own in His household. He has in great mercy condescended to go as far as possible in acknowledging them, although they will have no place in the heavenly glory. But in those which he thus recognizes there is the full opportunity of confessing Christ, either in subjection, or even in authority (which after all must be subjection unto Him), or in poverty or riches. All is brought to the cross, and seen and exercised as associated with Him in the resurrection. Whenever therefore, authority cannot be exercised in association with Jesus risen, it cannot consistently be exercised by a believer. There will be no confession of Christ in its exercise. We could not take worldly authority to the cross, and then take it up again in resurrection—because Jesus has not yet taken His great power in order to reign, not according to the rule of human convenience, but according to the rule of God's holiness. But we do see Jesus in the relation of the Husband to the Church, seeing Him we see the Father, and therefore know Him in the exercise of that authority, and He too is our Master. But whilst He is long-suffering, the exercise of power must be shewn forth in a manner correspondent to His condition—"strengthened *with all might* according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." May the saints adorn the doctrine of their Saviour God in all things !

But let us take care how we give a place to these relationships which God has not given to them ; they must ever be held as temporary and passing away with the world. The sustainment of them may hinder instead of help our service to the Lord, if they occupy the first place in our minds. The great object for all should be "to attend upon the Lord without distraction ;" and this may be greatly frustrated even by the very charities of these relationships. The wife may care for the things of the world, how she may

please her husband ; or the husband for the things of the world, how he may please his wife ; so also is it painfully seen how many parents are really acting as debtors to the flesh on the assumed ground of duty to their children—and it may be, even children hardening their consciences on the ground of duty to their parents. How blessedly then does the Spirit of wisdom in the Apostle burst forth when he saw the minds of Saints more occupied about the present relations than the resurrection of Christ. “ But this I say, brethren, the time is short : it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none : and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as though they used it not ; for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

HEADS OF PSALMS.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 355, VOL. IV.

BOOK II.

Psalms xlii. to lxxii. inclusive.

IN continuing to communicate to you, the headings of the Psalms, which you desire, I must still leave them as they really subsist, as the passage of my own mind through the enquiries, whose results only can give the full satisfaction of more complete thoughts ; and those who read them will not find this satisfaction, unless they study the Psalms, and not merely read the notices on them. I am however fully confirmed in the character and precision of the views they lead to, and the justness of the statements contained. Further study of the book led me to divide it into five distinct books, having each distinct characters, the second of which you now have : this division arose from the subjects and the character of the relationship of Christ with Israel, and through Israel with the world, and both therein with God in each of the divisions ; and I came to

definite, and to my mind, interesting conclusions thereon. I was surprised to find (what want of attention or study had left me ignorant of before) that this division was one marked precisely as I had marked it, in large editions of the Hebrew Bible.* This naturally confirmed me in the idea (whatever the source of these ancient divisions) that my mind had been mercifully led by truth, and not by natural imagination.

As noticed heretofore, the two first Psalms having given the man of perfect legal righteousness, and therefore flourishing in all his ways; and secondly, the King exalted on Zion's throne of God, and judging and breaking to pieces hostile Gentiles; the Psalms which follow, present the astonishing enigma, (solved only by the deeper knowledge of the counsels of God,) of Him, (in whom alone these characters were true, and those united with Him in His ways, and by the working of His Spirit in them) instead of prospering (outwardly) being in misery, afflicted, despised, betrayed among God's people, and forsaken apparently of God, (in one sense really) and the Gentiles domineering over them without hinderance. This enigma, in the pleadings of the Spirit of Christ in all the circumstances, the dealings of God in them, and the display of all His ways and depths thereby (for the real sources of it were all the depths of God's character) are brought out in these Psalms, as felt, understood, and expressed by Christ. The first of these five divisions, views Christ rather in His sufferings in the midst of them; in the discovery of the people He is among, and the responsible relationship to God He therein assumes, as identifying Himself with the saints; it lays the basis therefore of the whole matter. In the second division from Ps. xlii. we have Him, and therefore the remnant of the latter day, by the successful supremacy of the Gentiles in their anti-christian power (consequent upon the rejection of Him by the Jews, and their dependence on and union with that power) cast out of Jerusalem, and speaking as so cast out by the Spirit of Christ. Thus from xlii. to xlix. we have the appeal of Christ's Spirit in them,

* The introduction to the former paper, on Heads of Psalms, Vol. iv. p. 332. did not accompany the paper, but was added by the Editor.

under the loss of all Jehovah promises against the Gentiles, xlii. —against the Jews as an ungodly nation, xliii.—their desolation in a state of righteousness and cry, xliv.—Messiah the King, xlv. —the God of Jacob the refuge of the remnant, xlvi.—Their triumph for and in the presence of the world, xlvii.—The great moral lesson xlix. of which resurrection is the real secret as regards all that is in the world.

L.—LI. A great judicial lesson on Israel, and their confession thereon, and thus righteousness in God vindicated, and grace meeting it restoratively, the first two verses the whole state of things, then the declaration of the manner of it “coming to judge” —“the heavens called”—the earth summoned that Israel may be judged but as “Ammi”—the saints assembled below, the heavens however declaring His righteousness, but judgment begins with the declaration now “my people” —“thy God.” LI. is the full national confession. The other Psalms enter into the various exercises of heart and development of relationship with God, consequent upon the general position stated, of positive exclusion from the enjoyment of known blessings; but bringing in by grace much fuller enjoyment to them, and the truth of man’s real state in all the world proved by it. The circumstances connected with these subjects are gone through, though imperfectly, in the notes on each respective Psalm. The character spoken of this book of the Psalms, occasions that (except in two Psalms of which the study will explain the difference) it is God as such, and not the Lord who primarily is addressed; Lord being the name of existing covenant relations, and not the moral condition of a justly cast out people, then standing in themselves, as even in their nakedness before Him; though the Spirit of Christ might take up their cause and be their strength, strength beginning in their confession of what they were.

XLII.—This Psalm seems to be a complaint against the Gentiles, and therefore specially referable to the latter day; while the 43rd is against the Jews. That it is the complaint of the godly in the latter days I cannot doubt, compare Joel ii. 17. But we must always remember that Christ fulfilled these sufferings in His

own person, (specially as far as the elect are concerned in them,) and therefore was on the one hand, witness in them of the faithfulness of God for others to act on, and on the other, able to succour, &c. (Heb. ii. 18.) and therefore can speak them in His own person. This however is of the remnant more especially themselves. It is not observe "*Le David*." We should also observe that, except in the 8th verse where it is introduced as the name of faithfulness, it is "*God*" alone that is used in these two Psalms, not "*the Lord*," and this is a most important point. "*God*" as such, is the refuge of the soul. We know that the *Lord*, He is the *God*, and *God* is the *Lord*, still the idea is definite and important; I say now not merely prophetically, in which it is uniform and consistent, but in its force as the definite object of the soul: "*my soul thirsteth for God*;" and all is the "*mystery of God*," and note therefore the spirit of these two Psalms much. I would add though doubting it at first, it appears to me that the first verse of xliii is characteristic, and its emphasis character, and not person; believing the interpretation right, it gives this verse remarkable force, for the Jews are called "*Goi*;" and note the word "*Lo chasid*," Chasidim we have elsewhere observed, is the name of the Jewish saints, as in the latter Psalms.

It seems to me the time when the remnant will have lost the privileges of public worship, (having been obliged to flee away,) the nations in general rather than Gog being the oppressing enemy. It also shows that the remnant as noticed latterly, will have till then gone with the multitude and counted them "*Chasid*" but now "*lo*" i. e., but a "*Goi*" and this explains much.

XLIV.—This is the voice of the remnant arguing from the faithfulness of faith, that it was the Lord and not their own arm which had delivered them, that the same arm could deliver them in any circumstances. It is spoken under the apparent utter dereliction of the latter day; i. e., the time between their outward prosperity, in which the wickedness of the Jews had grown up in the land, and the full blessings of Immanuel's deliverance, when the latter-day-enemies should then come up on the land, and the remnant should between them and the ungodly Jews, seem to be

deserted. St. Paul quotes it as evidence of the portion of the remnant, (ver. 22., with Rom. viii. 36.) and as the Holy Ghost recognises it as the portion of the *accepted* remnant, or the voice of the Spirit in their mouth, it was evidence of any thing but *their rejection*; and thus the testimony of evil becomes the evidence of acceptance, to secure the faith of those on whom the evil falls when it comes; so our Lord, “these things I tell you before it come to pass.” (John xiv. 29., xvi. 4.) This is a gracious arrangement of God (the Lord); the written sufferings are the evidence of the acceptance of those on whom they fall, when their faith might be shaken, so that “out of the eater, comes forth sweetness,” — “we are more than conquerors.”

XLV.—The subject of this Psalm is the triumph, reign, and union of Christ, with the Jewish Church. It seems to me, the spirit as in the remnant. It is Christ as the Head of the Jewish Church as King, the full spiritual recognition of Him. The 10th verse manifestly turns from the celebration of Christ the King, to address just admonition to the Queen, the Jewish Church, at His right hand. This is manifestly (to me) the Jewish Church in its perfect state; but it is as received in the way of grace, and therefore “a daughter,” and to forget her Father’s house. The whole question once argued between Christ and the professors of that Church. The people who are to praise her when thus restored, are the Ammin,—“the gathered” Gentiles of the latter day, or new day rather. Having these points determined, the Psalm is manifest in its contents and full of the richest matter. It is the union of Christ with the Jewish Church in its proper character, with the glory of both celebrated by the Spirit. Righteousness is the character of Christ as a Jew, so “therefore God thy God” &c. It is prophetic; the voice of the remnant, who *did not* see His glory as a present thing to the Jewish Church, now called to Him in the latter day, and recognizing His glory in Spirit when so coming: moreover it is consolation for Christ, the real mind of the Spirit in His humiliation; for this spake the “groanings which could not be uttered,” of Simeon and Anna, and all those who looked for redemption; and they were so interpreted by God.

XLVI.—This is the song of the remnant in the turning-point of the circumstances of the latter day ; that the God of Israel was, and had proved Himself to be “ their God,” that He was true to them, as His chosen. The exercise of faith on the deliverance and interposition of the latter day, recognizing God, and so putting themselves into the position of His people.

XLVII.—This triumph of the remnant is quite plain, as also the call unto all people. The 9th verse, (10th in Heb.) is the only one which calls for enquiry, and the expression is a very interesting one, though in the first instance the construction is difficult ; “ people” is (Ammim) a word we have often noticed ; Gentiles brought in, having the name of a people now, as on re-joining the Jews, and not in their national distinctiveness of power. “ Or ever I was aware, my soul set me in the chariots of Amminadib, my willing people ; here the “ nadibi ammim,” (verse 9, translated the princes of the people,) are gathering together ; “ for to Him shall the gathering of the “ ammim” be.

The difficulty is, the apparent disconnection of “ Am”, but it is I suspect, as ever in Hebrew the strength of the sense. They are gathered into unity, with the people of the God of him who received as his name and title, “ the Father of many nations.” It is in the exaltation of the “ Am” of the God of Abraham—the people of the Jews, that they, the Gentiles, are brought in under the then presence of God’s calling power, into blessing and gathering ; so that He should be (Elohi col ha-aretz) “ the God of the whole earth.” (Isaiah liv. 5.) “ Gathering” is one of the names of Christ, “ gathering into one the (Bennai Elohim) Sons of God that were scattered,” and then all (as here) on earth in Israel ; “ for the shields of the earth belong to God,” or are, in fact, now God’s, “ who is greatly exalted ;” “ for the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.” God is the shield of Abraham also, (Gen. xv. 1.) therefore He is gathering in heaven and earth all into one. It is a very interesting Psalm ; (Col ha-aretz) “ all the earth,” should be its title along with the circumstances of being sung by them to (Malchenu) “ our king.” (See verses 6, and 7, and 8 in Heb.)

XLVIII.—This Psalm also is manifest. It is the destruction or

disappointment of the Anti-Christian confederacy, and enjoyment by the believing remnant of their former, but renewed mercies "as we have heard, so have we seen." Nothing can be more touching than the 9th verse. The 10th is worthy of notice. His name is indeed what God is to His people, as revealed to their *faith*. It is, and has been, matter of their faith and reliance upon Him; but now more, *He had accomplished* that which His name declared.

XLIX.—This Psalm seems to me an address of the Spirit in the mouth of the remnant in the latter day. I think flowing from the state of the Jews, who have taken unbelievably the promises in a merely earthly way, and therefore not of God, i.e., who are living at ease in Palestine. But also referring to the ungodly Gentiles who think to have the world in possession. It marks, however, the false security of the world: (chaled) the transitory character of time, (Ps, lxxxix. 47.) which passes away as a moth fretting a garment. It is the security of the people of God, being redeemed from the power of the grave which would destroy and "gnaws" (verse 14) the hope and security of those who are not God's. It is enabling faith to say what the Lord said of the remnant, "Blessed are ye poor." It is the instruction qualifying our faith to unite in the expression of the Son of man. The Maschil (the moral) which consists in the contract between the world's attempt to build itself selfishly and individually a house, and the redemption of the poor and rejected godly ones, is simple and manifest. The redemption from the power of the grave, does not affirm resurrection, but just thus much,—deliverance from it. (At the same time, the principle of all this was fully verified in our Lord—the remnant all through; and as to this last point, his not seeing corruption was a literal fulfilment of it, though he saw death.)

NOTE.

From xlii to xlix, is one book of the remnant's songs. To the end of the xlvth their sorrows. In the xlvth they are turned to the king; then the results, the God of Israel being found to be with them. They are regarded as from the time of the separation of the fleeing remnant consequent upon the heathen getting into possession.

L.—This is the actings and principles of God towards Israel at the time of God's shewing Himself. The thesis is manifest; the application and force of the argument towards Israel as to its condition intermediately, is very plain. It is the summons of the Saints, witnesses of God's righteousness intermediately, and Israel thereon brought into question, with the assertion however, and founded on "I am God, even thy God:" when God manifests Himself, when *God is Judge Himself*. It is the judicial act wherein the saints in covenant with God in 'Christ, are assessors, and the Jewish people, His earthly Church, called up to plead; where God, the God of the remnant of the Jews, speaks and comes, calling "the earth, from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same." It is applied to the instruction and advice of them who recollect, as well as those who forget God among the Jews, in warning for that time. To the 6th verse, is the forming of the Session. Then from 7, is the stating of the pleading on God's part: (but there is a nicety of distinction in it, the tenor however, is unaffected by it, which I believe, is what is stated: the word for saints, (ver. 5.) is not *Kodshim* but *Chasidim*. I believe the former, not the latter, are the saints in glory, (and these would be the Jewish remnant;) the heavens declaring His righteousness, (verse 6) includes the others however; and the great result of blessing, then universal, comes in also unto them; also note them coming in under the covenant of sacrifice, as indeed they and all saved must; but this is not merely the rescuing the remnant in Palestine, but a much more extensive, and indeed, universal work, when He shall gather (as the heavens also now declare His righteousness,) His elect scattered Jewish remnant from the four quarters of the earth, after the appearance of the glory and the utterance of His voice in Jerusalem. The result is after the appearance of God in Zion; the first two verses state the great result, "speaking"—"calling the earth"—"shined out of Zion." The manner of it, "God shall come"—"He calls to the heavens;" these are the saints whom He brings in—and "to the earth," for He judges *His people*. The result is, that the gathering the righteous Jews and the heavens where the Saints are already, declare his right-

eousness; the grounds of the judgment, to wit, on the Jews: against whom the saints coming in glory with Christ are witnesses that it was no unrighteousness on God's part; but it was their practical unrighteousness and their supposition that while this was so, the sacrifices were worth anything, as if God were like themselves. This last principle is very extensive. The scene is the session after the resurrection of the saints, bringing in the heavens on the Jews as a people, but as we have said, with the witness, "I am God, thy God," calling them "Ammi." It is an exceedingly interesting Psalm. We learn also that not till and in the judgment of the Jews does the Lord thus effectually call the earth "from the rising of the sun" &c.; and then He "shines out of Zion the perfection of beauty," saying, "their God," and "Ammi," my people.

LI.—The application of this to the sin and restoration of the Jews, has been observed by others, and the mere carrying the idea through the Psalm will give its application too obviously and forcibly to need comment. There are some points however, of which I am not at present master; for example, is there any type in the circumstances, and what is it? I will not enter now into the circumstances of the type, but we may note the wondrous identification of Christ with the Jewish people or with Jewish responsibility, and how the David of the Psalms is just this availing power in the deliverance of the remnant. He bore the very sin of them in His own death, and pleads as their representative for deliverance on this ground; so Isaiah liii. "He was wounded for their transgressions:" what was their great transgression? His death! It is the true David thus pleading, thus identified, that this Psalm introduces, saying, "mine iniquities," &c. for David is not Christ in His glory though it may include triumph.

LII.—We have the energy of the Spirit of Christ risen up after Israel's confession of sin to contrast the position and character of Anti-christ and the righteous remnant, in fact of Anti-christ and Christ in Spirit; violence, self-confidence, deceit, constitute the character of the man of the earth. The contrast is dependence. This is always the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms. It is the helpless but perfect assurance of the believer, the beloved in the rem-

nant, contrasted with the enmity, presumption, and therefore, destruction of the last enemy—the Edomite, and its consequences ; it is simple and pointed.

LIII.—I do not think the 53rd and 14th Psalms the same thing. The 14th is the blessing of the faithful Jews by *the Lord* in spite of the ungodly. *This*, the destruction of the ungodly Gentiles also by God : compare xiv. 5. and Isa. liii. 5. The thesis is in the 1st verse—“The fool.” The folly of saying there is no God, proved by God’s being in the congregation of the righteous. (xiv. 5.) This, in His character of the Lord, by His confounding and scattering the camp of their enemies (verse 5) this proved there was a God, and proved it to them ; and in blessing to Israel His chosen.

The election of God, is the proof that He is God properly, “ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.” (Isa. xliii. 12.) It is a remarkable Psalm, from the connection between the evil ones of Israel, and the enemies, and the position in which they find themselves. We know from the Apostle, (Rom. iii.) that those under the law, Jews, are spoken of. But the principle averred of them, stating a general principle, is “no God.” God’s judgment looking down, “none doeth good, no, not one.” It is in effect the revelation that when God looked down, He found no good, not even in the Jews, His people nominally ; this though always true was then manifested. He views them as God, not in Jerusalem, but looking *down from heaven* at men ; for Israel are but as men, thence and indeed Lo-ammi it is every one, man, (Benai-Adam.) The workers of iniquity is the general character, the Jews are found in it. In Ezekiel xxxiv, the conduct even of Jews may be seen, it left them a prey to the beasts, the heathen. “My people,” &c. (verse 4,) the remnant are called here in effect according to Ps. xlv. 2., consequently they, the unrighteous Jews, were in fear where there was no need for fear. “The sinners in Zion are afraid, though they have made a covenant with death, and are at agreement with hell.” But there was no need to fear from this pride of men, for God scattered the bones of those who were encamped against Jerusalem. “God,” (there is the question of righteousness ; the others said, “no God,)” despised

them ; then the desire of the Spirit of Christ in the remnant, when God does that, they wait for it ; that is, brings back the captivity of His people. It is "out of Zion," first in a remnant, (compare Ps. cxxvi.) Jacob and Israel, the whole people shall rejoice, and Israel be glad. The existence and judgment (and afterwards actings) of God are the great question of this Psalm, justly adduced by the Apostle to determine all questions of righteousness for man as in man. Salvation is another thing. It is cited, as said to them under the law.

This class of Psalms, from xlii to lxxii, takes up the condition not merely of what Christ found Himself among the Jews, but in, and as, a separated remnant, who were concerned in the union of the evil Anti-Christian power, the apostasy, and the body of the Jews : this remnant being driven out, as we have seen in Ps. xlii. But the character of *God* in question in the earth from heaven, when He, is what He is, not the *Lord* in covenant in Jerusalem ; the deliverance and interference of God, in mercy to the Jews, properly guilty of blood guiltiness. God in pure grace begins with the worst, through the Messiah whom they rejected, but united in His love with this separated remnant ; thence (*Yachidim*) deliverance being given in Zion, God having scattered the bones of those who encamped against it, the desire for the deliverance and joy of Israel and Jacob, bursts forth, and withal is accomplished, as noticed already in Ps. cxxvi.

LIV.—This is Christ, as the object of God's deliverance, or saving power, including the desire of it, (verses 1, 2.) and acknowledgment, (verse 7,) both important as shewing the position of Christ. It takes Him in His whole position as a Jew, from His first trial to the deliverance of the Jews in that day. The "name," is the *manifestation* of the internal and essential power and character, precisely what is obscured and injured in this world of confusion and evil ; the "judging" is just the *intervention* of that name of power, so as to vindicate the consistency of Christ with it—which is the thread of order, of which Christ was the witness and which was attached to His name in the midst of evil, because He was it, and therefore the vindication of Him was the vindica-

tion of God's name ; and so the " saving by His name," was peculiarly appropriate, for indeed it was the declaration of the identity of that name in God, with Christ as in the world ; for He had that name in weakness, therefore He says, " Judge me by thy strength," i.e., vindicate to me as in weakness, that very character and name which is thine in strength, by the putting forth of thy strength as vindicating itself. Now this is true as regards man by its suitableness, and as regards the object on account of its very weakness, because graciousness of love and faithfulness of kindness is part of the very name to be revealed, as may be seen, Numbers xiv. 15—19. This cannot be pursued further here. " Thou hast loved," &c. John xvii. is part of it. " O righteous Father," is again another, and " my God, my God," &c., and " therefore doth my Father," &c., " not unto us," &c. (Ps. cxv.) and even " be merciful to my sin, for it is great," (Ps. xxv.) proceeds on the same principle. This is a subject full of interest because the Church can always go on this ground, (and it is a ground of unfailing righteousness,) and say " not unto us." The Church is set to declare the character of God, and in its weakness, therefore it cries for the vindication of this character ; so Christ was enabled to say, " I know that thou hearest me always," but therefore also judgment must begin at the house of God, thus Christ put Himself under these things, and it " became Him," &c. but if these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry ; for the judgment and character of God run on unchanged, and as He judges *by*, so will He judge *in* His strength ; but Christ is the vindication of the principles of God, because He is their personification in that very weakness in which the question arises ; the application of God's power settles it. But we must not pursue this further here. It seems to me that this Psalm, also would seem to make Christ speak in the language of mediatorial praise, as well as affliction, and observe the reason, (surely blessed be His name He does.) He is the mouth-piece, the efficient representative of our praise, (as now) so especially in that day, and more especially as here, of the Jews. As to the application of the Psalm to the circumstances and person of Christ, I add, it is

universally the name of God, and the strength of God, which is appealed to ; but as we have seen before, God is found (an only refuge actually for the position in which Christ sees things,) in contrast with all men. It puts the relationship in which the Spirit of Christ finds itself consequent upon the truth of Psalm liii. They are "strangers;" "God was not before them." God is ~~his~~ helper. It was not now a matter of covenant, for all this was forsaken, but abstract faith in God, but this faith produces sense and application of covenant. Christ is alone ; but "Jehovah is with them that uphold my soul." The sense of favour on God's principles towards others is the restoration of one's own soul in righteousness ; He does not say "with me," for He was as an outcast for our sake ; because perfect, His trust in God as the one only perfect man, but this induced, and became the object of all concentrating grace afterwards. Therefore it is Jehovah, and all the trouble in result is passed.

LV.—This Psalm is Messiah's complaint of the Jews, from whom He had expected sympathy and concurrence. It is the departure (Matt. xvi. 13., Mark vii. 24., John xi. 54.) as it were of Christ (in Spirit in the remnant) from *the city* in that day. He has discovered, they have discovered their true character. He retires, and His Spirit would retire ever so far from such a scene and state. But there is the energy of righteousness more marked in this, (I speak not of its perfection) and the name of Jehovah is more speedily brought in. "How long shall I be with you," saith the Lord ; and even Samuel, "accept not thou their offering." The treachery of those nominally associated with Him, the Jews with hostile power which gave it this character, (as in Abitophel.) It is consummation of the evil of Anti-christ. The union of wickedness, there was none good ; all gone together : thus their character is very remarkable all through here. There was nothing to be had but God, whose character changed not, if the prosperity changed not. (ver. 19.) A friend or religious associate was the worst because the nearest enemy. How this was personally verified in the blessed Saviour, all know ; but it is carried out to all that solemn scene of the latter day, when those that are faithful

must follow that faithful One and Guide, led of Him without the camp, blessed be His name.

LVI.—This is the complaint of the beloved as trusting in God's word, the faithfulness of God to His trust in Him, when He had to wander, not having where to lay His head, in that land, of which He was born and anointed King. Compare Heb. v. 7, Psa. lxi. 13, 14, and Isa. xlix. 8, a chapter singularly indicative of the union, evidently in the mind of the Spirit (in the view here taken) of the Lord and Israel. Though it is quite evident, verse 3 of that chapter is literal, but in 5, this assumption of the remnant into His character is marked—in verse 10 of this Psalm, *His*, is put in; it is the *testimony*, on which the truth rests; we may notice the expression *God* and *Lord*, both are the objects of (his) faith: *God*, is that He is, to do it; *Lord*, the covenant relationship on which the accomplishment depends; nothing can be more affectingly interesting than the comparison of David, and the Lord in the days of His wanderings; it is in His Jewish connection He is properly David, though all the covenant is broken now, yet it is sure. We may add, Israel being now judged, Christ speaking as cast out, it is "*man* goeth about;" they all stood on the common ground of contrast with the God of heaven, on the rejection of Him who came amongst them: verse 13 is the principle so often found of the power of deliverance from death; the resurrection the centre of this; our portion is to "suffer with," theirs to be "delivered from."

LVII.—This is at once the distress and the confidence of Messiah, when identified with the sorrows of the Jews (the remnant), when ready to be swallowed up (by the adversary.) Its result in full manifestation of the Divine power in the heavens, and His glory over all the earth is manifest. The 6th verse, the reader of the Psalms must be familiar with, as the destruction of the enemies in the latter day. We may observe also the 9th as connected with, and made illatively dependent on the 10th and 11th. The remedy for trouble, i.e. the saint's trouble, is the exaltation of God; and then He will be exalted above the heavens, and His glory be in all the earth; the heavens and the earth will be brought together in Him, in reconciliation of full blessing.

In the same troubles and increased, he looks higher, not only trusting in faithfulness on the word, but the day star is arisen in his heart, for the night if long and dark is therefore far spent, "until these calamities be overpast." To the eye of heaven the earth is full of wickedness, but God shall send from heaven; accordingly at the close, the praise is not vowed, but from a fixed heart, and called to awake, and praise *among the people* (Ba-ammin) proposed. For verse 11, is the actual millennial glory viewed as in the glory of God and Messiah desiring it for His (God's) sake. Yet, in fact, He who sought it for God, in Himself, only and really, is it accomplished. It is then a beautiful Psalm, verse 3, which brings out the beautiful expression of his position, "these calamities" evidently are the situation of the full development of evil in that day: the principle is ever true for the Spirit of Christ, is then manifested.

LVIII.—This Psalm is the glory of the righteous judgment of God against the Gentile oppressors. It is the righteous, most righteous appeal, in judgment, to the wicked, to men themselves—a sense of righteousness of situation, rising over the manifest character of the wicked, character distinctly manifested by that situation; therein the righteous judgment manifests itself to His spirit. The Jews are the expression of righteousness on the earth, hence this appeal, and righteousness is a right thing—verse 11, so that a man shall say. "verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily He is a God that judgeth *in the earth*." This position is one of great importance, the Jewish manifestation of righteousness; the earth is the place for the manifestation of righteousness, i.e. judicially, though the heavens shall declare it; Heaven is *the place* for grace, as it is written, "that in the ages to come, He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace"—but God *judgeth in the earth*, and the Jews are the people whom He hath known for His; and in the connection of Christ with the Jews, this can be accomplished and fully brought out as seen here: righteous in His promises to Abraham and his seed, and Christ in grace associating (in righteousness) a remnant herein to himself, but here describing the position as in Himself, as perfect in all ways

in it, from God and in man ; and wickedness being therefore fully manifested, and then after all the grace to them, judgment a righteous desire. It proves in the union with hostile Gentiles to be a deeper principle—*man*. “He knew what was in man”—Compare verse 1, Long His patience and grace, wonderful the salvation of the Church, now it all came fully out—then judgment ; but it is from a place of destitution and righteous faith that it is thus set forth. Till Christ took perfect humiliation, in perfect righteousness accomplished it then in the midst of them (rejected), in perfect grace towards them ; justice had not its way. “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.” God could simply in righteousness have punished iniquity, but He could not have displayed Himself ; but how then ? In Christ he could in uttermost grace, manifesting a head of righteousness, on this being despised and spitefully entreated even after all, (and the enemies of God proved,) the righteous will rejoice when they see the vengeance—such suitably not being come in judgment ; Christ would feel as to the Pharisees, “My soul abhorred them.” Zech. xi. but in the humiliation of Christ, with the remnant in the latter day, when wickedness is then accomplished, it is brought into much greater relief. He shall stand up yet for the people (all written in the book), “a time such as never was of trouble.”—This these Psalms describe by the Spirit of Christ entering actually, as He alone could, into all their estate.

LIX.—This Psalm is a remarkable instance of the identification of Christ with the house of Jacob in their latter-day extremity. We learn also, the mistake of looking for the full meaning of any Psalm, in any of the circumstances merely of the writer, as the 5th verse abundantly shews ; the former point is brought before us in comparing the first three (1st and 2nd are the thesis), the 5th, 10th, 11th, and 16th verses : the 12th gives the character of the enemies, compare Deut. xvii. The 13th verse gives the end, object, of all this—6th, shews also their character ; 14th, their disappointment ; though the subject of these Psalms be the same, we must not suppose that they are tautological, various are the

characters in which sin now come to a head presents itself ; pride, lust, tyranny, and ignorance of, and enmity against the Lord Christ, taking part in the afflictions of His sin-afflicted and enemy-afflicted people ; and many correspondently are the ways, in which the position of Christ is shewn towards God, towards them, and towards their enemies. In these characters, different Psalms represent Him and them (and God as to the results), and the faithfulness of God drawn down towards them in Him, and due in Him. Therefore, He says “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but *I* have known thee, and *these* have known that thou hast sent me, and I have declared, &c. that the love, &c.” Consequent upon this intercessional identification of Christ with the remnant against the heathen, we return again to outer enemies, the heathen. It is now, “My God”—“O Lord God of hosts”—“the God of Israel,” dealing with the heathen, that He has taken up Israel as His people. God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Verse 3 is the character of their evil, it is not now a matter of correction, but pride. Verse 11 exhibits Christ owning them as His people, in this intercessional Psalm.

LX.—This is the half-doubting (through sense of casting off) but returning confidence, of the Spirit of truth in the house of Jacob, through the sense that their enemies are not overcome, but, that the promises goes to results, which include that. In a word, it is the sense of the Spirit in the house of Jacob, when their enemies presence has brought them into the full sense of their casting off, which indeed was (though the reconciling of the world spiritually) the abrogation of judgment in the earth, and the leaving of it by God ; but at the same time led them to that looking to God, which at once brought them, through grace, to all the promises ; and so “through God we shall do valiantly.” We have here, in the 5th verse, the appropriation of the Davidical name to the remnant, and the identification with him in name. As to its direct prophetic application, it is the remnant, those who feared God, given a banner, and emerging from the consciousness of their casting off, by this mercy, which pushes them to seek, by God’s title, their inheritance, casting themselves on the God who had cast them off, as their only strength.

It appears from this Psalm, that Israel is fully recognized with Judah, (ver. 7.) and Judah in his best character, before God begins to act with them on the enemies around within the territory, and the Jews possess themselves of Edom. After their recovery from positive oppression and trials, they call upon God for help, in their weakness for action; and verse 4 shows the latter, as verse 3 the former. Verse 10 invokes the God who had cast them off, as *the* God of their help. "He had not let them stumble for their fall." They now "stay no more upon those who smote them, but upon the Lord, the Holy One in truth." God and man are again contrasted, verse 11, but in honest faith and sincerity, humble yet sincere truth—after the past act of the positive trouble, under the sense of it looking for the strength, which shall order and establish them as against their enemies; going with their anxious acknowledging it was the casting off of God—"accepting the punishment of their iniquity," owning they were cast off,—still as with a trembling heart to themselves, yet true, holding the banner of God given to them and calling themselves His beloved. The truth is to come out in connection with them—God is to tread down their enemies, an old position, on much better ground, to a humbled renewed people in whose heart God has put His laws and revealed their Messiah as Jehovah in righteousness, whom they once rejected. But here it is specially God and the people and the work *in* them, not the revelation to them. Here he stands at their head, receiving God on their return.

LXI—LXVI.—I also find these connected together. Instead of being Christ or the Spirit of Christ in the presence of His enemies, or the people's (or remnant), it is in the presence of God in these circumstances—the calm [appeal and judgment of circumstances in His presence. His Spirit conducts him as man (and so the remnant), to a Rock higher than He, as man, or themselves. From the end of the earth or land, shut out from His holy presence in His temple, He, God is His tabernacle, God who has heard his vows. He has the heritage of them that fear God's name—his confidence is in Him; it is all through as associated with the Jews, I mean the Jews as distinct from Israel. Verses 6, 7, and 8, are

the expression of the character of this confidence, "generation, and generation it shall be," yea for ever, and says, "mercy and truth" which then shall meet together—a time of praise. (lxii.) In the midst of all the circumstances He calls His soul to wait "*only* upon God"—calls the people (Am), to "pour out their heart before God, for He is a refuge for *us*."—men are all vanity—power belongs to God: mercy shown in justice (now to be manifested for the patient and oppressed.) The expression of soul in this, is in Psalm lxiii. The application of this Psalm to spiritual joy, its character and confidence in this desert world, how often have they been the joy and instruction of the heart of the saint; but here I only follow the sense or explanation. It is most sweetly rich in joy. The King, verse 11, marks the place and consequence as in Psalm lxi. Psalm lxiv. is *the depth of the secret counsel* of the wicked, malice and encouragement of the enemies, 5, 6; but God shoots at them whose thoughts are deeper still—they shall be a sign of their own folly and God's judgment; men, all men shall fear, then afterwards the Lord shall be the joy of the righteous upright. lxv. presents Zion as the place accordingly where praise waits for God, as soon as ever the remnant His people are set there, praise will begin: and they have it ready there already in their hearts—their sins hindered, they are to be purged away—verse 4, the character and anticipation of this; 5, the manner of its accomplishment, its effect and consequences on the earth, as life from the dead. This is a joyful Psalm, full of blessed hope, very beautiful in its spring of holy hope. The answer to the cherished hope and vow of the sorrowing righteous, long estranged but righteous, just ready to burst forth. lxvi. is a consequent summons to all the nations or lands. It is the song of the righteous, proved such, after their acceptance and so far restoration, but before the submission of the nations. The judgment which delivered them (the remnant) from their immediate oppressors (Antichrist, &c. of whom we have seen,) is the occasion of this summons to the earth at large, *having been* in fullest trouble, they can now say *our* God in deliverance;—Christ is the foundation of it in the close.

LXI.—This Psalm seems to be the address of Messiah Christ to the Father, as rejected and expelled by the Jews (of whom He was anointed King), that from the end of the earth or land, driven (himself of old in Spirit, in this Enos character) among the Gentiles, He could still look unto Him to be led to the Rock that was higher than He, as He said, “for my Father is greater than I.” (See Psalm xvi. 2.) In this, as the persecuted Christ, He would abide for ever, for “He put His trust in Him.” This was His mind in His humiliation: then we have (with the exception of the 7th verse, which seems the interlocation of the Jewish remnant) His thoughts as under His deliverance, i.e. having taken His people now upon Himself, He would act as became Him in consequence of the responsibilities so acquired, He would daily perform His vows; here then we have Messiah as the exalted man occupied with rendering His vows (for the salvation of His Church, or rather here, more especially, His earthly people felt in Himself as Heb. v.) to Him who had been the power of its deliverance, hearing Him so crying; this with the 7th verse, is a subject of very deep interest. Compare here Psalm lvi. 12, verse 8 here and lxxv. 1, where the form of the blessing is entered into. I do not here state the enquiry, whether the paying of vows by the Lord Christ, is only as the head of His people in the Millennial glory, or in the ages of eternity; of the former we have evidence as to the Jews here, for it is in this character, and as connected with them, He specially pays the vows; as with the saints, He is in the glory reigning. I have omitted to refer to the xxii. Psalm, where the subject and result of Christ’s vows are fully entered into. The latter part of the 5th verse here, is worthy of our attention. (The 7th verse compared with our Lord’s words in John “and abode in His love,” lead us into the force of this subject.)

LXII.—This Psalm particularly describes the jealousy of Christ’s enemies against Him, and their feebleness, because God was on His side. “His expectation was from Him.” The 8th verse is His comment *upon* this, and the statement of His experience *in* this, to His companions, “the people,” and so “a refuge for us:” it also glances at the vengeance, as mercy of deliverance

to the afflicted children of God ; they are indeed bold and unhindered now, but God will recognize me, God will render to every man according to His work, therefore “trust in Him,” and “always trust not in oppression.” See also verse 3, (where the soul is set morally right, the prevalence of all evil is but the evidence that the Lord *alone* shall be exalted, because there is a God.) This is the Psalm of *faith*, and though I have but briefly touched on it, it is a most instructive and touching Psalm ; just the meeting of the mind of faith, with what is true in God, but hidden from faith save as it is realized *in* faith. The identity of Christ with the nation, is strongly marked in verse 8 ; also observe GOD all through, except the last verse, where it is the covenant name of God,—The Lord, the faithful One.

LXIII.—This seems to me, to be the desire of Christ, (now that He has come into a far country from God, in the midst of, and under the sin and misery and desolations of man, wandering, yea, departed from God, as utterly estranged,) for God, and looking at the full glory of God in the sanctuary, (Judah externally was the sanctuary, and the Shechinah of glory was there.) The desire of Christ after that glory which He had “with thee before the world was.” It is the recollection, so to speak, of Christ applying itself to that which belonged to Him ; (I see much of this running through St. John, who is full of the glory ;) as He says in the very case, “and now O Father, glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” It is then the thought of Christ in His time of need, of the glory as His delight which He knew in God, and delighted in, in His presence : and we may say of another glory which He had with the Father before the world. The enemies that were against Him should be destroyed, who did not know, or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. In which act, according to the principles of the Psalms, we see, “Princes of this world” was a common designation for all.

LXIV.—The malicious and calumniating enmity of the haters of the Lord, (of Christ) shall draw out the wrath of God, and thus unexpectedly shall they be taken in their own wickedness : the

character of their own enmity against Christ the perfect One, exhibits the principles of their own state, and when drawn out to a head in the act of their own exaltation, draws down the vengeance of God. The very same perfection in power, as Christ was in humiliation, (the full character of the enmity, and the result with God, are strongly developed.)

LXV.—That this Psalm is the restoration of the Jews, or more properly speaking, the replacing of the remnant (now a nation,) in their old place with God, in the mediation of Immanuel, as introducing Millennial blessedness, is, I think, evident. The Jewish portion of this is stated in the 1st verse, as expected, and appointed, and that in the most beautiful manner possible, in the union, if we may so speak, of God's interest and man's in it, according to the promises. In the 2nd verse is the Gentile portion of this blessedness. In order to this, Christ must take it up : accordingly that which has prevented, is stated in the 3rd verse, but in Christ's person as for the Jews, as in Isa. liii., the latter part being the expression of this by the Jewish remnant ; this leads them to celebrate their acceptance in the beloved, the man whom God chose ; then comes the manner of their deliverance, as in answer to their faith ; the extent of this, "over all the earth," and the fruition of blessedness by the removal of the curse from the earth : such is the scope of this beautiful Psalm. The Psalms here open out more into the glorious results of the union of Immanuel with *men* rather than with the *Jews*.

LXVI.—The blessing of the nations, in the deliverance of the Jews in the latter day. Christ *at* the head of the Jews, or rather *as* the head of the Jews, ready to pay the vows uttered in the time of their trouble. It is the voice of the upright remnant, *He* being so really, *they* in their acceptance, having integrity as spoken of in scripture, as Noah, &c. to God ; but really true only in Him, and therefore all this is spoken in His person, and He has fulfilled all this, i.e., what in His own person made Him capable of so taking the lead. To the 4th verse is the blessing arising from the dealings of God. to the nations called to praise Him. 5th in reference to old doings, calls them to see present similar ones, putting

down the rebellious. 8th turns to the acknowledgment of, for whom, and in what, all this is shewn. "Bless *our* God." He hath tried, but hath also delivered us. 13th, Christ takes up the word, having His mouth opened, as it were, by the blessing of His people, all along in His heart ; it is then progressively developative, from the general call to the nations, to the special feelings of Christ.

LXVII.—There are two things in this Psalm that the blessing of the Jews is the way of saving health, being known to all nations ; and next, that the praise of the *peoples* (brought in) is the object of their desire, and caused by the judgment and government of God, and that the bringing in of the people, their restoration to God was needful to, and occasional of the full blessing of the Jews in detail, that producing the fear of Him who blessed them ; see Jer. xxxiii. 9, (as of the earth, for they were the earth's representatives and spokesmen.)

LXVIII.—This is a noble Psalm ; it triumphs in the thought of the presence of God. The preface is longer than usual ; and though the first verse is as a general heading, yet extends itself to the end of the 6th verse ; the celebration of blessing because of the assumption of this place in the heavens, by Him of the Ancient name. His character in association with this, especially as regards the Jews. Compare the desolation of Edom in Jer. xlix. God arises—God that is all this. The solitary, I should translate, those separated into the unity of estrangement from the evil of those that were around them, the remnant and their estate : He maketh them a house, delivers the captives, and brings desolation on the rebellious, namely, the body of the Jews ; it is the constant, I should say almost technical term for them. The Jews are the object of this arising, but it is the wicked, and the righteous, referring them to the presence of God in the wilderness, and the preparation of an inheritance, in which, refreshed with rain from heaven, the incorporation of the Jews (*Yachidim*) should dwell. Verse 11, then comes the development, when "Adonai gave the word." 13–17, The Jewish Church a body. The establishment of God's throne not *over*, but *in* Jerusalem, similarly as in Sinai

too, and according to its power and enactments. 18, The recognition of those in whom these things were wrought and how. "Thou" that is their Adonai, "hast ascended on high and received gifts as man, even for "the rebellious," (the Jews) for the dwelling of Jah "Elohim." The Apostle does not quote the latter part in referring to the gifts in Ephesians. The rest of the Psalm scarcely requires a note, taken as referable to the latter days. The congregations, are not the same word; the Jah Elohim in the heavens, the strength and salvation of Israel shines through the Psalm. It is a magnificent Psalm. From lxxv. to this seem a sort of little book of themselves, a common subject. Indeed the whole from li to this, is not merely great general truths, (relative indeed to Christ and the remnant,) but the actual question between Him humbled, and Him delivered and His enemies. It is all personal, the personal trial of Messiah as identified with the remnant. Man would swallow Him up, as a man; but God was His strength; when God arises, that being so, the case will be different. *God*, will be found to be specially brought before the mind accordingly here, i. e. in these Psalms. It is the whole course and relationship of God with Israel, from beginning to end, as acting on the very same principles (His principles) throughout, with, and manifested in them, taking the name and word in which He went before them, in their first deliverance in the wilderness, and identifying it with Christ in the Heavens, Adonai ascended; verse 18, shews the address to Christ as one who had effected all this; solitary, are yachidim, it is a principle of action which we have seen all through, i.e., we have seen the yachidim in their cry, compare Ps. xxii. 20. Lord in verse 11. is Adonai, i.e. Christ recognized on high. 16. Yehovah. 17, Adonai. 18, Yah. 19, Adonai, 20, Yehovah Adonai. 22, Adonai. 32, Adonai. It is recognizing Yah, the existing God—Elohim, God in covenant, i.e., in Himself in consistency of character. Yehovah the accomplisher of all spoken in Israel, in a word, of promise properly—especially Adonai who is celebrated as Christ risen in verse 18. But the same act, mercy, and protection or powerful deliverance at first in the desert. "Let

God arise.” Numbers x. 35. In a word, it is all God’s glory and truth as centered and developed in Israel, accomplished and celebrated by Israel in Christ ascended, their Adonai. God giving deliverances, God giving strength and power unto Israel His people. The triumph is complete and detailed, not only as their Ancient God, their God of old, but as in the heavenly glory of Christ ; verses 33—35, compare Dan. vii. 7, 9, 13, 22, 27. Deut. xxx. 26—29.

LXIX.—The deep affectingness and object of this Psalm, “ He was heard in that He feared ;” only we may notice the gracious use of these things in supplication by the Lord ; This deliverance as we have seen before, made the occasion of confidence to the humble, the “humble shall hear this, and be glad ;” so they were the objects of His solicitude ver. 6. His identification with the Jews seen herein, is manifest, it breaks forth in distinctness in verses 35, 36. see also verse 34.

Christ explains His part in going without the camp (as in effect the sin offering, bearing all reproach) but really that of a wicked world against God, verse 7. The Lord, the God of Israel, (we have seen the circumstances of Israel,) as *obliged* to go without, He explains His part towards men, and towards God. Here we see the circumstances of the great Sufferer, not in sympathy, but in fact alone ; and He explains this in His appeal to God first ; then to the Lord as to its effect on the poor, and scorned, and low-laid remnant around Him—for it was for the Lord of Israel’s sake—then He pleads the whole case in His own sorrow before God the Lord. He had done all He could, ever to win them : what had He not suffered for them. His heart had been broken—what had He received—there was none to pity. Then judgment—but He poor—set up on high, praising. The humble hear this—they rejoice and are glad—it is the sign of their confidence and deliverance. All will praise Him, for after all (the wicked having been judged) God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah, and there will be a heritage for those that love His name, as seed of His servants.

LXX.—Though the object of this Psalm is the same, yet its

character is different ; there is more confidence, (I say not more faith,) more appealing to God on the rectitude of His favour ; its word also is, (for it is brought now to a crisis,) “ make no long tarrying’ ”—also the humiliation of Christ, the way of others’ joy, is affectingly brought forward : “ let others,” saith He, “ rejoice,” as for me, I am content to be humbled, to do thy will for thy sake ; “ but I am poor and needy ” content to be in humiliation, but my joy is in this, making others to enjoy. It is Christ and the poor, as the object of deliverance, not of suffering, a result in fact of His faithfulness in suffering. He poor, the occasion to secure by intercession, the gladness of them that trust in deliverance, but in His poverty He pleads, that they at least might be glad. It is in this spirit St. Paul says, As to the Church, “ so death worketh in us, but life in you,” only there in combat, here, in intercession.

LXXI.—This Psalm, though I believe the literal David to be the subject of it, applies it appears to me to the anomalous position of the Jews on the setting up of Anti-christ, as David driven out by Absalom ; this type will fully explain the Psalm, looking to the Jews as similarly placed in the latter day, but finding a new place in resurrection, as Dan. xii. 2. ; though that rather applies to another portion of the remnant yet scattered : this to a body of them, in, but now driven out of the land, though not permanently, the last time of Jacob’s trouble, closing the typical David history, for then He takes His Solomon power or state ; the lxxth was personal feeling, therefore of David properly. The positive application of this Psalm, is to the Jews as apparently utterly cast off again in the close, the very close of their eventful history. Verse 20, is the confidence, but there is the faith of God’s elect in the Lord now after the sufferings of Christ explained, clearly recognized in the outset. It was a Jewish faith of old ; it was however to be as in a resurrection, not in what was of old : Solomon, not David was to build the house—still not forsaken, till God’s strength and salvation was shown in them to that generation, and those that should come, they should not bear fruit so, i. e., according to that generation, but they should introduce a better hope as a risen people.

The Jewish people shall be dealt with in the close, upon their old principles, but they shall bear fruit upon new, under a new alliance. Therefore we have "old age" as in the trial, "bringing up again from the depths of the earth," as in the confidence. Psalms xlii. xliii, are probably when David was through Absalom driven across Jordan. So Christ with the sufferers driven out, but His connection in spirit with the remnant is very different from His appearance in person to deliver, and give joy to the separated remnant, whom sorrow and evil around them, have separated and driven out. With the remnant, we have seen Him in the foregoing Psalms, oppressed by those who oppressed them, even the great body of their own people estranged from them, because they were evil, and by them (because they are in power) driven from Zion, and the temple and worship in it.

LXXII.—The purport and application of this Psalm is obvious (closing as it were, the previous David ones) so as not to need comment. It is however one of the few, which apply to our Lord in His manifestation of righteousness and glory, and it is the end of His desires as Christ. But we must notice only here, that, as of others, it is properly and exclusively Jewish, speaking of the bounds of His dominion, and here describes succinctly but very clearly, and fully, the nature and extent of His dominion (which is important.)

It is the work too of the Lord God, the God of Israel, and relates as to blessings by Christ so to the whole earth being filled with His glory, as the desire of David. The 15th verse also marks a character of Millennial glory properly as I conceive human, (not Isangelic i.e., as to the desire,) and Jewish.

THE DISPENSATIONS.

IN the progress of those successive periods which are the subject of revelation in the Scriptures, and which end in the re-subjection of all things to God, through the agency of Him who is given to be "Head to the Church over all things;" (Eph. i. 22.) we find a slow and gradual development of the purpose of God, but all tending to shew that whilst it is His character to give, it is man's to mar and misuse the blessing given.

And thus we learn the humbling but yet most blessed lesson, that happiness is only secure when "God is all in all;" when He not only gives, but preserves and directs the use of the blessing given.

The Scriptures therefore are not merely intended to reveal the way of individual peace and salvation, they are the expression of the mind of God respecting the things of earth, in their relation to Him. They evince and manifest in their record of successive dispensation what He and what man respectively are; and shew that while the first man who is of the earth, hath scattered, the second who is from heaven will as surely re-gather unto God.

But the progress of these things is slow, and there are many dispensations. The word "dispensation"* directs our mind to God, for there could of course be nothing dispensed unless there were a dispenser, and God is the dispenser of good and perfect gifts; and there are three spheres in which He has or will distribute the

* The word translated "Dispensation" is literally economy, being compounded of two words *oikos*, a house; and *νέμω*, to distribute. It therefore refers to the regulated arrangements of a household. And the word *οικονομος* frequently translated "Steward," means a person who presides over and directs such arrangements, dispensing to each their proper portion: and dispensation is the later name for such an office. The economy therefore or arrangement of any period may be said to commence whenever God is pleased to assume this character of a dispenser, and to end when the arrangements are manifestly broken up by Him, and others constituted. Hebrews iii. where the relation of Moses to his house, and that of the Lord Jesus to His, are contrasted, may illustrate what I mean.

gifts of His goodness, an unfallen, a fallen, and a new earth.

I need not dwell on the character of the blessings dispensed to Adam in the fallen earth. The earth and all things were placed not in constrained but willing subjection under him.

In the first and second chapters of Genesis it is said that God made and then blessed ; “*God blessed and saw what He had made was good.*” Here was the great character of this dispensation, but it ended as soon as that word was pronounced, “*cursed be the ground for thy sake,*”—“so He drove out the man.”

Here was the failure of the flesh in its innocence and perfectness. Adam was not spiritual—he was not alive in the spirit—there was no union to God—he had the perfectness of a sinless creature, but the flesh even when sinless was not worthy to be trusted with the keeping of the blessings given. “By one man sin entered in and death passed upon all.” But grace had not failed in God, neither His power of bringing life out of the corruption of death ; and this is indeed the great character marked upon all His subsequent dealings with man, whenever the blessing is effectual and does not fail. Promise was the great instrument which God began to use in an earth which had now fallen under the power of Satan and the curse, and had begun to groan in the bondage of corruption, “the whole groaneth.” It was now no longer present enjoyment, the gifts had been marred and the goodness spoiled, but it was now promise respecting future things hoped for. And promise opened the way for faith, as the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for.

And how blessed a thing is promise, for it has its origin in God.—It rests on His faithfulness, and Almighty power, and therefore the unfailing certainty of this word, “he that believeth shall never be confounded.” It is the gentle but mighty power with which He works and reclaims and comforts in the midst of the world’s miserable ruin.

It was through the instrumentality of the promise that God formed for Himself, in this His first dispensation to a *fallen* world, that little family of faith whose God He was not ashamed to be called. Of these, Abel is the first, and this was his character :—

He "looked for a better country." The earth had still many good things in it, but he knew that it was no longer blessed, but accursed; and he looked for a better country. Yet he did not cease to use the things of earth, only he used them for God, for it is written that he offered to God not a more *excellent*, but a more abundant (*πλεονα*) sacrifice than Cain. And God "testified of his gifts," for they were the fruits of a heart which was willing to renounce present things for His sake, and gladly to give them to Him. In Seth's family too, (for Seth means substituted as being set in the place of Abel whom Cain slew,) we have the same characteristics. And here it is interesting to note how soon disappointment, hopelessness, and thereby an acquaintance with God's restoring power, are marked as the three steps of experience which are sooner or later realized by those who hope in promise.

Cain signifies "acquisition." At the birth of her first born son, Eve seems to have supposed that she had gotten or acquired what might indeed deserve the name of acquisition; but before her second son was born, either from experience already gained, or from prophetic fore-sight into the future, she had learned what disappointment was, and she called him Abel, "*vanity*." Nor was it until Abel had been slain, and she had thus fully drunk of the cup of sorrow, that she learned that God was able to supply and that God did supply by His own gracious power the hopeless vacuum which sin and death had made.

God, said she, hath *appointed me another seed* instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. It is in things substituted, substituted after nature has done its utmost and failed, that we alone find abiding blessing.

In Seth's family therefore, we find those who trod in the steps of Abel as pilgrims and sojourners. It is especially said of Enoch and of Noah that they walked with God; (and Enoch and Noah were those to whom the earth's destruction by fire and by water were respectively revealed, and accordingly many names of the family of Seth are such as indicate either the sense of present weakness or future expectation of rest.) In Cain's family, on the contrary, we find the names of strength, security, and rest, in the

earth. The building of cities, the feeding of cattle, the invention of the harp and organ, and the workmanship in brass and iron, are all mentioned as springing from the family of Cain, i.e., the utilities and elegancies of social life found their origin and cultivation in those who regarded not the promise, who would not confess that they were pilgrims and strangers in the earth.

As long as the family of God held fast their integrity the dispensation did not fail. The first attempt against them was one of violent and unsparing enmity; and Abel was the victim. The second was seductive allurements into union and association with the very family and circumstances against which they should have continued to testify. This succeeded; and here was the apostasy of the Antideluvian dispensation. And how closely does it resemble the character of the apostasy of our own. The result of the union was good as far as the earth was concerned, for it produced giants, mighty men, men of renown. But there was no room for promise here; for conscious weakness and expectancy only are suited to the consolation of promise. And consequently since no law had been given, and promise was the only instrument applied which could bind men unto the ways of God, when this had failed there could be nothing but lawlessness; and so it is written, that the whole earth was filled with violence. Testimony through Noah was sent and rejected, and the flood was sent upon the world of the ungodly. Two dispensations then had thus passed away; each ending in failure, and in judgment: but as soon as life again appeared upon the earth, we find the Lord introducing a new dispensation of blessing which has continued to the present hour, and under which we still are. Its specific characteristics are detailed in the first six verses of the 9th chapter of Genesis. The fear of us and the dread of us to be upon every animal. Every moving thing that liveth is to be our meat. Flesh with the life thereof, shall not be eaten. Man's blood shall be avenged by man. These are the specific marks of this dispensation, and they will continue until the Lord Jesus shall come again and bring in the times of restitution. But moreover this dispensation to Noah, was accompanied by a covenant, a free and unconditional covenant of blessing;

which therefore can never fail, and is expressly said to be everlasting. "And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you. I do set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." This is the first covenant mentioned in scripture, and it is based on sacrifice. "Noah builded an altar and offered burnt-offerings on the altar: And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." (Gen. ix.)

Here were promises based not upon any thing in man, unless indeed upon his known worthlessness, but resting on the sweet smelling savour of a well-pleasing and accepted sacrifice. And therefore life shall never be utterly swept away again, and seed time and harvest shall not cease. And the whole earth is brought under an abiding covenant of blessing.

And thus every bud as it opens and every flower as it blooms, is now to us the witness of grace—grace that has weighed and considered our worthlessness, but has found a way to bless, through the power of the sweet-smelling sacrifice. This then was another characteristic of the dispensation that commenced with Noah, that it included in its privileges these covenanted and everlasting blessings; and these will remain even after the dispensation to which they were first attached shall have passed away. And therefore the rain-bow (which was the token of it) is seen in the Revelation surrounding the throne of God, as if every covenanted blessing were treasured there, in security from the wilfulness and evil of man. This wilfulness and disobedience were manifested afresh as soon as God had given these promises of blessing. The building of Babel was the evidence of their sin; but God did not destroy them. He scattered them indeed (and thus nations and national distinctions and national pride are but the witness of man's early rebellion and sin; but He did not destroy them, neither

will he, for He is long-suffering, until the last great Babylon of which the Revelation speaks (Rev. xviii.) shall have been completed, and become the centre of the glory of the nations of the earth, and fully shew the character of the fruit which man's efforts have produced from an earth placed under a special covenant of blessing. And thus, as regards human life and human energy, there is a fearful continuity of purpose and of action from the days of Noah to the time when the Son of man shall be revealed in His glory, to destroy, not the earth, but "to destroy them that destroy the earth." (Rev. xi.)

Hitherto then we have seen no manifestation of goodness that was not universal in its aspect, 'The covenanted blessings of the earth for example, were not limited, but concerned all the inhabitants of the world, and one as much as another. But the new world had been proved to be evil, and therefore in order to preserve blessing in the earth, we for the first time find ostensibly and manifestly introduced that method of elective grace, which alone secures the perpetuity of blessing, because it is "not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." And hence the call of Abraham, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time; even Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods; and I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed and gave him Isaac." (Josh. xxiv. 3,) Here was sovereign grace calling, and sovereign grace giving and multiplying, and this is the character of all the branches of the covenant to Abraham. And therefore nothing that could arise from man, no subsequent arrangement even of God Himself could possibly annul it, so as to make the promise of none effect. This covenant therefore must be everlasting, and all that ever will be effectually blessed either in earth or in heaven, hang upon it as a covenant of promise. Upon this covenant the natural seed of Abraham, Israel according to the flesh is secretly sustained now. And therefore the Lord has said that when their uncircumcised hearts shall be humbled, and they shall accept the punishment of

their iniquity, that then He will remember His covenant with Abraham; and He will remember the land. (Lev. xxvi. 42.) Again, that "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes; for the gifts and calling of God are unrepented of." (Rom. xi.) But not only the earthly Jerusalem and the land, the Heavenly Jerusalem likewise does equally rest upon the covenant of promise to Abraham; for the promise was not made simply to Abraham, but equally to His seed, i. e., Christ. (Gal. iii.) And therefore if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise. So that heirship according to promise, (Gal. iii. 29.) the bestowal of the Spirit, (Gal. iii. 14.) and the being the children of Jerusalem which is above, as the Sarah,—the mother of the child of promise; (Gal. iv. 26.) are all made to depend on the covenant of promise to Abraham.* I do not mean that we can turn back to Genesis and there find every blessing speci-

* The promise to Abraham was that he should be the "father of many nations,"—"the heir of the world,"—"and that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed." Here we find the great result to the earth, through that agency, by-and-bye to be manifested, which God since that time has been secretly preparing.

The promise consequently made to David was necessary as a means to this. It was more specific and concerned particularly Israel, as blessed under the true Solomon. And it was through them that the nations are to be blessed secondarily. And thus the promise is, "I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers." Rivers according to Isaiah xviii. being the symbol of Gentile power.

But in order that the sure mercies of David may be established, Christ must be raised from the dead. (Acts ii. 30. and xiii. 34.) So that we here see that according to the arrangements of God, the establishment of the throne of David in Jerusalem, and in order to this the resurrection and exaltation of Christ as the Son of God, are made necessary as means to the great result promised to Abraham. Hence the Abrahamic covenant may be considered as the first unfailing root of blessing in the earth. The root and fatness of the olive tree from which the Church now who are Sons of God, and have the heavenly calling, derive the blessing. This takes in the three characters of the Lord, Son of Abraham, Son of David, Son of God; for He was declared to be this last by resurrection. All these blessings rest on the sure ground not of man's competency, but God's—they are all according to promise, and hence being of grace, they are equally open to circumcision and uncircumcision. It is no matter whether during the economy of the Millennium, the blessings received be those of heavenly Priesthood or earthly Priesthood, both will hang upon the Abrahamic promise. And the promised heirship of the world could not be given in the way proposed by God, unless there were such union between those in heaven and those on earth. Jacob's dream soon after distinctly typified it. The 18th verse of the 68th Psalm quoted in Ephesians affords, I think, a distinct proof that the ascension of Christ was necessary in the arrangements of God, to the fulfilment of the David promises which that Psalm details.

fically recorded, which is involved in the heirship of the world, but the character, and means, and mode of the promised heirship were secretly determined on by God ; and therefore the promise of the heirship included the promise of the accompaniments.

The Dispensation therefore, which commenced with Abraham, is necessarily an eternal one ; for (though many earthly and temporary blessings yet to be accomplished were included in it) it had respect to a heavenly and eternal city—Jerusalem which is above, the mother of the Church of the first-born ; (Gal. iv. compared with Heb. xii.) a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. But how gradual is the unfolding and accomplishment of the purpose of God in blessing ! For though Israel after the flesh are still *secretly* sustained as a nation in the power of the Sarah covenant, though the worn and weary Church upon earth, are by faith under its blessings ; and although the spirits of just men who have finished their course are still more perfectly resting in it, yet even they have not as yet received the promise, and without our being added to them cannot be made perfect ; so that whilst Israel under the Hagar covenant (under which they have *ostensibly* stood since Sinai,) have abundantly and manifestly exhibited all the consequences of such a relation : the *manifestation* of Sarah blessing is altogether future, and will not be shown forth in its power until the whole family both in earth and heaven, Jerusalem above and Jerusalem below, are alike *manifestly* brought under its bonds of blessing.

The marriage of Abraham with Hagar was an attempt to gain by his powers what GOD had made dependent upon the exertion of His own Almighty and supernatural energy : and so the covenant at Sinai devolved upon Israel the responsibilities of earning and keeping by *their* faithfulness and obedience, blessings which really depend on God's faithfulness to His own promise to Abraham. Of course it could not be but that the creature would fail : and therefore all the blessings that were made to hang upon this covenant, Priesthood, Kingship and the like, all failed in the hands of their possessors. And Jesus said, " Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Here was the virtual termination of

the Hagar standing. Desolation, the curse of the law, and wrath rest upon Jerusalem, the beloved city: and it was then fully proved that every hope of maturing blessing from any powers innate in earth must altogether be laid aside.

God had foreseen this, and therefore He had long before said, "Behold I create a new thing in the earth:" the Lord Jesus was that new thing; in Him was found power to receive and answer to every responsibility which the law or any other arrangement of God had devolved upon man. Not one jot or one tittle passed from the law until He had fulfilled it; yet He did not receive the blessings of it, but the curses—for He put Himself in the place of others to whom these curses were due. The law therefore found its end in destroying Him, so that it was abolished by His death: and after this it became a question not of blessing under the Old Covenant, of which Moses was the mediator; but of blessing under a *New Covenant, of which Christ became the Mediator.*

In other words, the whole world, both Jew and Gentile, were left under sin: One only had been a righteous Servant; but whilst on earth He could not be blessed, because He had voluntarily identified Himself with Israel's circumstances and Israel's sin. He died for that nation. But as soon as the curse had fully fallen on Him, God would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. He raised Him from the dead and GAVE Him glory. And now this is the mystery made known to us, that for the dispensation of the fulness of times He *hath* headed up for Himself all things in Christ.* It is not a future thing. He *hath* done it; for as soon as Christ was raised, all the titles which concern all future manifested blessing, whether in heavenly or earthly places, were bestowed on Christ. He is Melchizedek, Aaron, the Mediator of the New Covenant and all things. The results of these offices are not indeed as yet manifested. Yet, which is there from which the Church does not at present profit. Because He is Melchizedek, we are able to praise, and are a royal Priesthood. Because He is as Aaron, we are able to offer gifts and sacrifices.—Because He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He opens the book about

* The 10th verse of Ephesians i. should be thus translated: Having made

earthly things to the Church's knowledge.—Because He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, He is able to dispense those blessings, which, we sinners of the Gentiles, need for our admission into the heavenly Courts, as the heavenly Priesthood of Israel, quite as much as Israel upon earth will by-and-bye need and receive them when their earthly court of the One Temple shall be occupied by them. For there is but One Temple, though diverse courts.* That Temple is Israel's Temple; and the blessings of the heavenly courts, and of all in them, depends upon this,—that the Mediator of the New Covenant has entered into them, and sprinkles both them and every worshipper with the blood of the covenant. And thus the distinctive blessings of the covenant, viz. “Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. I will write my laws upon their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” “They shall be my people, and I will be their God.” “They shall all know the Lord;” (see 1 John iii.) all these as much as any higher blessing that may also be communicated belong to those who are priests of the LORD's house—Israel's Priesthood, for the Church is a part of the Israel of GOD—there is to be one flock and one Shepherd.

Indeed it is very important to remember, that the bestowal of greater blessings by no means implies the necessary loss of lesser. The Israelitish priests, for example, had peculiar and distinctive privileges with respect to the sacrifices and the courts in which they were allowed to worship. But this did not prevent their having the ordinary privileges of the congregation of Israel in respect of *their* sacrifices and *their* courts. Again, blessings dispensed to the different members of a household may vary in character and degree, and yet the bestowal of them may be dependent on the same circumstances, and flow from the same source.

known unto us the mystery of His will . . . viz. that for the dispensation of the fulness of times, he hath headed up for Himself all things in Christ. I suppose that the Millennial period is to be included in the times here spoken of.

* I here use the Temple made with hands, Solomon's Temple, as symbolical of the connexion, which, when the heavens are opened over the earth in the Millennium, will exist between the heavenly places and Jerusalem on earth, all forming in their connexion one Temple.

(See *Thoughts on the Tabernacle*, last number of *Christian Witness*.)

Thus the Priests were differently privileged from other members of the Israelitish family, yet the privileges of all rested on one and the same ground, viz. their being all children of Abraham. Moreover both priests and people were placed in similar circumstances of need—they both required, and both alike received, instruction, and guardianship, and care, proportioned and suited to the circumstances of their respective need. And thus the future heavenly priesthood of Israel, that is, the Church being at present composed of individuals who are by nature sinners, ignorant and ever ready to wander from God, as much need and as much receive the forgiveness, instruction, and preservation which are bestowed through and under the second covenant, as Israel will need and receive them when it shall, by-and-bye, be formally made with them in their own land. Jerusalem on earth will then be manifestly acknowledged in her Sarah character; and then the children of the desolate, that is, of the apparently deserted Sarah, shall be more than the children of the married wife, that is, of the once apparently acknowledged Hagar; the whole of Isaiah liv. will then definitely apply to Jerusalem on earth thus acknowledged. But the Sarah character and this same chapter of Isaiah are definitely applied in the Galatians to Jerusalem which is above, which is the heavenly court of the future temple, measured, i.e. acknowledged and blessed by God; whilst the outer court, i.e. the earthly Jerusalem is given up to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. It has been already said, that all hope of Israel's taking their proper earthly standing was over, as soon as the Lord Jesus said, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate;" but they could not be said to have been broken out of their own olive tree, of which the Abrahamic promises are the sap and fatness, until the final rejection of the Apostolic testimony in Jerusalem; for it was this testimony which brought those who received it into the heavenly city, a way into which had now been opened through the ascended Mediator. But even these heavenly blessings now shared by the Gentiles, are yet declared by the Apostle, to be part of the fatness of the Jewish olive tree; so that neither does the par-

taking of the fatness of the olive tree,* imply that the blessings thus derived are simply earthly, for they to whom the Apostle was writing had a heavenly calling; neither does the Mediatorship of the New Covenant, of which, as held by the Lord Jesus, we now receive the blessings, imply that those blessings are earthly; on the contrary, when we are told in Heb. xii. that we are come to the Mediator of the New Covenant, it is to Him as associated with the heavenly Jerusalem, and the spirits of just men made perfect, so that whilst the glory and blessing of earth is held in abeyance, heavenly things and heavenly blessing are opened in virtue of the same Mediatorship, and the same covenant, which therefore have already taken effect, and are each day operating on all who by faith enter, not indeed into the earthly court for that is at present closed, but into the heavenly court of the one temple.

As soon as the Lord Jesus took the cup and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" the means were revealed whereby the promise in Jeremiah respecting the remission of sins was to be accomplished, namely, through His blood. And from that moment the blessing of the new covenant began to be received, as they have been ever since received, (even before Israel and Judah are brought under it,) by those who have remembered this command to shew forth the Lord's death till He come. All discipleship therefore, which comes between these two points, viz. the last supper on earth, and the coming in glory, has necessarily the character of an unearthly calling, for His servants share with Him: if the Master had been acknowledged upon the earth, and had received the glory of Jerusalem and the earth, they would have shared in His portion; but when He was rejected of earth, and His portion became heavenly, He says, "the glory which thou

* The olive tree itself by its very existence in the earth, as planted by God independently of man's agency, is the symbol or witness of the way in which the blessings come, viz., in the way of free promise and grace. The blessings themselves are symbolized by the "fatness." The fatness is alike received by stem, leaves, fruit, yet in different degrees and in which the result is different. There is nothing therefore in this symbol which implies either that the Church which is now grafted in, has the specific privilege of Israel, nor that Israel when re-grafted will have the specific and distinctive privileges of the Church at present. The Gentile branch boasts of its fatness, i.e., not the mode in which the blessings come, for that humbles, but of the blessings themselves.

hast given me, I have given them. But as the glory which He has received is heavenly, and as we are not yet actually in heaven, it is of course glory to be waited for, and will not be received until He shall be revealed from heaven ; but then what is the practical effect of knowing that all power in heaven and in earth belongs unto Him now, that all things have been headed up in Him, and that all dispensations, titles of power and glory belong unto Him ? the effect is this—that it leads us to abjure every thing that does not answer to those titles ; if for example, I know that He is the Son of David, the true Solomon, and that to Him in this character “all kings must bow and all nations do Him service :” when I see that the present state of kings and nations does not answer to this, and that their course is contrary to His course, and their precepts to His precepts, I instantly see, that however much I may submit to suffer, I cannot exercise a power which proceeds on principles of disobedience to Him. Or again when I see that He is the second Adam, and that all things will by-and-bye be seen in entire and blessed subjection unto Him ; it takes me from rejoicing or resting in creation, as it at present is, groaning under the bondage of corruption, for it at present affords no more stable foundation for joy, than does my own corrupt and corruptible tabernacle in which I groan. And it is thus that the very knowledge of Christ’s exaltation, of His being a king, the king of Israel, received and seated on the throne of God, and therefore having, in this sense, all put in subjection under Him, (Eph. i. 22.) necessarily separates me from fellowship with the things so subjected, unless they are found in a state answering to that subjection : if not, they are out of course, contrary to the mind of Christ and of God ;—and I have only to wait and to suffer until the time comes for Him to leave the Father’s throne, where He now sits as the One whom man has “despised and the nation abhorred.” And then He shall be brought before the Antient of days, (Dan. vii.) to be manifestly invested with the glory. And then the saints will say, “we give thee thanks O Lord God, because thou hast taken to thyself thy great power and hast reigned.” (Rev. xi.) And thus it is not by saying that Christ is not at present King, that I shew the necessary

dissociation of the saints from the exercise of power as at present used in the earth ; but by saying He is a king, all power is given to Him ; but He has been and is rejected : and it is grace and long suffering which prevent His asserting as yet His rightful title. And He calls on me to exhibit grace and long suffering too.

We have thus from Noah to the second coming of the Lord, four periods of distinct dispensation, of which three are continuing to exist together, and one has entirely passed away.

The first of these comprehends the whole period from Noah to the second coming of the Lord. The dispensational arrangements of the first six verses of the 9th chapter of Genesis, still continue.

The second is the Sinai dispensation, which was the seeking of the Abrahamic blessings in the Hagar way. And this terminated when our Lord pronounced desolation on Jerusalem.

The third is the committal of power to the Gentile image ; it commenced with Nebuchadnezzar, continues still, and will be terminated by the ten kingdoms and Antichrist.

The fourth is the New Covenant dispensation, which has began to bring in the Abrahamic blessings in the Sarah way, for the Church as citizens of Jerusalem which is above, have even at present, the Sarah character of blessing, though not in earthly things. And this commenced with the preaching of the Apostles, after the Lord gave them the cup of the New Covenant or Testament (for the word is the same in the original) in His blood.*

* Both the Hagar and Sarah dispensations, are of course only the results of God's giving blessing through Abraham ; on the covenant with him, these and the Millennial and all future dispensations hang. It is most interesting and important to note the contrast between the first and the second covenants. It will be seen very plainly by comparing Lev. xxvi. 3—17, with Jer. xxxii. 31—34.

In Leviticus it is, "*if* ye walk in my statutes and do them, I will be your God and ye shall be my people." In Jeremiah it is, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and *will* be their God and they *shall* be my people."

It is not that the resulting blessing is different, for the very words are the same, "I will be their God," &c. But the better promises which, as the Apostle says, characterize the New Covenant, are these—that God taking the responsibility of the *if* upon Himself, promises to write His laws upon their hearts, and to forgive all their sins.

These promises are better therefore, both because they are unconditional and also because they are blessings not contemplated by the law which never provided for the putting away of sin for ever, (*εις το διηνεκες*) but quite the contrary, which the continuous sacrifices shewed, and of course as being in its

And now we have to consider the character of this Sarah dispensation towards the Church.

very character external to those addressed, it was no living power in the heart. The old covenant terminated in the death of Christ, and therefore when He took the cup as foreshowing His death, He said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood." As soon as this blood was shed, the New Covenant was sealed; and as soon as Jesus had risen, it was placed in His hands, and He became the Mediator of it. Mediation does not in itself imply either Priesthood or Intercession. Its meaning is gained from a verse in Galatians, where the Old Covenant is said to have been ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator. Jesus therefore is He in whose hands the New Covenant has been placed; and using the language of the Apostle, it may be said that the book has been sprinkled; but that the people for whose sake He especially becomes the Mediator, i. e. Israel, are not sprinkled. Moses sprinkled both the book and the people *together*; but we constantly find that the types in Leviticus and elsewhere (say for example the day of atonement,) are broken in the midst, and stayed in the progress of their *manifestation*, in consequence of Israel's unbelief. But this makes room for us; we are prematurely born into the enjoyment of blessings which result to us, in consequence of our owning Jesus in characters which He bears to Israel; so that there is no character in which Israel rejects Him, from which we do not derive some present blessing.

One of the great blessings promised, we know to restored Israel, is the outpouring of the Spirit, as described in Joel, yet even this blessing we have anticipated, as the Church of the first born, those who *first* trusted in Christ, (Eph. i.) as contrasted with those who trust in Him after He is manifested in His glory; and I should consider our relation to the second covenant as closely parallel. Though Israel has not been sprinkled, yet we have been, as many as worship by that one sacrifice. In the passage of Jeremiah which first speaks of the New Covenant, we find forgiveness of sins promised; and the writing of the law upon the heart: the means by which these blessings are secured, is not there revealed; but the words of our Lord when He took the cup, take up the words of Jeremiah, and additionally reveal the means. "The New Covenant in my blood for the remission of sins." And in the 8th of Romans, the words of the Apostle, viz. "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," shew that the other blessing of the New Covenant is effected towards us by the means of union with Jesus in the Spirit. The third blessing of the New covenant is, "They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord," &c. And this is apparently referred to by the Apostle John. "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, but as the same anointing," &c. Indeed it is not so much new promises, as the means of bestowing blessing previously promised, which successive covenants reveal.

If I say, "there is this point of blessing to which such a one shall be raised," as the means unfold themselves which my plan for effecting the intended end render necessary, there may be new views of unthought of blessing disclosed; but still my first declaration implies that all these things are included in it, and thus we may regard the promise in Eden. A triumph is promised in it, but the character and means of that triumph are only fully known when the book of Revelation is given. The covenant with Abraham enables us to understand the original promise and the meaning of it more definitely.

The second covenant of Jeremiah reflects the same kind of light on the Abrahamic, this in its turn is equally illustrated by the words of our Lord and His Apostles; but all these are not to be looked at as unconnected things, but as parts of the same great economy, progressively unfolded.

It commenced when the evil of the world, both Jew and Gentile, had been fully manifested by the rejection of the Lord Jesus, and therefore it is called the dispensation of the grace of God. When every dispensation which had been given to the earth, or any in it, had failed, it was then that this dispensation commenced on the supposition of utter failure in the earth, and it is gathering by sovereign grace into heaven. It is no longer an effort to amend or govern nations as nations, but it supposes the whole constitution of human society and laws to be radically corrupt, and therefore it gives citizenship in heaven, and teaches us to use the things of the earth only so far as the laws of our heavenly citizenship in Christ Jesus permit.

Its great character is "henceforth know we no man after the flesh, not even Jesus;" but "all things are become new." In

It may be instructive to consider what blessings specifically mentioned in the New Testament, we should be deprived of if the New Covenant were not in operation as ordained in the hands of its Mediator—the Lord Jesus. They are mentioned in the following passages:—

"After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, this cup is the New Covenant in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me." (1 Cor xi. 25.)

"Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant....and this ministry is said afterwards to be the ministration of the Spirit. (2 Cor. v. 6.)

In Hebrews x. it is said, that the law could not by those sacrifices which they offered year by year, perfect for ever (*εις το διηνεκες*) the comers thereunto, (for so the verse should be translated;) but that Jesus after that He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, (*εις το διηνεκες*) sat down on the right hand of God, having perfected for ever (*εις το διηνεκες*) them that are sanctified by the offering of His body once, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us, for after that He had said before, "This is the Covenant, &c. . . . He also saith, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" "Now where remission of these is," &c. . . . THEREFORE having, brethren, boldness, &c. The proof that there remains no more offering for sin, is grounded by the Apostle on this, that the promise of the New Covenant has taken effect.

Several other passages might be quoted, but these may be sufficient. It might have seemed needless to dwell so long on this subject, (which to many may appear not needing proof,) but a desire to press the important truth that Israel and Judah have not been brought into the New Covenant, and consequently that the words of Jeremiah, like the promise of the Spirit in Joel, remain future, as to their full accomplishment, have led some to employ expressions which have caused it to be supposed that they excluded the Church at present from the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant, as there detailed. The term new or second is of course relative and refers to the Old Covenant which God had before introduced into the earth for Israel only. But I may receive a gift to-day and keep it to myself alone; to-morrow I may receive a second gift, and may share it with others. Those to whom the gift is imparted would thus be said to share the second gift.

other words the character of that dispensation which commences with these words — “Behold I make all things new,” is by anticipation marked upon those who now “repent and believe the gospel,” and they are called the first born *whose names are written in heaven*.

Now it is the nations of Christendom who by their profession stand under the responsibility of this heavenly calling.

They should be “a chosen Priesthood, a peculiar people, shewing forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

Christendom in the midst of the nations of the earth, does distinctly bear the name of Christ ; and China for instance, discerns no living exhibition of what Christianity is, except in the manners and habits of Christendom.

Is Christendom then heavenly ? is it waiting for God’s Son from heaven, in the work of faith and labour of love, being not of the world even as Jesus is not of the world ?

If not, if we are obliged to turn for comfort to the thought that there is a reserved, a secret remnant according to the election of grace ; then it shews that we, in our dispensation, are just where Elijah was in his. For what was the united corporate testimony of Israel then ? was it not to Baal and the ways of Baal ? and what is the united corporate testimony of the so called Christian nations now ? There was once a united corporate testimony in Jerusalem when great grace was upon them all. And so at Colosse, and Ephesus, and in the midst of Greece and of Rome. But now it is so no longer. Nations now stand bearing the name and testimony which once belonged to a visibly distinct, separated, and united few among the nations. And now there is nothing visibly distinct, separate, and united any longer. We know not where to look for the hidden reserved remnant according to the election of grace : yet there is one gathering principle, and it is obedience. “My sheep hear my voice.” Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah, respectively gathered through the claim of obedience all who had ears to hear ; and this is the only path before us now, namely, to gather and instruct or to be gathered or instructed as the few, whilst we surely see that that in the midst of which we are a remnant, will, because it has not continued in God’s goodness, be cut off.

Thus every dispensation which has been entrusted to man has failed. The Adamic—the Antediluvian—the Noachic—the Hagar dispensation to the Jews—the Nebuchadnezzar dispensation of power—the Sarah dispensation to the Church—all have failed. In other words, the end of each has been found worse than the beginning; and what was good at the first has been found less good or altogether perverted at the close.

But God has centred in His beloved Son all that man has scattered and marred in these dispensations, which have now all nearly fulfilled their course; and here we find the value of the instruction contained in Revelation iv. and v. John had lived to see the commencing failure even of our Church dispensation, and he prophesied to the Churches of it, that their candlesticks would be removed. But he was taken up into heaven, and there he saw the rainbow of the Noachic dispensation; the lordship of the Adamic dispensation; the glory of Israel which Ezekiel had seen removed from Jerusalem; the title to Church blessing as indicated by the Lamb's taking the book: he saw all these things centred in Him, and preserved by Him, who is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, hidden with God.*

But when He is manifested, He will come with this power, and then all dispensations will manifestly centre in Him. And the power dispensed will not fail of its end, for the end of the Millennium is this—"He must reign till He hath put all enemies under

* It is remarkable that in these chapters there is nothing to symbolize the Nebuchadnezzar Headship, i.e. the Headship of delegated power in the earth. And the reason doubtless is, that this is the only Headship which God allows still to exist, though indeed it has manifested its character (and therefore its doom is sealed) by condemning and crucifying the Lord of glory. Accordingly the power which the Lord Jesus at present holds, is indicated by the seven horns and the seven eyes, i.e. it is the invisible irresponsible power of the most high God, which sustains (as it ever has), and as we say "providentially" overrules all things. But this is very different from the responsible delegated power, possessed by the kings of the Nebuchadnezzar image, which really enters into all the details of arrangement in ordering and adjusting the things of the earth, and enforcing the laws which are to regulate their use. It is only when the Lord Jesus quits the throne of the Father, that the Headship is taken away from the Nebuchadnezzar image. And He receives and enters upon the exercise of all this delegated power by which He will controul and direct the arrangement of the things of the earth. His investiture with this power is described in Daniel vii. where He is brought before the Ancient of days, and is of course altogether future

His feet ;' and then all will be brought back to God and subjected in blessing for ever to Him.

The Millennium is called in the Scripture, the times of re-constituting all things (*χρονα αποκαταστασεως παντων.*) And this expression well gives us its character. The Lord Jesus will indeed come with all power ; but the foundations of all things will be out of course. There will be Babylon—Armageddon—Anti-christ in Jerusalem. These will be the matured fruits of all past dispensations.—A maturity of fruits combining, I believe, the characteristics of the evil of all past periods, from the family of Cain to the present hour. Some of these fruits will be, doubtless, Jewish in their growth ; others, Babylonish, i.e. nationally Gentile ; and others the fruits of Christian apostasy ; but together they will present a fearful aggregate : and this is what the Lord will find when He comes, and it is only in the riches of His own grace that He will not make a full end. There are three passages in the New Testament referring to this subject which it is important to notice. They all three quote the same passage from *Psa. viii.* but yet refer severally to three different periods. The passages are as follows :—I give them in the original in order that the resemblance of expression may be more clearly seen.

Ps. viii. Παντα υπεταξας υποκατα των ποδων αυτου.

Thou hast put all things under his feet.

Eph. i. 22. Παντα υπεταξεν υπο τους ποδας αυτου.

He hath put all things under his feet.

Heb. ii. 8. Ουπω ορωμεν παντα υποτεταγμενα.

We see not yet all things put under him.

I Cor. xv. 28. Οταν δε υποταγη αυτω τα παντα.

When all things shall have been put under him,

(i.e. at the end of the Millennium.)

I am anxious to notice these texts because they so well illustrate the character of the controversy which at present exists in the Church respecting the Millennial reign. There is an apparent contrariety between the Ephesians and the Corinthians, for the Ephesians appears to speak of as past that which the Corinthians

speaks of as future. And thus in the Church now, many so earnestly press the present exaltation of the person of the Lord Jesus, as effectually to divert the attention from the un-corresponding condition of things around us, which are any thing rather than practically subject to Him, who is thus exalted.

It is plain that the text in the Ephesians is intended to direct our minds to the exaltation of the person; and that in the Corinthians to the practical subjection of the things; and both are true at their respective periods. We now by faith see Jesus (*βλεπομεν* not *ορωμεν*)* “crowned with glory and honour:” but it is only in the world to come whereof we speak,” i.e. the Millennial earth, in which we shall see (*ορωμεν*) all things subdued unto Him. We shall begin to see it at the commencement of that period, but shall not fully see it until the close.

There are of course, many physical changes in the constitution of created things which will usher in the Millennial dispensation. Of these, part will have the character of precursive signs, standing to the reckless and intoxicated world very much in the same relation as the writing on the wall did to Belshazzar on the last night of his revelry. It is of these our Lord speaks in Luke xxi. “There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon,† and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the

* In the New Testament *ορω* is, I think, never used except for actually physically beholding; *βλεπω* is used indifferently, and therefore is applied to seeing by faith, in which last sense we now see Jesus crowned with glory and honour. These words come only from the 8th Psalm, and have clearly no reference to the High Priest’s garments in Exodus xxviii, for the words are not the same in the Hebrew, nor even in the Septuagint do they occur in any connection with “crown.” Nor moreover is *כִּטְוֶה* the word used in the 8th Psalm, ever employed for the High Priest’s mitre, but only for the regal diadem. With respect to the three passages which I have quoted above, I should say that the Ephesians was intended to direct our minds to the exaltation of the Person; the Corinthians, to the subjection of the things in correspondence with that exaltation; and the Hebrews, not so much to either of these things as to our beholding it.

† Revelation vi. 12, is I believe, a prophecy of the same events, but given by means of a symbolic vision, which a simple heart who looks for the day of the Lord’s judgments, will find no difficulty in interpreting.

Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” These words it must be remembered do not occur in a symbolic book of prophecy such as the Revelation is, but in a plain narrative of facts, and therefore are to be taken quite simply. The passage in Haggai also, quoted by the Apostle in Hebrews xii. 26, “ Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven,” refers to the same period ; and very many other passages which will be found in the Old Testament, and may always be distinguished by their connection with the day of the Lord.

These awful changes are in judgment ; but there are other passages which speak of blessing. “ Ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” (John i.) The whole earth is at rest and is quiet ; they break forth into singing. (Is. xiv.) “ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.” The Prophets, it is well known, abound with these and similar predictions, which will be fulfilled in the same manner, and are to be interpreted on the same principles, as the prophecies respecting the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, or any other past subject of prophecy. It is a plain and simple fact that creation is now groaning under the bondage of corruption, and it will be as simply manifested then, that it is delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Satan likewise will be bound, and will deceive the nations no more until the thousand years shall have been fulfilled. I do not now speak of the removal of the saints of this present dispensation into the heavenly city, nor of the manner in which the remnant of the Jews in Jerusalem, (like Paul by the appearing of the glory, and who thus was prematurely born,) will be converted and blessed ; for these things have been frequently noticed in previous papers.

The character of the power which will then be visibly exercised by the Son of God, will be chiefly remedial. I do not mean that it will not be sometimes destructive. The first exercise of it is destructive. “ He will destroy them that destroy the earth.” “ He will dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” But the sending forth of glad tidings from Jerusalem, (Isa. lii. 7.) the mission of some to

the isles afar off; the reply returned to the messengers of the nations, the causing many peoples to beat their swords and spears into ploughshares and pruning hooks; the chastisement upon disobedient nations (Zech. xiv.); the healing of the nations through the medium of the Heavenly City: these, and many other passages distinctly show that the patient exercise of remedial power, sometimes in chastisement, at others in direct blessing, is the great character of the Millennium.

Restored Israel in Jerusalem, will in many respects resemble the Church now. Not indeed, in suffering, for that is a privilege possessed by the Church of the first-born distinctively. But as it is now said of the Church, that they are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood; so it is written of Israel in that day, that they shall be a kingdom of priests and an Holy nation. Again, though not like the Church in trial and hardship, but on the contrary, in a delightful land; no longer groaning under the bondage of corruption, yet they will be still in bodies of sinful flesh, and therefore, admonition and warning is addressed to them, as to the Church now. One proof of this may be found in the 95th Psalm, which (together with the five that follow) is clearly a Millennial one. "O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation." But we find warning in it—"to day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." And this is applied by the Apostle in the Hebrews, to the Church now; so that neither do *our* sufferings destroy our title, to say "O come let us sing;" neither will Israel's earthly blessedness then exempt them from the necessity of warning and teaching. This is another proof of the manner in which the Church is prematurely born into the Sarah standing of Israel.

But I have already prolonged this paper so much that I will not add any more on this subject at present. I will only add a few words on the expression, "the Regeneration," as applied by our Lord to the Millennium; because it implies, I apprehend, what I desire chiefly now to press—the imperfect character of the Millennial period, and that it is preparatory to and introductory of the perfected state of blessing which succeeds. I may explain

what I mean, by referring to the state of a regenerated person now, as illustrative of the use of the word Regeneration in connection with the Millennium. When a believer is regenerated, his old nature is not changed or renewed, but a new nature is brought into connection with it; so that it is no longer the old only, but the old connected with, and acted on by the new. Two things result from this: in the first place, the old no longer in the same manner brings forth its evil fruits, because it is kept under by the new; and secondly, the introduction of the new is so surely a pledge of the final renewal of the whole man, that language which in strictness is only true when the renewal is complete; is frequently used to denote the incipient change. Thus it is said of the believer now, even before his body is redeemed, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a *new* creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

So will it be I believe in the Millennial earth. The earth will still be the same, not a new but this same fallen earth, but it will be united with part of the new creation even the Heavenly City. And from thence and from those in it a power of blessing will be derived; which though it will not renew, will so alter the character of all things as to be an abiding earnest of all that final change in which all things will be made new; when the fallen earth, like our fallen bodies at the resurrection, will be changed and made fully fit for the presence of God, when the word shall manifestly be accomplished, "Behold, I make all things new."* The first six verses of Revelation xxi. (which should have formed a chapter by themselves,) alone describe this perfected state of blessing. They may be contrasted with the Millennial state by reading the xxxv. chapter of Isaiah, especially the last two verses. It is this final period when God shall be "all in all," that is, I believe in the

* It is on this principle, I should interpret the last chapter of the second Epistle of Peter, as applying both to the incipient change at the commencement of the Millennium, as well as to the completed change at the close. Thus also Rev. xix. 7, and Rev. xxi. 10, refer, I believe, to the commencement of the Millennium; and Rev. xxi. 2, to the close, or rather the commencement of the post-Millennial period.

Ephesians called the economy or dispensation of the fulness of times, subsequent to which nothing is revealed, except that it is His purpose in the ages to come, to shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ.

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JOSEPH.—GEN. xxxvii—xlvi.

He "that was separated from his brethren."

For judging the history of Joseph to be typical or allegorical, like that of Hagar and Ishmael and a thousand others in Scripture, we have clear warrant of the Holy Ghost. See Acts vii. But without this warrant, the use which in the New Testament is made of the Old Testament narratives, might authorize us to look for some mystery or "hidden wisdom, in one of them so strongly marked as this.

I propose now simply to follow out the series of events in this history, as given us in these chapters, briefly unfolding what I judge to be their mystical or hidden meaning. May the Lord, in such sweet and heavenly labours, both enlarge and control our minds!

XXXVII.—This chapter gives us the *first* part or section in the history.

Joseph here signalizes himself as the righteous or separated one, and as such provokes the enmity of his wicked brethren. The light makes manifest the deeds of darkness, and the darkness

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hates it, as Joseph's Lord was afterwards hated of the world, for He testified that its deeds were evil. And this enmity is only further moved by tokens of the divine favour, which are put upon the righteous one. Joseph was a younger son, no way entitled according to the flesh to distinguishing favour; yet the Lord marks him out as the appointed heir of blessing and glory, and Joseph speaks of the goodness he had found, and of the high purposes of God concerning him. But his brethren did not care for any divine purpose which interfered with their pride. He might be the one that was to receive the kingdom, but they said "we will not have this man to reign over us." As Cain had slain his brother Abel because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous, so it is now. Joseph's brethren envy him; and again when in the field together, like another Cain, they take counsel together whether to slay him, to cast him into the pit, or sell him to strangers. And they do sell him for twenty pieces of silver. And they who could thus trespass against their innocent brother's life, easily deem it a light thing to wound their aged father's heart. "This have we found," said they of Joseph's coat which they send to Jacob besmeared with blood, "know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." And thus was their offence of high and double bearing—they sinned against their *aged father*, and their *righteous unoffending brother*.

In all this we have the stiff-necked and uncircumcised Israel betraying and murdering the just one. His father had sent Joseph to his brethren to enquire after their welfare. But it was not as the bearer of kind tidings that they saw him or received him, but "behold this dreamer cometh, come therefore and let us slay him." So afterwards towards the Greater than Joseph; it was not as the minister of grace and messenger of love, but as the envied Heir of the Vineyard that they looked on him with malicious heart, and said, "come let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours." His love was refused, and for envy his brethren delivered Him unto death. For His love they were His adversaries. There might be one in the council who would plead for the prisoner, as Reuben did, who would not consent to the council

and deed of them (Luke xxiii. 51, John vii. 51); but this could prevail nothing. Thirst for blood may yield to covetousness, but the evil heart in some of its desires against the righteous one, must have its way. For thirty pieces of silver they sold him to strangers. They crucified Him that was the Father's elect One, and all His delight. "They pleased not God, and were contrary to all men;" they sinned against *God* and *their brother*.

XXXVIII.—This chapter gives us the *second* part in the history.

The spirit of revelation here interrupts the course of Joseph's history, in order to give us a view of his brethren during Joseph's separation from them. And what is the view we get of them here? just filling up the measure of their sins, making terms with the uncircumcised, and defiling the holy seed.

And so it is now. The holy seed has mingled itself with the seed of men, and all in Israel is corruption and uncleanness. They have profaned the covenant of their fathers' as Judah here does; and the Lord has been a witness between them, and the wife of their youth. Judah dealt treacherously and profaned the holiness of the Lord, marrying the daughter of a strange god. He wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh passed from him. (Jer. xi. 15.) So Israel has played the harlot with many lovers, and is now, while Jesus is separated from them, filling up the measure of their sins.

But while the Spirit of God thus for a moment raises the veil, and we see the abominations that are now done in Israel, we are given also to catch the faint glimpse of distant blessing. Judah is brought to know and confess his sin; the pledges of his full abomination are produced and owned by him in the spirit of a repentant one; and then "mercy rejoices against judgment." Pharez comes forth, and he is the second Jacob, the supplanter, who in spite of fleshly title in his elder brother, gets the birth-right. The kingdom suffers violence at his hand, and he takes it by force. And from this Pharez comes the true Inheritor of the blessing, the righteous Supplanter of every usurper, the one that shall prevail, and whose kingdom shall stand for ever. (Matt. i. 3.)

XXXIX—XLI.—These chapters together form the *third* part in the history.

Here we see Joseph filling up the measure of his sorrows, while his brethren are filling up the measure of their sins. He in exile preserves his purity and separation to God, like a Nazarite purer than snow and whiter than milk, while they at home are defiling the covenant. God is with him, and man against him. He takes his place in the cloud of witnesses, suffering for righteousness' sake. For conscience towards God he endures grief, suffering wrongfully. But the Lord is still with him. God shews that His covenant was with him, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed; for Potiphar first, and then the keeper of the prison, were made to prove this in their own persons. The archers are sorely grieving him, and shooting at him, but his bow abides in strength, and the arms of his hands are made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. He may be persecuted of men, but God will not forsake him, but give him favour in the sight of strangers in spite of all the dishonour and humiliation to which the wickedness of his kindred and others may reduce him. And all this "affliction of Joseph" is made the discipline of God, who loved him; for as we read, "the word of God tried him" (Ps. cv. 19.) This tribulation under the divine hand was made to work patience, and by it the crown was brightening for him.

And we find Joseph not only distinguished with favour, but in some sense *glorified* also even in his prison. For though power in the earth is not his yet, so that he could burst his prison doors, yet we see him glorified as a Prophet, knowing the secret of God.*

And thus was it with the Lord in the day of His sorrow, and still with Him in measure in His sympathy with the Church, for

* The butler's treatment of Joseph seems to be referred to by the Prophet, as exhibiting the conduct of those that are at ease in Zion, and thus is a warning to us. (Amos. vi. 1—6).

These dreams of the butler and baker were "according to the interpretation," words which imply that *they were of God*. For dreams have two sources: either *God* sends them, or *the multitude of business* (Joel. ii. 28. Eccles. v. 3.) In them God may reveal His mind, or they may be simply "divers vanities," the fruit of our own passions or necessities. (Eccles. v. 7. Is. xxix. 8.)

in that He is still saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me." In Jesus, as in Joseph, it was clearly shewn that though in weakness and rejection, God's covenant was with him, that he was God's *object*, all blessing passing through His hand, though in shame and poverty. And even beyond this. Jesus was in His day of sorrow, like Joseph, glorified as a Prophet. (Luke iv. 15.) And so in His saints now in measure. "They may be despised, but they have the mind of Christ," they are in the secrets of God, they know the love of the Father, the judgment of the world, and the coming kingdom and power of Jesus. And of these secrets they bear witness of to sinners, as Joseph told of the secrets of God to Pharaoh, and his servants. They tell both of *judgment* and of *mercy*, as he did.

Such are the ways of Christ, and the saints now. They are among strangers in a world that is but foreign to them, and where they have no citizenship. They may be poor, "silver and gold having none," lonely, in prison, and forgotten there, like Joseph. But "God is with them." Patience with self-denial, and a holy keeping of their Nazaritism or separation to God, is their calling, and their present praise. But even in the humiliation, they have "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" in Christ. They can interpret the dreams that tell out God's purposes, the voices of the Prophets and Apostles are their delight and their counsellors.

But in the close of all this, we see Joseph not only as at the first comforted in sorrow, but brought out of sorrow—not only glorified as a *Prophet*, but introduced into the full confidence of him who held the *royal power*, and authority in the earth. Pharaoh was then the lord of Egypt, and Egypt was then the lady of kingdoms, and Pharaoh gives Joseph authority to go over all the land, as the great executor of all rule, desiring that no man in Egypt was to lift up hand or foot without him. Joseph receives the king's ring, and rides in the second chariot. He is made lord of Pharaoh's house, and ruler of all his substance, to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom. (Ps. cv.)

He becomes the sole treasurer and dispenser of the resources of the whole earth, the one who alone could open and shut those store-

houses from which his once injurious brethren, and all the world were soon to become entire dependants for preservation in the earth. Only in the throne was Pharaoh greater than he—and all this Pharaoh makes him and gives him, because he owned that the Spirit of God was in him, that he had been distinguished as “the friend of God,” knowing his ways, and was entitled to be called “the revealer of secrets.”

This was indeed glory among the strangers. The poor was thus raised from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, to be set even above princes. But this was not all. Joseph must have *joy* as well as *glory* among them, and the king gives him a wife, a lady of honour, and Joseph becomes the husband and father of a family in this strange land. Like Adam he gets *Eve* as well as *dominion*.

Such was Joseph now. And surely a greater than Joseph is here. Surely this is none other than Jesus the Son of God seated beside the Father on His throne in His full confidence and favour, and though cast out by Israel, receiving unquestioned title to all power, and made the Treasurer of all that grace and blessing upon which Israel and the nations are soon to draw for life and preservation in the earth. And all this because a right spirit was in Him as Pharaoh owned in Joseph. Jesus honoured not Himself. “Do not interpretations belong to God,” said Joseph—“My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me,” said Jesus. Jesus was obedient, wherefore God has highly exalted Him. “Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.”

And beside all this present *glory* on the throne, the Son of God has received a present *joy*, as we have seen Joseph did in Egypt. He has now received from among Gentile strangers, a new unlooked for family. And Joseph’s Egyptian family clearly typify Christ’s heavenly family, or the Church. For in the joy of His having received the Church, the Lord has for a while forgotten Israel, as Joseph called his first-born “Manasseh,” for “God,” said he, “hath made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house;” and his second son, he calleth “Ephraim,” for, “God,” said he, “hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

All this a child might trace ; but the Holy Ghost, who graciously reveals "to babes and sucklings," has Himself led us in this interpretation. In the 7th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the rapture of the Son of man into heaven, is given exactly the same place as the glory of Joseph in Egypt. The whole bearing of St. Stephen's words leads to this. He is drawing out the proofs, that Israel had been always resisting the Holy Ghost ; that as their fathers had done, so had that present generation been then doing, and thus that their treatment of Joseph and Moses (whose history as well as Joseph's he recites) were thus types of their treatment of the Just One. Joseph, it is true, was at the last made known to his brethren, as we shall see presently, and at the last also Moses delivered his people. But during a long interval, both were separated from them. And so with Christ. In the end he will be made known to Israel, as their Redeemer and Brother, but for the present he is separated from them. And His separation is *unto heaven*, as Joseph's had been *unto Egypt*, and Moses' *unto Midian*. And wives and children given to Joseph and Moses in the place and during the season of this separation, is thus necessarily the type of the gathering of the Church to Jesus now.

But Joseph and Moses not only get a special *glory* and a peculiar *joy* in the separated place, but *they are there also under preparation for becoming the future benefactors and redeemers of their unbelieving brethren*. Joseph, as I have already been noticing, is made the treasurer of those supplies on which Israel was soon to draw, and Moses gets the rod of strength by which he was soon to make a passage for Israel forth from the land of their bondage. But till the appointed hour, Israel was in an evil case, filling up their sins, and knowing the service of the nations ; as now they are a scattered and outcast people, and their sanctuary a disclaimed dishonoured ruin, while He, whom they have rejected, is in heaven. So perfect are the patterns given of old, of the secrets which are now revealed unto us by the Spirit.

XLII.—XLIV.—These chapters give us the *fourth* section of the history.

In the preceding sections, we have seen, first, Joseph cast out by

his brethren ; secondly, his brethren filling up the measure of their sin : thirdly, Joseph brought to glory and joy in the midst of those strangers among whom his brethren's enmity had cast him. And all this we have seen as setting forth Jesus, Israel, and the Church.

But Israel is not always to lie in their blood or be forgotten. Their sins and iniquities are soon to be remembered no more, as soon indeed as sore affliction brings them to Jesus and to repentance, as here stress of famine in the land of Canaan leads his brethren to seek that help which was now laid for them on Joseph alone.

Joseph, however, had something more to do for them, than simply to supply their present need. He must not only prepare a blessing for them, but them for a blessing. And though the method which he may take may be strange in their sight for a while, yet love and wisdom were to direct it all, from beginning to end. In order to bless them with real blessing, as he purposed, he must lead them to repentance, and he orders his behaviour before them now, according to this purpose. He had once come to them, and they had said, " behold this dreamer cometh ;" they now come to him, and he says, " ye are spies, ye are spies." He makes himself strange, and speaks roughly to them, and by this he calls their sin to remembrance. " We are verily guilty," say they, " concerning our brother." But he hides himself while all this is going on. He speaks to them by an interpreter. It was indeed his work, but it was his *strange* work ; he was doing his act, but it was his *strange* act. He orders circumstances so as to let sorrow work repentance, but he does not yet shew himself. For all this may be the way of *his hand*, but it was not the way of *his heart*. In secret, though unknown to them, he enters into the very sorrows that he was occasioning. In their affliction, like One that is better than he, he was afflicted. He would not have put on this rough mood, could he have helped it. But by this their iniquity was to be purged, and this was all the fruit, to take away their sin. His love therefore must be firm and wise, as well as tender. They had once bound and sold their poor brother to

strangers, and now a stranger takes and binds one of them. All this was fixing the arrow of conviction in their hearts, there to spend its venom, and lay the sentence of death deeply in them. He dismisses the rest with present supplies for their houses, charging them not to see his face again, except their youngest brother was with them. For he must know whether they had as yet the affections of *children* and of *brothers*, or whether they were still, as once, when he had known them, reckless of a brother's cries and a father's bereavement.

Ere they departed, however, he commands his steward to restore every man's money to his sack. But this was only to carry on the same work of repentance in their now awakened hearts. And so it does—for on opening their sacks, and discovering their money, “their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, what is this that God hath done to us.” The money in their sacks will not let them forget, that though they may now have turned their backs on that stranger in Egypt who spake so roughly to them, and called their sin to remembrance, yet God's eye was still upon them, and God had still to do with them.

Thus the work goes on in their souls. They had been convicted, and godly sorrow was then working fear in them. And very soon much more than sorrow and fear is seen in them, for being returned home, and letting their father know that Benjamin's presence with them was the only terms on which they dared to hope for a fresh supply from Egypt, Reuben and Judah at once stand forth in the spirit of self-sacrifice—“slay my two sons,” says Reuben, “if I bring him not unto thee.” “I will be surety for him” says Judah, “of my hand shalt thou require him.”

All this blessedly shews how repentance was yielding its meet fruit in them. But to aggravate their grief, and thus still to carry on the work in their souls, Jacob seems now for the first time to come to a suspicion that they had been guilty concerning Joseph. He had before said, “an evil beast hath devoured him”—but now it is “me have ye bereaved of my children.” He seems to say of them, “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.” All this must have stirred the arrow

afresh in their hearts, that it might still be doing there its needed work.

But Jacob at last consents to let Benjamin go—and after all this exercise of heart, and with Benjamin in their hand, more prevailing than all the honey and balm and spices which they carried, they return to Joseph. On seeing Benjamin, Joseph is moved to new affections, and fresh kindness, and he gives his house commandment that all these men should dine with him at noon. But kindness or roughness works alike with an evil conscience. To the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. A shaken leaf might well frighten the brethren now, for conscience had made cowards of them all. “They were afraid because they were brought into Joseph’s house.” And other thoughts await them there. They are seated before Joseph, “the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth,” and they marvelled one at another, while they ate and were merry. So wisely was Joseph calling in every passion of the mind, and weaving them together, wonder with fear, and gratitude with joy, that there might be a thorough renewal unto repentance.

Thus does the work go on, and prosperously too, but it has some way to travel, ere it reach the perfection that Joseph had purposed. He lays a further plan for *fully* testing whether indeed a *child’s* heart and a *brother’s* heart were in them. Joseph’s cup is put into Benjamin’s sack, and they are again dismissed with fresh supplies. But now was the crisis. Benjamin, the cup being found on him, becomes forfeited to Joseph. This was the solemn moment in the whole proceeding; and the question is, how will the once murderous brethren, and the once thankless children, now carry themselves? Are they still what once they were, or has the heart of flesh been given them? Will the sorrows of Benjamin move them, with whom the cries of Joseph could not prevail? or will the thought of the grief of their aged father at home, plead with their hearts as once it refused to plead? These were the questions, and they get their triumphant answer. Judah stands before Joseph in the shame of confessed iniquity. They were all innocent touching the cup, but they were not so touching their

brother, and this their sin only is before them now. "What shall we say, what shall we speak," says he, "how shall we clear ourselves, God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." Joseph for a moment feigns as though their former iniquity thus confessed, were nothing to him. Benjamin is his, and he must remain with him. Then Judah draws near, and again pleads as with the bowels of *a son* and *a brother* for Jacob and for Benjamin. "The lad" and "my father," are the oft-repeated burthen of Judah's sorrows now. He is ready to abide a bondman himself, only let "the lad" go back to "his father;" let *the father's* heart be comforted, and *the brother's* innocency preserve him, and Judah will be satisfied come to himself what may.

Thus did Judah plead, proving himself indeed one "whom his brethren might praise." And now nothing more is asked for. Joseph had not been *willingly* afflicting his brethren. All his way was only to lead them to this place of repentance. He meets them now not as a judge, but as a brother. His love could no longer hide itself: "cause every man to go out from me," said he, and then he made himself known to his brethren. He showed to them his thoughts how kind they were. He set free their evil conscience, and bound up their broken hearts. The channels were now cleared, and grace and blessing flow through in living, refreshing, and gladdening streams.

So it will be with Israel and the Lord. The Lord has now retired to His place, the place to which Israel's enmity had sent Him, but made to Him of God the place of honour and of family delights, as Egypt was to Joseph. But in their affliction, by-and-bye, they will seek Him in that distant place, (Hos. v. 15,) and He will then be found of them, and in richer wisdom and love than even that of Joseph, lead them to repentance, sit over them as a refiner and purifier of silver, give them a broken and contrite heart, cause them to look on Him whom they pierced, and then open to them a fountain for all their sin, and treasures of consolation for all their sorrows. For though He has spoken against them, He remembers them still, and in all their afflictions has been afflicted, and will then rejoice over them. Joseph no longer spoke

to them by an interpreter, no longer hid himself as with a vail from his repentant brethren. "Your eyes see," said he, "that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you." And so shall Israel's eyes see the King in His beauty, and the vail shall be taken away, and with a surer and readier love, than that with which Joseph fell on his brethren's neck, and kissed them, will Jehovah Jesus return to them. (Lev. xxvi. 40—42.) "I will say it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God."

XLV—XLVII.—These chapters give us the *fifth* and closing section of our history.

The reconciliation, which waited only for the repentance, being now perfected, all was ready for the loading of the brethren with unstinted blessing, and Pharaoh's good-will is to be fully towards them, as well as Joseph's. They were Joseph's brethren—that was enough for Pharaoh; and Pharaoh will have their aged father brought down, and with his households and his flock, seated in the fattest and choicest portion of the land.

All this was marvellous in Jacob's ears, when he heard it. He "believed not for joy and wondered;" for this to him was *receiving Joseph alive from the dead*. But Jacob seems to tremble a little at the thought of Egypt. There Abram had sinned, and there Isaac had been warned not to go. Jacob might say, "Joseph is still alive, I will go and see him before I die;" but he seems to enter on his journey with some godly fear, for it was bearing him towards this Egypt. Accordingly when he reaches Beersheba, he pauses in his way, and offers sacrifice to the God of his father. But the hand of the God of his father, is now to appear to Jacob for his full confidence. He comes to him in a vision of the night, and adds His *encouragement* to that of Joseph's *invitation* and Pharaoh's *desire*. He enters into a covenant of promise with him, as He had done with Abram, (xv.) giving him to know that Egypt was to be the place where Israel was to be made a great nation; and thus encouraged and commanded of the Lord God of his fathers, Jacob is fully ready, and accordingly goes down into the land of Egypt, and finds Joseph there of a truth and the place itself, the scene of Joseph's greatness and wealth—being

thus given to prove, that whereas he had thought all things were *against* him, all things had the rather been working together *for* him; and in spirit he says, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

But Joseph was not only, as we have seen, to be made known to his brethren, but Joseph's kindred are also now to be made known to Pharaoh. (Acts vii. 13.) Accordingly he presents them to the king. They were shepherds, it is true, keepers of cattle from their youth, such as were held in abomination in the land of Egypt. But what of that? "he is not ashamed to call them brethren." He owns them in the presence of the king, and the king himself is of one mind with Joseph towards them; he owns them also, and honours them, and will have them regard the whole of his land, as before them. And they are accordingly placed in the best of the land, in Goshen in the land of Rameses, and Joseph nourishes them and their households.

All this is great, and all significant. But this is not all. Joseph is to be the upholder of the whole earth in life and in order, and to secure the full honour of Pharaoh's throne, as well as to be thus the healer and restorer of Israel. He must seat the king in the dominion of the world with the willing homage of a preserved and happy people, who were to owe their lives to him. And this he does. He gives the Egyptians their lives out of his storehouses, but he gathers their money, their cattle, their lands, and themselves, all for Pharaoh. For himself he retains nothing but his place of honour and trust and service under the king. Every one, it is true, was to confess that he was lord, their deliverer and preserver, but this was to be to Pharaoh's glory. "Thou hast saved our lives," said they, "let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." It was into *Pharaoh's* house that Joseph brought their money, it was for *Pharaoh alone* that he bought them and their land. He settled the whole country, it is true, according to his wisdom, removing the people into cities from one end of it to the other, but the land was still to yield her increase, her holy portion, her double tithe, unto Pharaoh and his throne. This was the law of "the Joseph earth," of that world

that had now been brought back from famine and the curse.*

There may be no speech or language here, but a voice is heard by the ear that is awakened. Joseph has now received his brethren, and enriched them with the richest of the land. He has also presented them without shame before the lord the king. He has preserved the whole earth, and secured the full glory of the throne of his master. And so will it be in the end of the days. The long-forgotten and then repentant brethren shall be seated in the true Goshen, the glory of all lands, and Jesus shall own them and present them as His brethren without shame, and the world shall then be established from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. God shall be merciful to Israel, and bless them, and the earth shall yield him her increase, and the people, yea all the people shall praise Him. (Ps. lxvii.) At His name every knee shall bow of things in heaven and things in earth, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

I do not notice the remaining chapters of this history, for in them Jacob becomes principal again, and the place which Joseph occupies in them, is of another character. But these chapters give us properly *Joseph*; and constitute one complete mystery, beginning with the rejection, and ending with the kingdom of Christ, taking up, by the way, his union with the Church and his heavenly glory.

* All but the land of the Priests was purchased and becomes a part of Pharaoh's footstool. And so in the coming kingdom—all shall be of the footstool, but the inheritance of that family who have been united to Joseph in his Egypt, to Jesus in heaven, and who are to be kings and priests unto God then, the heirs of the *Throne* with Jesus, having their inheritance apart from the *footstool*.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE MERCY TOWARDS ISRAEL.

WE have seen in the first* part of this tract, the infinite grace of God, manifested in the exaltation of the Church in the heavenly places. In this second part we pass on to the interests of the *earthly people*; a people wonderful from the beginning hitherto. As in the Church we have seen the full manifestation of grace, here we shall behold supremely displayed, all the providence, all the counsel, all the patience, all the long-suffering mercy of God, manifested in sovereignty shewn already or before the end of the history of this earth, the wonderful theatre of all His dispensations. Here is the importance of the thing. It was necessary that God should choose some nation, in this He was both *sovereign* and wise. He chose the Jews; He formed them for Himself that they should be His witnesses, and they should show forth His praise. (Isaiah xliii. 10, 21.) Let us follow the history of this people of God, towards whom "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Rom. xi. 25.)

The two passages we have just quoted, are sufficiently remarkable in themselves, to attract all our attention to Israel. God has formed this people for Himself, and it is with respect to them that it is said, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." It follows as a direct consequence, that the *faithfulness of God* on one hand, and His character on the other, should be found specially manifested in this nation.

In fact it was in contemplating the dispensations of God towards this people, that the great Apostle of the Gentiles exclaimed, 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!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

* See paper on Ephesians, i. p. 164.

But it is *on earth* that they are the witnesses, as to the heavens, there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. (Col. iii. 2.) Consequently, this witness acts on the nations of the earth, God Himself, in the midst of this people, and by their instrumentality, acts on these nations, and shews Himself amongst them, by His justice and power towards Israel, and by the connections which Israel had with the nations, or the nations with them, and according to their conduct towards this people.

Here then all His providence finds its centre, as it is written, "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." (Deut. xxxii. 8.) Thus then, the faithfulness, the character, and the providential government of God, are found displayed on earth. I shall endeavour to follow (according to the Scriptures,) some of the facts, the principles, and the testimonies which refer to this people, and instruct us in the judgments and ways of God. There is a very clear distinction between the ways of God, *before*, and after the deluge. Since the fall there has always been a people of God, and the world of the ungodly. God has never left Himself without a witness. The prophecies of Enoch, were the instruction of the Church in those days, and the hope of the faithful in our days. Nevertheless, in those times, there was no manifested judgment, no nation, no external call, which formed *believers* or an elect people into *a body acknowledged* before God; and there was consequently no development of the principles of the character of God. It was a fallen race, and the fallen nature of man shewed itself, and followed its course in spite of the witness of God, and God did nothing until the evil being intolerable, He swept them from before his face, by a judgment which none could escape, save the little band in the ark; and the world swallowed up in the waters, perished. "God repented that He had made man, for the earth was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence, and God destroyed it." The world which exists now, is a new world reserved for fire in the day of judgment. In this

world there are two great principles—*Rule* in the hands of men, and *separation from the world* by the call of God. The first is easily corrupted, and men may shew themselves in this (and in every thing else) unfaithful in maintaining the glory of God ; but where there is the possibility of evil,—where there are *principles* which left to themselves might produce evil and misery ; *there* the ordering of every thing on divine principles, according to the will of God, is the *first principle* of happiness, which in its character embraces all the extent of the earth.

This was the principle which in its *root*, was established for the first time with Noah, for the guidance of that new world, which rose out of the ruins caused by lust and violence. “He who sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” It was the authority of God over life, put into the hands of man, and for which he was to be responsible. The exercise of this power was the manifestation of the judgment of God, and recalled the holiness, the authority, and the constant watchfulness of the Most High. This at least was its true character. But in order that the value of this principle of rule, should be recognized in its details, either by the *governor*, or the *governed*, it was necessary that the source whence it emanated should be acknowledged. The value of this principle, was its recalling to the heart and the eye, the authority of that God who had established it. An authority which thus recognized, would restrain the lusts of the flesh, ere they broke out in those acts to which the power of the sword itself was to be applied, and would even prevent the effects of those desires which were not sufficiently serious to come under the immediate application of the law. But not only do we see the head of this new world, failing in the very beginning, in *self-government* (and consequently losing the respect of him who ought to be the first to obey even his own son) ; but we also perceive an evil and malicious spirit who knew how to destroy the efficacy of this power in its very source, by appropriating it to himself ; presenting himself as the source, both of the evils and blessings which resulted from man’s conduct, or were the effect of the power and rule of God ; and in the fallen and sinful state of man he was able

in some degree, to verify his pretensions, or at least to cause them to be respected. Here then came in the *second principle*, viz. the call of God—a *principle* which by separating *one* people, *one* family, *one* assembly which acknowledged the true God; was capable of rendering them witnesses of His character, and the theatre where He could display His power in accordance with that character.

“And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and they presented themselves before God; and Joshua said unto all the people, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, the father of Nachor, and they served other gods, and I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan,” &c. (Josh. xxiv. 1—3. We see in the history given in this passage, the occasion and the necessity of this call, which was a thing unheard of in all the provocations before the deluge. Your fathers served other gods! a fresh crime, a fresh snare of Satan, which called for new measures on the part of a God who is all goodness. Strife and violence displayed themselves in the time of Nimrod; and perhaps pride and ambition rising against God were seen in those who wished to make for themselves a name, lest they should be dispersed.

There Satan caused the principle of rule, to flow from the will and the violence of man, and the concentration of power, from the name he was making for himself; but the judgment of God, confounding their projects and dispersing them, sufficed to shew the supremacy of His power to humble their pride, and by the confusion of tongues, to originate at the same time the national separation and ties of country, which were to furnish opportunity for the organizations of His providence. But whilst the pride of man was abased by the judgments of God, and served only to display His watchful power, and to accomplish His providential designs; the substitution of the power of Satan in man's heart, under the form of false gods, as the originators of rule, and the

authors of judgment, gave occasion to Almighty God, who is ever able to extract good from evil, to display the other principle before mentioned, even the calling of God, and thus He glorified Himself, even by the perversities of His foolish creatures. God called Abraham, who was a type (both according to the flesh and the spirit) of the family of God, and the depository of all His promises. These are the terms of this call. "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee : and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing ; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee ; and in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Here *in principle* was separation from the world, by breaking all its strongest ties and nearest relationships, in order that he might give himself to God alone, in heart, faith, and confidence. The *principle* of national government and family authority remained in all its power ; but Satan had seized upon it, and our gracious God by drawing one family and nation nearer to Himself, introduced a new and powerful principle to make good His name, His character, and His grace, in the midst of *that world* which had withdrawn from His providential judgments, by throwing itself into the hands of the great adversary of its happiness, as well as of the glory of God. The want of fidelity and power in man under responsibility, was thus again shown, in a manner fatal to the whole world ; because his weakness had placed it in the hands, and under the authority of Satan, not only in consequence of the sin of the whole human race, but as respected the principle of government introduced for its regulation.

But the principle of the call of God, maintained His supremacy, in a manner which put it beyond the effects of man's responsibility, and therefore God could add to it, unconditional promises. This is what took place as respected Abraham, and in what follows we shall see its importance in the history of the people, thus chosen. This is the difference between the external call in itself, and the principle of government, (two things nevertheless, which have

clear and positive rights on the hearts of men) on one side, and the certainty of the promises, and the calling of God according to grace on the other, whether for the Jews or for the Church. God's right is recognized by the believer in the first case, but also the perfect failure of man, in every sense as respected them. The efficacious power of God is felt, and produces its effects in the second.

The existence of this principle of the call of God, has been developed since the time of Abraham, under various forms, but God has constantly maintained the principle. In the history of the government of the world from that time, there have been many changes of the greatest importance, in which the government of God has been displayed, and the truth of it will yet be honoured, by the results which shall spring from them in the latter day. These are the subjects of the Old Testament prophecies ; as the precious subjects of the New, are the faithfulness of God to His call, as respects His ancient people ; and the manifestation of this call in a new form, which leads the Church into the knowledge and enjoyment of heavenly things, things plainly revealed by the Holy Spirit which has been given to it. Before the deluge then, we see the perfect opposition between fallen man and the character of God : and that after a simple, yet powerful, and patient testimony, God swept this mass of iniquity from before His face, and washed the polluted world in the waters of the deluge. We have seen the principle of judgment, and daily retribution introduced under Noah, as a constituent of the new world. This is the principle of government. We have also seen the principle of the calling of God, marked out in the history of Abraham. This is the principle of grace, holiness, and the supremacy of God. But the *union* of these two principles is also presented to our view in the scriptures ; an union very remarkable for a time, as a new trial of the faithfulness of man under responsibility, and in circumstances altogether singular, and accompanied by a still more astonishing display of patience on the part of God, which will furnish the subject of that solemn praise in the latter times.—“ His mercy endureth for ever.” As to the future, the union of these two principles is the source of

a state of things which will be the manifestation of the incomparable wisdom and power of God, when He takes the government into His own hands.

The history of the union of these two principles whether under the responsibility of man or the efficacy of the supremacy of God, is the history of the Jewish people. The law is the directing principle of it, as being the expression of the actual terms of God's government. It is consequently in the history of this people, that we must look for the centre of the administration of the government of the world, containing (as it does) in its past history, on the *one hand* the witness given by people called to the knowledge of the only true God, against the false gods of the Gentiles, ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is *one* Lord,") and on the *other hand* the witness afforded to the principles of the government of the true God, by *His* conduct towards His chosen people, blessing or punishing them openly according to their proceedings, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos. iii. 2.) In their history for the future (of which prophecy is the account) the sovereignty and efficacy of the calling of God, will be clearly and openly manifested; and the government of all the earth be put into the hands of the king whom God has established, and conducted according to the principles of a law which God shall in the meantime have written on the hearts of His people, teeming with rich and sovereign blessings, and proving at once the riches of His goodness and the faithfulness of His promises, and of which the obedient Gentiles shall partake according to their measure, in a world filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

But if the responsibility of man gave mediately an opportunity for the display of the whole character of God on the one hand, the weakness of man on the other, made it necessary for God to establish the hope of all His promises on some other basis than this responsibility, and in fact we see in the history we are examining, that Israel receives the promises in Abraham, according to the calling of God absolutely and unconditionally. Under the law Israel takes these promises on the responsibility of their own

obedience : we will examine their circumstances in these two respects rather more in detail.

The promises of blessing were given to Abraham unconditionally. We read in the 17th chapter of Genesis, that, “when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him I am the Almighty God : walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, as for me behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations ; neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham ; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee ; and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their God.” Then he received the seal of circumcision, which if neglected, occasioned *not* the loss of the promise nationally, but the cutting off of him who omitted it. We also see the unconditional promise in the 15th chapter. “He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir ;” and again, “so shall thy seed be :” and in the 18th verse, “in the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt, unto the great river Euphrates. The Kenites, &c. &c. This promise to Abraham is confirmed to Isaac in the 27th chapter, and to Jacob in the vision at Bethel, equally unconditionally. Let us compare the covenant made with the people at Mount Sinai ; God had brought them out of Egypt with a strong hand, and had led them with grace and blessing to the Mount, providing for all their wants, and never reproaching them for their murmurings ; and Israel encamped over against the mountain. This was God’s message to them by Moses ; “ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles

wings, and brought you unto myself; now therefore *if ye will obey my voice indeed* and keep my covenant, ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation; these are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, and Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord had commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, all that the Lord has spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord. (Ex. xix. 4—8.)

Then the law was given and thus was the covenant concluded on the express condition of obedience on the part of the people, as a preliminary to their enjoyment of the promises it contained. What was the consequence of it? just what must be expected from man—from our wretched hearts. Before Moses could bring down the details of the covenant from the presence of God, and the commandments written by His hand, the people had turned completely from Him, and had made to themselves a god of gold.

The covenant was on their part broken in its fundamental principle almost before they had received it.

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the Mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, “Up, make us gods, which shall go before us, for as for this Moses *the man that* brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.” (Ex. xxxii. 1.) What forgetfulness of the hand of God! but the Lord takes them at their word and does not acknowledge them as His people under the covenant that had been made with them. He said to Moses (verse 7), get thee down, for *thy* people which *thou* broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. Let us pause for a moment at this important juncture, and consider the unfolding of the relationship of God with the world, and with men in this people; after that we will return to their history.

From this time we see the three great instruments of these relations, holding their place in the midst of them. Moses was the representative of royalty among the people of God. “Moses com-

manded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob; and he was king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people, and the tribes of Israel were gathered together. Aaron held the place of the great high-priest, and Miriam was the prophetess. "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants, and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." (Micah vi. 4. see also Ex. xv. Numb. xiii.)

Thus we see in the wilderness the model of the three mediatorial instruments of the power of God:—*one* the communication of His will, the second the means of our approach to Him, and the third the instrument of His government, the recipient of His power.

Moses at different periods filled all these three functions. Thus also in the plagues inflicted on the proud Egyptians, Aaron acted as Prophet, Moses as God to Pharaoh, but that changes nothing in the main. During the union of the two principles of government and calling, these things were fully developed. But under responsibility in these things, the Jewish people corrupted themselves in each one of them. Under the priesthood, when God was their King, and there were only judges raised up from time to time to preserve them in their inheritance, from the occasions of misery produced by their unbelief; they were connected with God through the medium of the priest. Shiloh was the place where God had put His name, but what was the end of it? a witness of judgment to all generations. Go ye now (saith the Lord) to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. . . . I will do unto this house. . . as I have done to Shiloh. (Jer. vii. 12.) Under the priesthood there was complete corruption, even in the priests, as we see in the 2nd chapter of the 1st of Samuel and in the touching scene described in the 3rd chapter, which marked *Ichabod* on the people of God. I say not that the Priesthood was abolished, far from it; it was on the contrary, to be an example of the patience of God, until He came who could efficiently fill all its functions. Samuel was the representative of the prophetic line, a *judge* also, governing the people by the witness of God; a witness given as we have seen against the actual state of

the Priesthood. It is for this reason St. Peter says in the 3rd of Acts, "*All the Prophets from Samuel and those that follow after.*" This then was God's government by prophets, but the people were not satisfied with it, and desired a king; and God gave them a king in His anger, and took him away in His wrath. (Hos. xiii. 11.) A king chosen according to the flesh, when God was their King, served only to shew the weakness of all that man did; the folly of all he desired. Nevertheless the Kingship of Christ over His people, was ever in God's designs: and He gave them a king after His own heart, and David and Solomon furnished the type of the Kingship of Christ; one in suffering and overcoming all His enemies after complete obedience; the other, as reigning in peace and glory over a happy obedient and prosperous people. There the picture ended! man may furnish types, but can never fill the functions of that which is true, and shall be fulfilled in Christ. The repose and glory which Solomon enjoyed, were the cause of his fall. He kept not his uprightness in the midst of the gifts of God, but drawn aside by his wives, he followed other gods.—Kingship, the last resource of God for maintaining His relationship with His people, was corrupted, just in that particular in which Israel should have been His witness. The kingdom failed, and was divided: nevertheless the house of David had one tribe in the wisdom of God, for the love of David His servant, and of Jerusalem the city which he had chosen among all the tribes of Israel.—For the calling of David, was a calling according to grace, and the choice of Jerusalem, was the choice of God. (See 1 Chron. xxi. 22. xxii. 7—14. 1 Kings xi. 13. After that, the long suffering of God waited; teaching, reproving, and forewarning by His prophets. For "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending them, because He had compassion on His people, and His dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15.) The rest of their sorrowful history is

short, the kingdom was made over to the Gentiles. God to fulfil His designs, preserved and restored a remnant, in order that His Christ should be set forth in the midst of the people, "a minister of the circumcision, to confirm the promises made to the fathers." The Prophet was manifested, the King was born, but rejected. The history of this all-important event is given us, though shortly, in the controversy which Jesus had with all classes of the Jews, at the close of His ministry. (Matt. xxi. 23, &c.) At length He sent unto them saying, "they will reverence my Son—but when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said, come, let us slay Him, and the inheritance shall be ours; and they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him." And their judgment was given, and their desolation declared in these tender words, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou who slayest the prophets, and stonest those who are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, that ye shall not see me henceforth, *until ye shall say* blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Having accomplished His ministry to the people as a prophet, and maintained their cause (notwithstanding their being under a righteous judgment *until that day*), like Aaron, not yet come from within the vail (they therefore consequently ignorant of their fate), He will return as a king, and fill the throne of David His father. He shall be a Priest upon His throne, according to the promise; "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without Teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." In those days the government, and the principle of calling, shall be united under the reign of Christ; and "the Lord shall be king over the whole earth, in that day there shall be *one* Lord and His name *one*." Nevertheless Jerusalem shall be built and safely inhabited, and God shall say "It is my people, and they shall say the Lord is my God." (Zech. xiii. xiv.) Having

thus briefly followed the history of this people until grace shall restore happiness to their nation (which shall bear fruit, and be the people whom the Lord has blessed, Matt. xxi. 43)—a history which shews us how they have been the scene of the manifestation of the principles of God's government, I will now resume the consideration of their relationship with God, under more general yet deeper and more detailed circumstances.

We have seen the promises made to Abraham unconditionally ; the Exodus from Egypt through grace, and the strong arm of God. We have seen the people led by grace to Mount Sinai, enter into a covenant based on their obedience, and break every tie with God, by making to themselves a god of gold. But this circumstance gave opportunity for the revelation of another principle of the greatest importance—*Mediation*—which served at once to maintain the consistency of the character of God, with the choice which He had made of a wicked people, and to give occasion for the development of that character, in patience, justice, and faithful chastisements and pity. Mediation always recalling to God *His grace* ; never the covenant of obedience, for *then* there was no need of it, exercising perhaps at the same time severe chastenings, the duration and severity of which, were proportioned to the fervor of the mediatorial supplications. A mediation on which consequently all the relations of God with His people were based ; in order that He might display all the riches of His grace and of His nature, manifested towards the people of His choice, beloved by Him, the just God, but constantly failing in fact, in the obedience which was His due, and which would have been the source of direct blessing. Mediation sustained the relations of God with His people in the midst of their transgressions, whilst all His wonders were made known, and until His judgment had severed the wicked from among them, and completed the blessing and glory of His people under the sustaining hand of Him, who had been the Mediator during the time of all their trials. The Lord said, “ I have pardoned according to thy word, but as truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.” (Numb. xiv, 20, 21.) “ Because all those men which have seen

my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice ; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it : But my servant Caleb, &c. him will I bring into the land, and his seed shall possess it. (23, 24.) Read all the 14th of Numbers. But we must observe the historical evidences of this introduction of *Mediation*, as a support to the Old Covenant, or the foundation of a New one. “ And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people ; now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them ; and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the Lord his God and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against *thy* people which *thou* hast brought forth (God had before said to Moses *thy* people which *thou*) out of the land of Egypt, with great power and with a mighty hand. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, for mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth ? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember *Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants*, to whom thou swarest by thy ownself, and saidst unto them, I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of heaven ; and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. *And the Lord repented of the evil that He thought to do unto His people.*” (Ex. xxxii. 9—14.) Here was the principle.—The consequences of this mediation—the conduct of Moses towards the people—his return to God with fresh supplications, (placing himself as the one bearing their sins,) together with the detail of God’s answers, are found in what follows in the 33rd of Exodus. At length Moses intreats to see the glory of God : this was impossible, but he promises to make all His goodness to pass before him.—“ And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed the Lord—the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth ; keeping mercy for thousands,

forgiving iniquity transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation. (Ex. xxxiv. 5—7.) Then on the renewed intercession of Moses, the Lord announces to him some modifications of His dispensations, and in the end it is said (ver. 27), " Write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made covenant with thee, and with Israel." Here we see a covenant founded on the calling to remembrance the covenant made to Abraham, &c. (the intercession of Moses staying the uplifted hand of God,) and the revelation of a special character of relationship with the people, a character on which is based the New Covenant, with Moses the mediator and the people. When Moses interceded in the desert on the return of the spies, his intercession was founded on the character given by God as the terms of the relationship existing between Him and the people, and both the answer and the judgments of God are in accordance with this character, save only one special mark of mercy which arose from circumstances. The 18th chapter of Ezekiel, (often quoted with really unbelieving views,) announced that God acted towards the people for their own iniquity, and not according to the covenant of which we are speaking, and in truth puts an end to the application of an important principle which it contains. The same thing is found in Jeremiah who concluded the period of their history in their country, as Ezekiel concluded it, out of it, accompanied in the former by a promise of a covenant and a new order of things, which should in the latter days be made with the house of Israel and the house Judah. (Jer. xxxi. 27—37.) It will be found also that Daniel who prophecies of the four empires, confesses both their *past*, and actual transgressions. Having followed the allusions to this covenant, there is one remark which it is very important to make, and the intercession of Moses at the time of their sin in making the golden calf gives rise to it. It is this.—The Spirit of God in all references to the true hopes of Israel, refers to the unconditional covenant made with Abraham. Thus we have seen Moses saying remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou

swarest by thyself, saying, &c. . . . In the same manner the God of mercy having pronounced blessings on their obedience, and followed their rebellions with threats, until their actual dispersion adds in the 26th of Leviticus, "If they shall confess their iniquities and the iniquities of their fathers. . . . and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquities. Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember : and I will remember the land." (See also Micah vii. 20.) Such was the hope of Zecharias, filled with the Holy Ghost. (Luke i. 72, 73.) Such also the prophetic song in Psalm cv. 6—9, 42. According to the solemn declaration of God when Moses asked if "they shall say to me what is His name, what shall I say unto them? **I AM THAT I AM.**" He said also, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you." "And God said moreover unto Moses, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you—this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." Therefore the Apostle in discussing this subject says, (Rom. xi. 28.) "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election, they are beloved for the *fathers'* sake."

We see in the book of Deuteronomy, the people when nearly entering Canaan, put under the principle of obedience, and their enjoyment of the promises dependant on that obedience ; Moses recalls to the people all that God had done for them, adding the Lord hath not given you a heart to hear . . . keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them that ye may prosper in all that ye do.—That thou shouldest enter into a covenant with the Lord thy God, that He may establish thee to-day for a people unto Himself ; and that He may be unto thee a God as He hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob ; as it is said, "Moses set before them life and death, blessing and cursing." It was a covenant which in remembrance of the oath made with the fathers, is a covenant of blessing, if they obeyed, and

threatnings if they disobeyed. God did not promise that they should possess the land, but that they should be blessed *in it*; otherwise, that they should be driven out of it; but that God would shew mercy unto them in a far country if their hearts turned to the Lord. For this reason the Apostle quotes one passage as a pledge of the righteousness of God according to faith, because the observance of the law was impossible in any land except that of Israel. Nevertheless if they were obedient in heart, and turned to the Lord, they should be heard and delivered. The return under Nehemiah was a partial accomplishment of this promise, and this covenant. But in that return, there was no question of the promises made to Abraham, it was a thing that showed the mercy and faithfulness of God; but which was not the fulfilment of His promises and original covenant although it involved important consequences.—The original promises given unconditionally, and guaranteed by the oath of God, must find a complete fulfilment in all their extent.* This is what still remains for the people of God. Joshua gives the history of their present and earthly fulfilment; and the book of Judges that of the fall of Israel in the midst of human enjoyment. In order then to accomplish the full manifestation of the thought and will of God, there was needed not only the promise made to Abraham, and the mediation (which testified to the complete violation of it), to sustain the weight and truth of God's promises in conformity with His justice, until the fulfilment of the promises should take place; (a mediation which was the type of Christ!) but there was also needed the representation of the type of Him who was to be the instrument of their accomplishment, and the centre of the blessings they comprised. This must be by *grace* in the midst of a fallen and rebellious people, who were consequently thrown upon the mercy of God. This representation took place in *David* among a people, who, transgressing under the immediate government of God, desired in their wretch-

* What is said in Dent. xxxii. goes further and deeper, God speaks not according to the covenant, but according to His sovereignty, and His thoughts; consequently the joy of the Gentiles with His people is there introduced.

edness, another king than Him, that they might be like unto the nations. After this filling up of their iniquity, God in His grace gave them a king, who was a remarkable type of Christ—named as king, rejected, driven out, hunted as a partridge on the mountains ;—but just, patient, and obedient under His sufferings : the hope of Israel, when Israel would not hope in Him ; filled himself in the midst of His trials, with all those glorious hopes with which the spirit of God inspired Him, afterwards vanquishing all His enemies, and reigning in glory in Solomon. These are the things which God gave us, to serve as a type of Christ rejected,—Christ the hope of Israel ; and in fact the Psalms are the prophecies of the experience or the expression of the sympathy of Christ with all the sufferings of His people. We see the soul of Christ revealed, either in the circumstances which were to befall Him, in the midst of His people, and in that case, taking the form of direct prophecy : or in the events which were to happen to His people ; and in these He is found by His complete sympathy ; as His spirit expresses itself, “ In all their affliction He was afflicted,” as He said, “ Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me* ?” In every case they are songs which give not an historical narration, but the soul, the feelings, the thoughts, the dependance of the spirit of Christ under the circumstances detailed : an admirable thing to give us the most perfect acquaintance with Christ, and throw a light and a personal interest over all the circumstances described in the gospel histories, and in those prophecies whose accomplishment is yet future.

We find the mind and the thoughts of Christ, on all that was passing around Him in the gospels. We find it also in the whole prophetic history of future events.—These strains introduce us to His heart, whether it be to the reality of His sufferings, or the perfection of His sympathy with His people. The sufferings and the kingdom of Christ, are the completion of all the promises which have been typically presented to us in David and Solomon ; and the spirit of Christ, as in the midst of His people, presents to us in the Psalms, all that He was in them. But there were also declarative prophecies, and we would speak a little of their character. These begin with the anticipated fall of the kingly power ; the last

means of maintaining the *union* in the responsibility of man, of the government, and the character of God, in His called according to the flesh. In order to enter into their full character, we will take the Prophet Isaiah, where the commencement of this species of prophecy is given us. This prophet begins by stating the complete fall of the nation—their future glory—the coming of the Gentiles to that revealed glory, and he takes Israel themselves for a witness, that God had done all that was possible for them, and that they had only brought forth wild grapes. He declares nevertheless, that after judgments, grace should triumph in blessings to this rebellious and backsliding people. After this, he is regularly appointed to his mission and goes to meet Ahaz. It is to these latter circumstances, that I wish to draw the attention of those who have accompanied me in my researches. The first thing to be observed, is this, that the promise, and the prophecy as a witness of the promise, are always applicable to a state of failure. Adam, in a state of innocence, had no need of the promise. Israel, walking in all uprightness under the law, and rejoicing in all the blessings which flowed from it, was not the subject of the reprimands of God, or of promises tending to encourage the faithful, when depressed by the prosperity of the wicked, or the misery of the chosen nation: consequently, the promise and the prophecy belong alike to grace. They are addressed to sinners, and are the intervention of God, to give an object to faith, or to sustain it where already existing. This is their character as we find it in the 6th of Isaiah,—the manifestation of the glory of Christ, as the Lord God of Israel, convincing the nation, and even the prophet, of sin, but strengthening his mouth by purifying it, to bear witness in the midst of them, to the judgment of God, and also to His faithfulness in preserving the *seed* for future blessing, which was to be the strength of the tree stripped of all its glory. I say the glory of Christ, because it is thus stated in the 12th of John. Judgment had been hanging over the heads of this people for centuries, but at length finds its accomplishment on their rejection of Christ, the true David. (See John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26, 27.) The other part of the spirit of prophecy, is intercession which re-

ceives us, the spirit of faith which acknowledges the people, and the fidelity of God ; the answer of the duration of the judgment of God, as not being for ever, an answer which is the support of the faithful remnant, in the midst of a wicked people. The glory of Christ and His rejection (sufferings), are the two subjects of prophecy—a rejection which shews the fulness of that wickedness, which the glory condemns, and becomes the foundation of the hope, which finds its blessing and its end in that glory. Reproof always takes place according to actual circumstances : and the violation of that law which was the rule of the government of God, together with the idolatry which destroyed their witness as a chosen people, to the one true God, furnished the occasion for those wonderful expositions of grace, of which the prophecies are full, and also for the detail of those circumstances, by which God vindicated His rights in the midst of an ungrateful people, by righteous judgments, and by means of a *New Covenant*. This is the reason that the prophets, (I speak not now of Daniel and the Apocalypse,) omitting the present dispensation, pass from the circumstances which gave rise to the prophecy, to the circumstances *in* and *by* which the judgments of God on infidelity (which is the subject of the prophecy) shall be fully displayed. They pass to the events of the latter days, when God shall arise in judgment upon all nations ;—upon Israel, according to their behaviour as a people, and the Gentiles according to their conduct towards that people ; and when the glory of Christ which has been the hope of the faithful in all ages shall be manifested for their joy and complete happiness. It is impossible to understand the prophecies, without looking to the circumstances of the latter days. Certainly there have been remarkable judgments on the Jews, and on the Gentiles, who were in connection with them, but nothing which fulfils the prophecies, because nothing which fulfils the end of God. This to my mind is the meaning of the Holy Spirit, when Peter says, “ No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation,” it must form a link in the counsels of God, which only finds its completion in the solemn and magnificent scenes of the latter days. All the nations which persecuted Israel, and insulted God by their

idols and their pride, shall take part in them ; Christ must reign over all the nations. The mountain of the Lord's house is to be set up above all mountains, and the Gentiles shall flow to it. He must reign in peace : but first the judgments of God must be manifested. " When thy judgments are in the earth, then shall the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." The consequences of these judgments on Israel and even on the nations, may be seen in Isaiah from the 13th to the 33rd chapters, in which is contained also the glory of Israel, which shall be accomplished. The same may also be briefly seen in the 25th of Jeremiah.

There are three classes of prophecy in the Old Testament, after the establishment of the kingdom. Those which preceded the captivity—those during it—and those which followed the re-establishment of Jerusalem. But there is one event of the utmost importance which gave rise to the division ; viz. God's ceasing to reign in the midst of His people, and the giving authority and dominion over the whole earth, into the hands of the Gentiles. Jerusalem ceased to be " the throne of the Lord," where His rule was directly displayed, where the ark of the covenant was found, and where God was seated between the cherubims. Consequently there were prophets, who bore witness to the circumstances of the Jews and the other nations, whilst the throne of God was in the midst of Jerusalem, or who spoke of the judgments of God on His people and on their enemies. Others who spoke of the state of the Gentiles during the time that the authority of God in judgment was committed to their hands. The prophets after the captivity, embraced both, and had a special character on account of the partial re-establishment of the Jews, whilst the Gentile empire still existed. The event of which we speak *changed the whole state of the earth*, by separating the *Government*, from the *calling* of God,—two things which had long been united in the Jewish people under responsibility. An union which having failed through the unfaithfulness of man, when God Himself ruled over them, had been propped up, and established afresh, under the reign of a man who was a chosen type of Christ. From the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the throne of David, the

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government of the world, was in the hands of the Gentiles, and the times of the Gentiles commenced, (see Dan. ii. 37, 38,) under a responsibility, the effects of which are described in the book of Daniel, the Apocalypse and Zechariah, and which are characterized in the 4th chap. of Daniel; the four great empires which by their pride, and in God's providence, successively seized on the supreme power, and consequently brought themselves under this responsibility and failed, are well known.

All the time of their dominion, Israel has been *Lo-ammi*, "not my people," this is all that we need say of them at this present time.

Before this event, Prophecy was the voice of God, judging the nations of the promised land. The world in its pride rising against God and His people, and Babylon presenting itself, only as taking the place where Israel had reigned. Its destruction is consequently foretold; but its history and that of the nations which succeeded it, is not given. The question is always between the God of Israel, Israel, and the world. There is no mention of Babylon in the first prophecies of Isaiah, which end at the 12th chap. In the 13th, we have the destruction of Babylon, which represents the habitable world. In the 14th it is said, "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord, for servants and handmaids: and they shall take *them* captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors." Here is Babylon set aside, and replaced by the restoration of Israel to dominion in the land of the Lord. "For the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from this time and for evermore." "And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, *even the first dominion*; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." This is the accomplishment of the prophecy in the 4th chapter of Micah. "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord

shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and the people shall flow to it. And many nations shall come and say, come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks." I have quoted all this as necessary to complete the scene. The details belong to the times of the Gentiles, which is the reason I refer to what belongs to those times. But there were many prophecies which belong to Israel, recognized in a measure, though unfaithful. The great question was between Israel and the world, before and after the existence of the Beasts; not as under their power, for the Beasts come into existence only by Israel's ceasing to exist as a people. Egypt, which was at first the world, was already passed away in that respect—God having called His Son out of Egypt. Assyria was its representative, that is the reason we see so many vital questions, between Israel and Assyria, as the last thing in the history of the present age. Babylon represented the world in the time of the Empire of the Gentiles, when God had given the Empire to the Gentiles, and she was responsible in herself, for the exercise of His power. Daniel, as we have said, has given us the results, but (a principle of all importance) the *call* of God was separated from *Government*.

We see the character of the union of religion and Government under the Beasts in Dan. iii. Faithfulness was displayed in keeping out of such a union, while acknowledging the authority of the government; but for religion it appeals to God alone. But while Israel was the called nation, Babylon was not in question. But the question between the authority of God's government in Israel, and the world, ever existed. Nineveh and Assyria was the occasion of it. This was how God acted. He permits the world as executor of His judgments, to lay waste His people for their good. Judgment begins at the house of God;

but if the worldliness and the sin of His people, have been corrected by the stronger worldliness and sin of the world, what will the end of that world itself be? We have consequently two prophets, whose witness concerns Nineveh only. One of these, the last witness given to the world, in the mercy of God, that is to say Jonah, a witness that there was the greatest and most speedy mercy for the world itself, before God. The other Nahum a witness of the final judgment. "The Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee, that no more of thy name be sown." "The Lord hath turned away the pride of Jacob, as the pride of Israel;" but there was through grace, a faithful remnant, though a small one. Here there was nothing but pride against the Lord, and who shall abide the day of His wrath? In the prophecies, which bring into contact the state of Israel and the world, we find the activity of the Assyrian, as the last instrument of the wrath of God, and the judgment of Israel by its means, but at length their destruction by God Himself. Israel is found a prisoner in Babylon, or what is still worse, united in desire and principle with the king of the apostate system: having made a covenant with death, and being at agreement with hell,—saying, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, we shall not be trodden down by it, for we have made lies our refuge, and hid ourselves under falsehood: wretched refuge against the justice and the wrath of the Lord. The return from Babylon, when Cyrus was king, changed nothing in fact. "Behold we are servants this day, said Nehemiah, (who felt the truth of the thing,) even in the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof; behold we are servants in it, and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings thou hast set over us, because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress." (Nehemiah ix. 36, 37.) And the Lord Himself the legitimate King of the Jews, united Himself in His infinite wisdom to this confession of the state of His beloved Israel, in repelling their unholy temptations: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." The wretched Jews received a repulse which left the

weight of their wickedness on their own heads. Their malice and wretchedness reached their height, when they said, we have no other king but Cæsar. Although their state varied according to the character, the strength or weakness of their rulers, yet were they always under the dominion of the Gentiles. But it was quite otherwise as to the Assyrian, the rod of the Lord: He humbles them; but the Lord choosing Jerusalem, puts her by His power beyond all the efforts of the pride of the world. Thus until the end of 13th chapter of Isaiah, where the history of the world begins, the prophet pursues the history of Israel in relation with this king of Assyria. The other events are only passing troubles, but both in the 7th and 8th chapters, the king of Assyria is the subject of the prophetic threatenings; and from the 9th and 10th chapters, from the actual circumstances of the moment, he shews the outstretched arm of the Lord, until He takes the Assyrian by His strong hand, to be the staff of His indignation, which is completed, and ceases in chap. x. 25, with the destruction of the proud king.

In the 11th and 12th chapters, we see the glory, the joy, and the peace of Israel, and of the world in *their* deliverance, a deliverance which as the Apostle says, shall be life from the dead. The 10th chapter marks in a very striking manner all the principles and effects of the judgments of God, which only leave a faithful remnant of His people, who destroy their enemies completely. It is God judging the earth, whether His people or the world. For this reason, after the destruction of Babylon and its king, (who had been substituted in the place of God's union with Israel,) we find in Isaiah xiv. 24, 25, the destruction of the Assyrians upon the mountains, and the land purified from all those enemies, when the answer to the messengers of the nation shall be, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of His people shall trust in it. (32.) In the remainder of the chapters which are applicable to this subject, we see the judgments of God on all the nations who have interfered with the affairs of Israel, whether near or afar off, beyond the rivers of Cush. We see the subject also treated of, in reference to the latter days, the occasions of the prophecies, being some-

times the Assyrian ; sometimes Nebuchadnezzar, and a complete mixture of dates and circumstances, as respects past time. The detail is however exact as to the latter days, a detail which is verified and arranged by a comparison with other prophecies. To enter into the details, would be to explain almost all the prophecies. The slightest attention will shew us the application of these things to the latter days ; for example, the 18th chap. and the end of the 19th. But we have said enough to shew the separation of rule, and the calling of God, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the giving of Government or power, into the hands of the Gentiles. With them it still exists, and shall exist until the destruction of the last of the four empires ; with this destruction the times of the Gentiles end. During those times the calling of God remained with some of the Jews. After the fall of their nation, after all hope was lost for the Jews in their actual state by their rejection of Messiah, this calling took place in the Church not for *earthly*, but for *heavenly places* ; and God in His providence suffers the last empire to exist until it rises against Him and His Church. (See Rev. xvi. 14. xvii. 12, 14. xix. 19, 20.) But this belongs to the history of the Gentiles, or to the hope and character of the Church of which we have before spoken. We must observe here, that at the time of the invasion of Assyrian, a type of what shall take place in the latter days, they acted upon Israel and Judah, seizing Israel and falling before Jerusalem. The king of Babylon (representative of the empires), takes Jerusalem ; consequently, when he is destroyed, Christ shall have retaken Jerusalem, and the contest between *him* as King there and the Assyrian will begin ; and the restoration of Israel shall have its full accomplishment. Thus among the prophets of the captivity, we have in Jeremiah (who prophesied *in the land*) the total rejection of Judah as *Lo-ammi, not a people* ; and a New Covenant made with the two divisions of the people, Judah and Israel ; and under this covenant, complete blessing is brought in, both to that nation and to the earth. We see in Daniel, the history of the four empires, and the circumstances of the call of God, until their end. In Ezekiel we find an entire omission of the four empires : the prophet having given an account of the

destruction of Pharaoh by the king of Babylon (whose attempts were a last effort to obtain the Empire, before Babylon), passes at once to events which characterise the return of Israel and their re-establishment in their own land, and to the attacks which their last enemies will make upon them; attacks which will only serve for the complete manifestation to the Gentiles of the glory of God in the midst of Israel. These last events bring us to the consideration of the reunion, once more of *Rule*, and the *Call* of God, in the Jewish nation, but under His dominion, who in the display of *His* glory, shall make all the earth happy, in the reign of Him who shall be a Priest upon His throne, and who will maintain the fulness of blessing by His presence, in His reign, and by the complete union established and settled in Him between the heavens and the earth. We will quote some passages as proof of the accomplishment of these things.—First, of the Government of Christ in Israel as powerful to subdue, and drive out the enemies of His ancient people; and then of His being the peaceful Benefactor of them, and through them of the whole earth:—in both cases joining together power and justice, which had long been separated. The cross of Christ was the complete overthrow of Justice on earth. For the only Just One was persecuted by the people whom He loved—of whom He was the Benefactor and the glory—condemned by him who represented the Government of the world, and who nevertheless declared his innocence—and at length apparently, and *in one sense really* forsaken of God, and given up to the justice of Him he had appealed to; this is what the cross was to the world. The Church which views these things in their heavenly light, sees in them, not the judgment of the patient Jesus, but of that world which rejected Him. It sees heavenly justice in the abandonment on the cross; divine love having provided a Lamb for a sacrifice, a justice which reclaimed the rights of that victim, not by helping Him in this sinful and wretched world, where He finished the work of salvation, but by receiving Him to that place which was the only real witness of the value of His justice and the glory of His person: viz. to the right hand of the Majesty on high. The Church consequently, partaking of the justice and glory of Christ, should seek rather the

fellowship of the sufferings of her Head, than the participation of that false glory which drove Him from the earth. (See Phil. iii.) Expecting that which He expects, that His enemies be made His footstool. In those days His cause and His right shall be maintained even upon earth, and His right hand shall find out all His enemies. The Jews suffer the earthly consequences, until this moment. The kingdom which has rejected Him in His humiliation, rising out of the abyss, will oppose Him when coming forth out of His place, in His glory, and shall find its end. Then Christ uniting Himself to His earthly people, or at least, to the faithful remnant, will subdue the whole world unto Himself by His power. The little stone which broke the image shall become a great mountain, which shall fill all the earth. This is the witness of a cotemporary prophet, given in the place where he speaks of Christ manifesting Himself in humiliation. "When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man." "And the Lord shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with the whirlwinds of the south." "The Lord of hosts shall defend them." (See Zech. ix. x.) "I will strengthen the house of Judah, and save the house of Joseph, and will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the Lord their God, and I will hear them." And in the 12th chap. "In that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people, all those that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against her." (Zech. xii. 3.) The details of these things will be found in this chapter and the following ones. Jerusalem will have been taken before, as was foretold by Ezekiel. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, and it shall be no more until He come whose right it is, and I will give it him." (Ez. xxi. 27. See also Zech. xiv.) We see the same truth in Jer. li. 19. "The portion of Jacob is not like them, for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of hosts is His name. Thou art my battle

axe, and weapon of war, for with thee will I break in pieces the nations; and with thee will I destroy kingdoms," &c. Let us come to more general descriptions of the re-union of Christ with this people, at the time of their restoration. "The children of Israel, saith the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Hosea, 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. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." (Read from the 15th verse of the 2nd chap. to the end of the 3rd.) This is the promise in Jer. xxxii. 37. "Behold I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in my anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell in safety: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me; yea, I will rejoice over them, to do them good: and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul," &c. And in xxxiii. 14. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. In those days I will cause the *Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.* In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely, and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.... Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant," &c. Also the 7th, 8th, 9th verses of the same chapter. "And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour be-

fore all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them : and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I procure unto it." Also in the 59th chap. of Isaiah, having described the state of sin and ruin, in which Israel was found, their transgressions being multiplied before the Lord, and truth lost, the prophet announces the intervention of the Lord in these words : " And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him, and His righteousness it sustained him. For He put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head ; and He put on the garment of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, fury to His adversaries, recompence to His enemies, To the islands He will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the Lord, from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come from Zion ; and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord, or shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." I take here the reading of the Apostle, supported by many ancient versions, which alters nothing as to the present question ; but the application of the passage by the Apostle, is of immense importance, for he says that it applies to the restoration of Israel, after the fulness of the Gentiles is come in ; that is to say, to the glory of the nation after the end of the economy of the Church. There is yet another long passage which must be quoted. After the resurrection of the dry bones, the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Ezekiel says, " Then said He unto me, Son of man these bones are the whole house of Israel : behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost : we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God ; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall 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. The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou Son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one Shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply

them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." We may also read in detail the 65th and 66th of Isaiah,—the elect remnant of Judah, and the judgments on the wicked nation, the blessing of the earthly Jerusalem, after a marked distinction between the faithful Jews, (lxv. 13, 14;) then lxvi. 5, the remnant addressed in terms of the greatest tenderness and consolation, and at last judgment on their enemies. "For behold the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire; for by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many.... For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory, and I will set a sign among them, and will send those that escape of them unto the nations to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory, and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles; and they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord.... For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." (Is. lxvi.) The same things may be seen in the 3rd of Joel, and the manner in which it shall be done in Isaiah lxiii. compared with Rev. xix. The promise is found in the second Psalm. I have already quoted the latter chapters of Zechariah, and will only select three passages, amongst numbers that present themselves. The first, respecting the re-establishment of the Jews; the second, respecting the judgment on the nations; and the third, concerning the presence of Christ as the strength of the restored nation against the Assyrian. "Behold, saith the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Amos, the days come saith the Lord, that the plow-

man shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed, and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt : And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof ; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them : And I will plant them upon their land, *and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land* which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." (Amos. ix. 13—15.) " Therefore wait ye upon me saith the Lord, until the day that I will rise up to the prey, for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger, for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent." (Zeph. iii. 8.) What follows is the joy of Israel, saying, in verse 17, " The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty : . . . thou shalt not see evil any more." (v. 51.) This is the quotation from the prophet Micah. " Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops, he hath laid siege against us : they shall smite the judge of Israel, with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore He will give them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth ; then the remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide ; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, when he shall tread in our palaces. (Micah v. 1—5.) That which follows is the description of what Jacob shall be in the midst of the nations, and of what God will be in the midst of *Jacob* and the nations, for as we read in Zech. xiv. 9, The Lord shall be king over all the earth, in that day there shall be *one* Lord, and His name one. We see

the kingdom given to Christ *after the destruction of the fourth Beast.* (Dan. vii. 13, 14.) In Psalms 82, 75, 76, we have God arising to judge the earth, because all have failed in obedience, walking in darkness.—Christ celebrating the government of God as put into His hands, in Psalm 75.—His re-establishment in Judah, in the 76th.

There is one consequence to be observed, which several of the quotations have in fact already marked ; viz. the actual blessedness of the earth under the government. The call to universal joy is found in the 95th Psalm ; then in the 96th, the earth is called to sing the new song, being instructed, she sings the song in Ps. 97. Psalm 98th is the calling of Israel to sing. Their song is found in the 99th Ps. The 96th and 98th Psalms, finish with one common chorus. The same state of things is described in the 72nd Psalm, but directly as Christ reigning, as Solomon. We have seen in the passages quoted, the judgment of God on His unfaithful people, and the calling of God separated from His Government, and the Government made over to the Gentiles, furnishing afterwards the opportunity (through the rejection of Messiah by the Jews), for the manifestation of the *heavenly calling* of God to the Church.

We have seen the promise of the restoration of Israel, but under very adverse circumstances ; even their chiefs at Jerusalem making a covenant with hell and the grave, to escape the scourge of God. All the nations led by their pride and their passions against Jerusalem—the righteous judgment of God on His people ; a time thus described by Jeremiah with the promises already quoted. (Jeremiah xxx. 7.) “Alas ! for that day is great, so that none is like it : it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.—For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burn thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” We have in fact seen all the nations of the earth assembled against her, saying in their pride, where is thy God ? But at this word, this un-

known God, shall show Himself, to their confusion, and shall gather them as sheaves into the floor. (Micah iv. 12.) Jerusalem becomes a burdensome stone to all nations.—Her faithful remnant escaped from the judgments. (See Is. lxxv. 19.) To the faithful remnant, the Saviour manifests Himself, they weep justly; but they will have David their king—his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. Then the calling and the government of God shall be united once more. “This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into the land.” The wrath against Israel shall then have ceased; their land shall be delivered from their oppressors, who had long filled it; and the dispersed among the nations shall return. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people...and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west; they shall spoil them of the east together; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them. (Is. xi. 10—14.) All the promises to Israel, shall be fulfilled to the letter; for when hath God failed in His promises? But the earth also shall rejoice before the Lord, Himself coming to judge it; and we have seen in the 7th of Daniel, dominion over all nations put into the hands of the Son of man, and His kingdom which broke the image, becomes a mountain which fills all the earth. We have seen also in speaking of the Church, that Satan shall be bound at this time, and there will be a world blessed under the dominion of Christ, from which outward temptation, and the tempter, shall be alike banished. The

Lord shall hear the heavens, and the heavens shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel, that is the seed of God. There shall be a chain of blessing without interruption or hindrance, from the throne of the Lord to His people blessed on the earth, and the Gentiles shall rejoice with them. We have seen this state described in Psalms xcvi. xcix. lxxii. Is. xxiv.—xxviii. and even the following chapters describe the same things. For it is in those days that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Here is the truth of the promises. They shall bless themselves in the earth, in the God of truth. Here is the long expected accomplishment of the prophecies. Here the proof that the calling of God is without repentance, even on earth; and that His mercy endureth for ever. Here is the oath to David, to which the faithful God has not been wanting, Here is the government of God established; *not* on the instability of man under responsibility, but on the efficacy of the power of Christ the Son of God, Son of man, Son of David, Heir of all things. Here even on earth, is the grace of God triumphing in the splendour of His justice: “Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” “Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven, yea, the Lord shall give that which is good, and the land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before Him and shall set us in the way of His steps.” We may read from the 73rd Psalm to the end of 77, which are all the description of what will take place in the Emmanuel’s land, in the latter days. The blessings of Noah, the promises made to Abraham, the hopes of David shall be accomplished together, and men shall rejoice in the beneficence of the Lord, not in the miseries of their own weakness and the temptations of the enemy—but in the strength of a present God, and of Christ the rightful Heir, the support, the Mediator, of all these blessings. I have but *one* word more to say, *one* character of Christ’s to add. It is in those days that He shall be manifested as the real Melchizedec, King of righteousness, King of peace; the Priest of the most high God—possessor

of heaven and earth. The High Priest, not of intercession within the veil, hidden in God, but come forth to bless with the riches, and the abundance of His house, the people of God, already conquerors over all their enemies, and to pronounce on them the blessing of the most high God ; possessor then in blessing of the heavens and the earth, and to bring up praises worthy of Him in the mouth of the High Priest ; happy reciprocation of blessings, for if the blessings of God, are the happiness of His people, the happiness of His people, in Christ, is the joy of God. It was meet to make merry and be glad, for those which were dead and are alive again, which were lost, and are found. The happiness and blessing of this earth, are the joy of our gracious God, and the second Adam will not fail of this part of His inheritance. Happy those who are co-heirs with Him, and who, partakers of the divine nature, may rejoice with God, in the blessings with which He clothes others, with hearts filled with His love. Blessed is the Church of the Lord.

THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 242.)

I HAVE hitherto followed this Gospel in its order, down to the close of the 17th chapter, having distributed it so far into three principal sections :—*the first*, introducing our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Stranger from heaven, and giving us His action and reception in the world as such,—*the second*, exhibiting Him in His intercourses and controversies with Israel,—*the third*, giving Him to us in the bosom of His elect, instructing them in the mysteries of the heavenly Priesthood, and in their standing as the children of the Father. And now we have to consider *the fourth* and closing section, which gives us according to the order and wisdom of the Spirit in St. John, all that attended on the death and resur-

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rection of the Lord. May the entrance of the Lord's words still give light, and bear with them to our souls a savour of that blessed One of whom they speak !

But while in labours like these, beloved, we seek to discover the order of the divine word, and are led to wonder at its depths, or admire its beauty, we should still remember that it is the truth of the divine word that we must chiefly consider. It is when the word comes with "much assurance" that it works effectually in us. It will not profit if not mixed with *faith*. Its power to gladden and to purify, will depend on its being received *as truth* ; and as we trace out and present to one another the beauties, the depths, and the wonders of the word, we should oftentimes pause and say to our souls, as the angel said to the overwhelmed Apostle who had seen the lovely visions, and heard the marvellous revelations, "these are the *true* sayings of God."

The place in our Gospel to which I have now arrived, presents our Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings. But I may notice here, that it is not His sufferings that seem at all to occupy Him in this Gospel. Throughout it, He appears to stand above the reproaches of the people, and the world's rejection of Him. So that when the last passover was approaching, though in the other Gospels we see our Lord with His mind full upon His being the Lamb that was chosen for it, saying to His disciples, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified," yet in our Gospel, it is not so. He goes up to Jerusalem at the time, but it is to seat Himself in the midst of an elect household, and then to display His royal honours in the city, and to receive the homage of the nation. No forethought of the cross was on His mind then. (xii. 1.) And so afterwards. When He is alone with His disciples, He stands above His sorrows and the world still—He does not tell them of the Jews betraying Him to the Gentiles, and of the Gentiles crucifying Him—He does not speak of His being mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, as in the other Gospels. All this is passed by. The many things that the Son of man was to suffer at the hands of sinful men, lie untold here. But on the other hand, He assumes the hour of the power

of darkness to be past, and as soon as we find Him alone with His elect, He takes His place beyond that hour. (xiii. 1.) Gethsemane and Calvary are behind Him, and He apprehends Himself as having reached the hour, not of the garden or the cross, but the hour of the Mount of Olives, the hour of His ascension; our Evangelist saying, “now when Jesus knew that His hour was come, *that He should depart from this world unto the Father,*” these words showing us plainly that His mind was not upon His suffering, but on the heaven of the Father that was beyond it. He spreads before them not the memorials of His death here, but of His life in heaven, as we have seen, for He washes their feet after supper. And all His discourse with His beloved ones afterwards, (xiv.—xvi.) savoured of this. It all assumed that His sorrow was past,—that He had finished His course,—that He had stood against the Prince of this world, and had conquered,—that He had continued in the Father’s love, and that all was now ripe for His being glorified. His words to them assumed this, and on the ground of this, He strengthened them to conquer as He had conquered. Instead of telling them of His sorrows, His object is to comfort them in theirs. He gave them peace, and the promise of the Comforter, and of the glory that was to follow. And when for a moment, as urged by their state of mind, He speaks of their all leaving Him alone in the coming hour, it was not, save with this assurance, “And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” And in like manner when He was separating Judas from the rest, we read that “He was troubled in spirit,” but as soon as the traitor was gone, the Lord rises at once to His own proper elevation, and He says, “now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” Thus, if His soul pass through a groan or a trouble, it is but for a moment, and just to lead Him into a fuller view of the glory that was beyond it all.

And now it is just the same in these chapters (xviii.—xix.) which give us His sufferings, as He descends into the deepest shades of His lonely way. Even here it is still strength that accompanies Him throughout, and glory that appears before Him throughout. And thus whether in labour, in testimony, or in

suffering, He is still in this Gospel in His elevation as Son of God. He walks on in the consciousness of His dignity, He takes the cup as from the Father's hand, and lays down His life of Himself.

I will now proceed with the remaining chapters in their order as before.—(xviii.—xix.) We may remember that in the 17th chapter, we saw our Lord as the High Priest in the heavenly temple, making His requests; from that place He now comes down to meet the hour of the power of darkness. In that chapter His heart and His eye had been full of His Father's glory, of His own glory, and of the Church's; and forth from all this, thus in spirit set before Him, He now comes out to endure the cross.

In the other Gospels He meets the cross, after the strengthening that He had received from the angel in Gethsemane; but we have nothing of that scene here, for that was the passage of the Son of man through the *human* anticipation of His agony, with the strength of God by an angel ministered to Him. But here it is the Son of God whom we see, descending as from heaven to meet the cross, and His passage through the whole of the hour of the power of darkness is taken in the strength of the Son of God. He seeks no companionship here. In the other Gospels we see Him leading aside Peter, James, and John, if haply He might engage their sympathy to watch with Him for one hour. But here there is none of this. He passes all alone through the sorrow. The disciples, it is true, go with Him into the garden, but He knows them there only as needing His protection, and not as yielding Him any desired sympathy. "If ye seek me, let these go their way." The angel does not strengthen Him in the garden, neither do His disciples stand with Him there for any cause of His. He comes down as the Son of God, from His own place on high, where He had just in spirit been, (as we saw in the 17th chapter,) to walk *alone* to Calvary. Though His present path lay to the cross, it was still a path of none less than the Son of God. The loneliness of the Stranger from heaven, is marked here, as it had been all through this Gospel.

And let me add here, (a reflection that has occurred to me with much comfort,) that there is a greatness in God, in the sense of

which we should much exercise our hearts, for it is blessed. There is no straitness in God, all in Him is worthy of Himself. The Psalmist appears to give himself to this thought in the 36th Psalm. All that he there sees in God, he sees in its proper divine greatness and excellency. His mercy is *in the heavens*, His faithfulness *unto the clouds*. His righteousness is like the *great mountains*, and His judgments *like the deep*. His preserving care so perfect, that the *beasts as well as men are the objects of it*. His loving kindness so excellent, that the children of men hide themselves as *under the shadow of His wings*, His house is so stored with all good, that His people are *abundantly satisfied* with its fatness, and His pleasures for them are so full, that they drink of them *as of a river*. All this is the greatness and magnificence of our God, not only in Himself, but in His ways and dealings with us. And, beloved, this is blessed truth to us. For our sins should be judged of in the sense of this greatness of our God. It is true, indeed, that sin is exceeding sinful. The least soil or stain upon God's fair workmanship is full of horrid shapes in the eye of faith that calculates duly on God's glory. A little hole dug in the wall is enough to shew a prophet great abominations; but when brought to stand side by side with the greatness of the grace that is in our God and Saviour, how does it then appear? Where was the crimson sin of the adulteress? where the sins that had, as it were, grown old in the Samaritan woman? They may be searched for, but they cannot be found. They disappear in the presence of the grace that was brought to shine beside them. The abounding grace rolled away the reproach for ever. God who taketh up the isles as a very little thing, and measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, takes away our sins as little things in the riches and magnificence of His grace.

With these thoughts we may well encourage our hearts. Our God would have us know Him in His own greatness. Set sin alone, and the least speck of it is a monster. Set it beside His grace and it vanishes. And all this expression of the divine greatness breaks forth in Jesus throughout this Gospel. There is every where the tone and bearing of the Son of God in Him and about Him, though we see Him even in toil or in suffering.

But this, beloved, only by the way. We have now followed our Lord over the brook Kedron, and the spot must have been one of sacred and affecting recollections to Him. For here it was that David had once stopped with Ittai his friend, and with Zadok and the ark, as he went forth from Jerusalem in the fear of Absalom. Over this very brook, and up this very ascent of Mount Olivet, the King of Israel had then gone weeping, His head covered and His feet bare, while Ahithophel (who like Judas now had once been His counsellor) was betraying Him to His enemies. (2 Sam. xv.) Jesus we read, oftentimes resorted hither, no doubt with these recollections. But it is the Son of God we have here at the present time, rather than the Son of David. The brook is passed, and the garden is entered, not with tears, and without the ark, but more than the ark in all its glory and strength are to be displayed now. The Lord comes forth to them, a band of cruel officers and soldiers as they were, with this word, "whom seek ye?"—thus addressing them as in the *repose* of heaven, which was His. And He comes forth in the *power* of heaven, as well as in its repose—for on His again saying to them, "I am He," they go backward and fall to the ground. And thus did He stand as Son of God, the Lord from heaven. No man could take His life from Him. He has even to shew them their prey, for all their torches and lanterns would not otherwise have discovered Him to them. Every stage in the way was His own. He laid down His life of Himself. They that would eat up His flesh must stumble and fall. They that desired His hurt must be turned backward and put to confusion. The fire was ready to consume this Roman captain and his fifty. Had the Son of God pleased, there on the ground the enemy would still have lain, but He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save, and therefore He would lay down His own. It was just seen that the glory that might have confounded all the power of the adversary, was hid within the pitcher, but he would fain hide it still.

And now it was that, in spirit, He sang the 27th Psalm. The Lord was His light and His salvation, whom should He fear? He had just seen God's glory in the sanctuary (as we saw in the 17th

chap.) and according to this Psalm, His longing was, to dwell in that house of the Lord for ever. It was a time of trouble, it is true, but, in spirit, His head was lifted up above His enemies, and He was soon to offer in the tabernacle, sacrifices of joy, and sing His praises unto the Lord. (Psalm xxvii. 1—6.)

Thus as Son of God He stood in this hour, and could have stood against hosts of them; but He would take the cup from the Father's hand, and give His life for the Church. Those who were with Him become now, in their wilfulness, an offence to Him. His kingdom was not as yet of this world, and therefore His servants might not fight. But Peter draws his sword, and would fain have changed the scene into a mere trial of human strength. But this must not be. It is true the Son of God could have stood. He might again have been the ark of God, with the power of the enemy falling before it; but how then should the Scripture be fulfilled? He rather leaves Himself in the hands of sinners. "Then the band, and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him."

Thus was it so far with the Lord. And as we still follow Him, we still trace the way of the conscious Son of God. Whether we listen to Him with the officers or with the High Priest, or before Pilate, it is still in the same tone of holy distance from all that was around Him. They may do to Him whatsoever they list—He is as a stranger to it. He is not careful to answer them in their matters. He would pass through all in loneliness. The daughters of Jerusalem do not here either yield Him their sympathy, or receive His, nor does a dying thief share that hour with Him. He is the lonely Son of God all through that dreary way. But none other stand thus in God but Himself. Peter is found in the way of sinners, *warming himself among them*, as one who had only the resources which they had. Another (perhaps John himself) takes his place *as the acquaintance of the High Priest*, and gets his advantage as such. But all this was a sinking down into mere nature, and leaving the Son of God alone in God—as He had said to them, "ye shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

And His path, I need not say, is without a stain. Let God be true, but every man a liar. So Jesus is without fault, though all beside fail. He was "justified in the spirit." He has no step to retrace, no word to recall. He could righteously vindicate Himself in every thing, and even reprove His accuser, and say, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me." But even Paul, in such a case, had to recall his word, and to say, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest."*

And as we follow Him on to the cross, we have the Son of God still. We see His title to the kingdom verified with all authority. The enemy would have had it blotted out, but he cannot prevail. Pilate, who before had despised the claims of Jesus, saying to the Jews, "behold your King," will now have them published in all the languages of the earth, and it is not in the power of the Jews to change His mind now as before. The cross shall be the Lord's standard, and Jehovah will emblazon it with inscriptions of His royal dignity, be the earth never so angry.

But this is the only Gospel that gives us this conversation between Pilate and the Jews about the inscription on the cross, for it savoured of the *glory* of Jesus, which is the great theme of this Gospel. And so, it is only our Evangelist that notices the woven coat which was something that the soldiers would not rend—a little circumstance in itself, but helping still to keep in view, in full harmony with this Gospel generally, the holy dignity of Him who was passing through this hour of darkness.

And here it is also that our Lord lays aside His *human affections*. He sees His mother and His beloved disciple near the cross, but it is only to commend them the one to the other, and thus to separate Himself from the place which He had once filled among them. Sweet indeed is it, to see how faithfully He owned the affection up to the latest moment that He could listen to it—no sorrow of His own, though that was bitter enough as we know, could make Him forget it. But He was not always to know it. The children of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in

* I do not here particularly notice our Lord's intercourse with Pilate, for that subject has been already treated in the Christian Witness. (See Vol. iii.)

marriage. He was the Son of God, and they were not henceforth to know Him "after the flesh." He must now form their knowledge of Him by other thoughts, for they are henceforth to be joined to Him as the Lord "in one spirit." For such are His blessed ways. If He take His distance from us as not knowing us "in the flesh," it is only that we may be united to Him in nearer affections and closer interests.

And to look deeper than the *circumstances* of this hour, if we mark the Lord's *Spirit* on the cross, we shall still discern the Son of God. He thirsted—He tasted death, it is true—He knew the drought of that land where the living God was not. But His sense of this is still expressed in His own tone. It does not come forth in the cry "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." That is given us in its proper place. But here there is no amazement of spirit, nor horror of great darkness for three hours, neither is there a commending of Himself to the Father. But it is simply, "I thirst"—and when He had entered and passed through that thirst, He verifies the full accomplishment of all things, saying, "it is finished." He does not commend His work to the approval of God, but seals it with his own seal, attesting it as complete, and giving it the sufficient sanction of His own approval. And then when He could thus sanction all as finished, He delivers up His life Himself.

These were strong touches of the mind in which He was passing through these hours. And these hours now end. The Son of God was now made perfect as the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him, and the fountain for sin and for uncleanness, is now opened. The water and the blood come forth to bear witness that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. (1 John v. 8—12.) We have not here the Centurion's confession, "truly this was the Son of God." We have not Pilate's wife, nor the convicted lips of Judas, bearing Him witness. Jesus does not here receive witness from men, but from God. The water and the blood are *God's* witnesses to His Son, and to the life that sinners may now find in Him. It was sin that pierced Him. The action of the soldier was just a sample of man's

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enmity. It was the sullen shot of the defeated foe after the battle, but thus only the more loudly telling out the deep-seated hatred that there is in man's heart to God and his Christ. But it thus also only sets off the riches of that grace that met it and abounded over it, for it was answered by the love of God. *The point of the soldier's spear was touched by the blood.* The crimson flood came forth to roll away the crimson sin. The blood and the water issue through the wounded side of the Son of God. Now was the day of atonement fully come, and the water of separation, the ashes of the red heifer, were now sprinkled. This was the Lamb which Abel had offered. This the blood which Noah had shed, and which had awakened in God's heart, thoughts of unmingled grace to sinners. (Gen. viii. 21.) This was the ram of Mount Moriah, and this was the blood which daily flowed round the brazen altar in the temple. This was the blood which is the only ransom of the unnumbered thousands before the throne of God.

But though pierced, thus to be the fountain of the blood and the water, the Lord's body must not be broken. The paschal Lamb may be killed, but not a bone of it is to be broken. That is, it shall do all the purpose of divine love in sheltering the first-born, but beyond that it is sacred, no rude hand must touch it. And this was the Lord's own security. For He was to say, "all my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea the poor and needy from him that spoileth him." And this was the Church's security also. For the Church is His body. He is the head, and we the members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, and not a bone of that mystic body is to be wanting. All must come unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. For all from of old have been written in God's book, and are to be fashioned and curiously wrought together, even every one of them. (Ps. cxxxix. 16.)

Thus was it with our Lord, in our Gospel, while He was yet on the cross. In every feature we see the Son of God. And as we follow Him from thence to the grave, it is the Son of God still.

We do not there see Him numbered with the transgressors, and with the wicked in His death, but we do see His grave with the rich. Two honoured sons of Israel came to own Him, and charge themselves with His body, to spend their perfumes and their labour upon it.

But in all this, we have again something to notice. When the Lord's body was pierced, it not only, as I have observed, allowed God's witnesses, the blood and the water to be heard, but it gave occasion to that which was written, "they shall look on Him whom they pierced." And this word which tells of Israel's repentance in the latter day, here introduces the action of Joseph and Nicodemus, and thus makes them the representatives of repentant Israel. They come last it is true, in the order of faith. They had both of them been afraid of their unbelieving nation, afraid of the thunders of the synagogue, had not continued with the Lord in His temptations, but were only secretly His disciples. They were slow of heart; but still in the end they do own the Lord, and are brought to look on Him whom they pierced. They take the body from the cross, fresh with the piercing of the soldier's spear. And as they lowered it from the tree, surely they must have looked, and looked well upon the hands and feet and wounded side. And surely they must have mourned as they looked, for their hearts had been already softened to take some impression from the crucified One. And so will it be with Israel. They come last in the order of faith, and are indeed slow of heart, but in the end they will look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, as one mourneth for his only son.

Thus was it now with Joseph and Nicodemus, and thus will it be by and by with the inhabitants of Jerusalem. These two Israelites, as true children of Abraham, claim the body of the Lord and consecrate it, as with the faith of the Patriarch (Gen. 1. 2. 26); and as true subjects of the king of Israel, they also honour it with the honours of a Son of David. (2 Chron. xvi. 14.) They spend large and costly perfumes upon it, and lay it up in the garden, in a new untainted tomb, on which the smell of death had never yet passed.

And here all closes for the present. Here in the *second* garden, as I may call it, the second man is now laid in death. In the *first* garden, the first man had walked with access to the tree of life ; but he had chosen death in the error of his way. Here in the second garden, death, the penalty, is met. Jesus, without having touched the tree of knowledge, suffers the death. In the first garden, all manner of trees good for food, and pleasant to the eyes were seen. But here nothing appears now but the tomb of Jesus. This was what man's sin ended in, as far as man was concerned. But let us wait a little space. By all this, the Son of God is soon to become the death of death, and hell's destruction, to bring life and immortality to light, and to plant again in the garden for man the tree of life. Let but the third morning arise, and this garden which now witnesses only Jesus in death, shall see the Son of God in resurrection.

XX.—Accordingly we here at the opening of this chapter so find it. Jesus has risen the bruiser of the serpent, being made through death the destroyer of him that had the power of death.

This was the third, the appointed day—the day on which Abraham of old had received his son as from the dead, the day of promised revival to Israel (Hos. vi. 2), the day also on which Jonah was on dry land again.

But the disciples do not as yet know their Lord in resurrection. They know Him still only “after the flesh,” and thus Mary Magdalene is now seen early at the sepulchre seeking His body. And in the same mind Peter and his companion run to the sepulchre shortly after her, their bodily strength merely and not the intelligence of faith carrying them there. And there they behold, not their object, but the trophies of His victory over the power of death. There they see the gates of brass and the bars of iron cut in sunder. The linen clothes and the napkin, which had been wrapped about the Lord's head as though He were death's prisoner, were there seen strewing the ground like the spoils of the vanquished. The very armour of the strong man was made a shew of in His own house, all this telling loudly that He who is the plague of death, and hell's destruction had

been lately in that place doing His glorious work. But in spite of all this, the disciples understand not. They as yet knew not the scripture that He must rise from the dead, and they go away again to their own home.

Mary, however, lingers still about the fond spot, refusing to be comforted because her Lord was not. She would fain have taken sackcloth, and like another, have spread it for her on the rock, could she but find His body to watch and to keep it. She wept and stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and saw the angels. But what were the angels to her now? The sight of them does not terrify her, as it had the other women, (Mark xvi.) for she was too much occupied with other thoughts to be moved by them. They were, it is true, very illustrious, sitting there in white, and in heavenly state too, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. But what was all splendour to her now? The dead body of her Lord was what she sought and desired alone, and therefore she has only to turn from these heavenly glories in further search of it; and then seeing, as she judged, the gardener, she says to him, "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." She simply says, if you have borne *Him* away, not naming Jesus; for, fond woman as she was, she supposes that every one must be as full of her Lord as she was.—Well, beloved, this may have been but *human* passion and *ignorant* affection, but still it was spent on Jesus. And would that something more of the temper of it were shed abroad in our hearts. Her affection sought a right object, though it sought it not wisely, and in the wonted kindness and grace of Him with whom she had to do, He gives her now the fruit of it. To her who had, more was now to be given. She had learnt thoroughly the lesson of knowing Christ "after the flesh." She was the truest of all to that, and her Lord will now lead her to richer knowledge of Himself. He will take her up to higher regions than as yet she thought of, to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense. (Cant. iv.)

And to do this in all gentleness He first answers her human affection, letting her once again hear her own name on His well-

known voice. That was just the note which was in full unison with all that was then in her heart. It was the only note to which her soul could then have responded. Had He appeared to her in heavenly glory, He would still have been a stranger to her, for as yet she knew Him only as Jesus. But this must be the last time that she was to apprehend Him thus "after the flesh." For He is now risen from the dead, and is on His way to the Father in heaven, and earth must no longer be the scene of their communion. "Touch me not," says He to her, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father.

I need not, perhaps, observe how fully characteristic of our Gospel all this is. In St. Matthew, on the contrary, we see the women on their return from the sepulchre meeting the Lord, and the Lord allowing them there to hold His feet, and to worship Him. But here it is to Mary, "touch me not." For this Gospel tells us of the Son in the midst of the heavenly family, and not in His royalty in Israel and in His earthly glory. The resurrection, it is most true, pledges all that earthly glory and kingdom to Him (Acts xiii. 34), but it was also one stage to the heavenly places, and that is the feature of it which our Gospel gives us. Jesus was raised from the dead "by the glory of the Father," and therefore He could not stop short of that, but must go upward till He reach the Father.

And Mary, as we have seen, is entitled to be the first to learn these greater ways of His grace and love, and also to be the happy bearer of the same good tidings from this far and unknown country to the brethren. For Jesus now says to her, "go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."*

Thus is she honoured, and she goes to prepare the brethren for their Lord, while He prepares to meet them with a blessing beyond all which they had as yet attained. And her tidings seem

* And here again I would notice another characteristic difference in the Gospels. In Matthew, the message was, to meet Him *in Galilee*; and accordingly the disciples do so—but here, it does not name any place on earth, but simply tells them that He was going *to heaven*, there in spirit to meet them before His Father and their Father, His God and their God.

to have got them all in readiness for Him ; for on His seeing them the evening of the same day, they are not amazed and in unbelief, as they are in St. Luke's Gospel, but seem all to be in waiting and expectation. They are no longer scattered as before (ver. 10), but folded together as the family of God, and the elder brother enters in, laden with the fruit of His holy travail for them.

This was a meeting indeed. It was a visit to the family of the heavenly Father by the First-born. It was in a place that lay beyond death and outside the world. And such indeed is the place of appointed meeting with our Lord. Those who in spirit stay here, never meet Him. For He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of strangers and pilgrims. The world is a defiled place, and we must meet Him in resurrection, in the kingdom that is not of the world. And so was it here with the Lord and His brethren. He now, for the first time, *really* meets them, meets them in the appointed place outside the world, and there meets them in no less character than His own brethren. Now it was that He began to pay His vows. He had made them on the cross. (Ps. xxii.) *First*, that He would declare the Father's name to the brethren, *secondly*, that in the midst of the Church He would sing His praise. The first of these He was now beginning to pay, and has been paying all through this present dispensation, making known to our souls the name of the Father through the Holy Ghost. And the second He will as certainly pay, when the congregation of all the brethren is gathered, and He leads their songs in resurrection joy for ever.

Now also is the promised life actually imparted. "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more ; but ye see me, because I live ye shall live also." The Son of God as having life in Himself now comes with it to His saints. He breathes on them now, as of old into their nostrils. (Gen. ii.) Only this was the breath of the second Adam, the quickening Spirit, who had a life to impart that was won from the power of death, and which was therefore beyond its utmost reach. The brethren are now given to know that Christ was in the Father, and they in Him, and He in

them. They now know the full peace of the cross—He shews them His hands and His side. Their sorrow now was turned into joy, for they were glad, “when they saw the Lord.” He was now revealing Himself to them, as He does not unto the world. The world, in this little interview, was quite shut out, and the disciples, as hated of the world, are shut up within their own enclosure, just in the place to get a special manifestation of Himself to them, as He had said unto them. (xiv. 22—24.) In the world they were now knowing tribulation, but in Him peace.

All this was now theirs in this blessed little visit of “the First-born from the dead” to His brethren, imparting to them the blessing which belonged to them *as children*. And thus this little intercourse was a sample of the communion which we enjoy in this dispensation. For we are still taught, as they here were, to know our oneness with the Son of God, and thus our adoption and fellowship with the Father, we enjoy the settled peace of the wounded hands and side of Jesus, we are glad because of Him risen from the dead, and have life in the Holy Ghost, life of the risen Lord, imparted to us. Thus, as we lately saw the armour of the conquered enemy strewn the distant field of battle, so here do we see the fruit of victory brought home to gladden and assure the kindred of the conqueror.

And these fruits of the victory of the Son of God were now commanded to be carried about in holy triumph all the world over. “As my Father hath sent me, so send I you,” says the Lord to His brethren. And with a message not of judgment but of grace had He Himself come forth from the Father. He had come, not from the throne of God to avenge God upon us, but from the bosom of the Father to declare the Father to us. And with a commission of the same grace are the brethren here sent forth. They are sent forth from the Lord of life and peace, and with such a ministry, they test the condition of every living soul. For the message they bear is from the Son of the Father, a message of peace and life secured in and by Himself, and the word then was and still is, “he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” Thus the Lord

here adds, making them, in this, the test of the condition of every one, as having the Son or not, "whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Such was the Lord's first interview with His disciples after He had risen from the dead. It has set before us the saints, as the children of the Father, and their ministry as such, and thus given us a sample or first-fruits of that harvest in the Holy Ghost, which the saints have been gathering ever since in this dispensation.

And here, though it may draw me aside for a little space, I cannot refuse noticing, that the ministry committed to the disciples by the Lord after He had rose from the dead, takes a distinct character in each of the Gospels. And as each of the Gospels has a distinct purpose (according to which indeed all the narratives are selected and recorded), so is the various language used by the Lord in each of the Gospels in committing this ministry to His disciples, to be accounted for, and interpreted by, the specific character of the Gospel itself.

In St. Matthew this commission runs thus:—"Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Now this commission was strictly to the Apostles, who had been already ordained by the Lord, and associated with Him as minister of the circumcision. (Rom. xv. 8.) And thus it contemplated them as in Jerusalem, and going forth from thence for the discipling of *all nations*, and for the keeping of them *as such* in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. For the purpose of that Gospel is, to present the Lord in Jewish connection, as the hope of Israel to whom the gathering of the nations was to be. And thus the conversion of nations, and the settlement of the whole world around Jerusalem as the centre of worship, is accordingly assumed here. A system of restored and obedient nations rejoicing with Israel will be exhibited by-and-bye; and the risen Lord looks to that when committing ministry to His Apostles in the Gospel by St. Matthew.*

* For I may observe that Israel had not as yet fully shut the door of hope against themselves. The testimony of the Holy Ghost to the risen Jesus by

But in St. Mark this prospect of national conversion is a good deal qualified. The terms of the commission there are these:—
“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Here it is not the discipling of nations that is contemplated, but universal testimony with partial acceptance. For St. Mark presents the Lord in service or ministry, and thus the case of some receiving the word and some receiving it not is here anticipated, for these we know, are just the two results that have attended on all ministry of the word; as it is said in one place, “some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not.”

In St. Luke, the Lord, after interpreting Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, and opening the understandings of the disciples to understand them, delivers ministry to them in this way:—*“thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem”*—and ye are witnesses of these things,—and behold I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.”—Now this commission does not appear to have been strictly to the eleven, but others were addressed by it. (See Luke xxiv. 33.) And their ministry was to begin *with* Jerusalem and not *from* it. And they are not allowed to go forth in their ministry till they had received new power, thus allowing that what they had received from Jesus while still on earth was not sufficient.

Now all this was a breaking away from mere earthly or Jewish order. It does not assume Jerusalem to be as yet gathered, nor as yet the source from whence the water of life could flow, nor the centre around which the worshipping nations might come, as St. Matthew had done. This was therefore the commission with something of an altered character, suitable to this Gospel by St. Luke, which does not present the Lord so strictly in Jewish association. The Apostles at Jerusalem, had not as yet been rejected. The possibility of that testimony being received might therefore be assumed, and the Lord seems to me to do so here in St. Matthew's Gospel.

ciation. But now in our Gospel by St. John we do not get this commission at all, nor any mention of "the power from on high."* We simply get, as I have been noticing, the life of the risen Man imparted, and then the disciples with that life in them sent out to test, by virtue of it, the condition of every living soul. The Lord gives them their ministry as from *heaven*, and not from the *mountain in Galilee*. He sends them forth from *the Father* and not from *Jerusalem*. For in our Gospel, the Lord has left all recollections of Jerusalem behind, and has given up for the present, all hope of restoring Israel and gathering the nations.

This variety in the terms of this commission and ministry, is very striking, and considering the different purpose of each Gospel, it is exquisite and perfect. The mere reasoner may stumble at it, and the man who honours the Scripture, and would fain preserve its fair reputation, may attempt many ways to shew the *literal* consistency of these things. But the word of God, beloved, does not ask for protection from man. It seeks for no apologies to be made for it, however well intentioned they may be. In all this there is no incongruity, but only variety, and that variety perfectly answering the divers purposes of the same Spirit. And though thus various, every thought and every word in each is equally and altogether divine, and we have only to bless our God for the sureness and comfort and sufficiency of His own most perfect testimonies.

But this, brethren, by the way, desiring that the Lord may keep our minds in all our meditations, and in all the counsels of our hearts.

We left the Lord in company with His brethren. He was there putting them into their condition as children of the Father, and raising them to heavenly places. But He has purposes touching Israel as well as the Church. In the latter day He will call them to repentance and faith, giving them their due standing and ministry also. And these things we shall have now in order unfolded before us.

* Indeed the word "Apostles" does not once occur in this Gospel, for that term stands rather connected with Jewish ministry, and this is still in character with our Gospel.

Thomas, we read, was not with the brethren when the Lord visited them. He did not keep his first estate, but was absent, while the little gathering were holding themselves in readiness for their risen Lord, and now he refuses to believe his brethren, without the further testimony of his own hands and eyes. And just so is it with Israel to this day. Thomas and the Jews were both outside the closed doors, when Jesus shewed Himself to His heavenly brethren within. And the Jews to this day, like Thomas then, are refusing the Gospel or good tidings of the risen Lord.

But all was not to end thus. Thomas recovers his place, and "after eight days" is in company with the brethren again, and then Jesus presents Himself to him. For this second visit was *for Thomas's sake*. And the unbelieving disciple is led to own Him as his Lord and his God. As by-and-bye, "after eight days," after a full week or dispensation has run its course, it will be said in the land of Israel, "lo, this is *our God*, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is *the Lord*, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Israel will own Immanuel there; and as the Lord here accepts Thomas, so will He then say of Israel, "thou art my people."

But here we are to notice something further significant. The Lord accepts Thomas it is most true, but at the same time, He says to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," And so with Israel in the latter day. They shall know the peace of the cross, the full peace of the wounded hand and side of Jesus here shewn to Thomas, but they shall take a blessing inferior to the Church. They shall get life from the Son of God, but they shall only walk on the footstool, while the saints are sitting on the throne.

And here the mystery of life, whether to the Church now or to Israel by-and-bye closes, and our Evangelist accordingly here for a moment pauses. This was the Gospel of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, which whosoever believeth has life in His name. Many other things indeed might have been added, but these were enough to attest the Son, and thus to be the seed of life. The

third witness from God had now been heard. The *water* and the *blood* had before come forth from the crucified Son, and now *the Spirit* was given by the risen Son. The three that bear witness on earth had thus been now heard, and the testimony from God that He "has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son," was therefore now complete, and our Evangelist just says, "these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."

XXI.—'Thus we have seen life actually dispensed by the risen Lord to His brethren, and ministry committed to them as such, and we have also sure life pledged to Israel in the person of Thomas. But this restored Thomas, or the Israel of God in the latter day shall (like the Church now, get *ministry* as well as *life*) be *used* as well as *quicken*ed. And we get the pledge of this also now in due order.

In the opening of this chapter we see the Apostles brought back to the condition in which the Lord at first met them. Peter and the sons of Zebedee are again at their fishing. Indeed their former labour had come to nothing. Their nets had then broken. The Lord had proposed to use them, but Israel in His hand had proved but a deceitful bow, a broken net. But now they are at their toil again, and the Lord appears again, and gives them a second draught. And on this, in company with the Lord Himself, they now feast, and their nets remain unbroken.

And thus will it be with the Israel of God in the latter day. Like Thomas, as we have seen, they shall walk in the light of the Lord, and then as here, the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto them. Waters shall issue from the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and fishers shall there stand and spread their nets, and their fish shall be of "the great sea, exceeding many." (Ezek. xlvii. 10.) "The great sea," the wide Mediterranean, as the Prophet here suggests, and not the narrow lake of Tiberias, shall then employ their nets, and the fish shall be "according to their kinds," for Midian and Ephah, and Kedar and Nebaioth and all lands shall yield their stores then. And the net shall still be ready for other

draughts, the unbroken net. For one generation shall tell His praise unto another, and shall declare His power.*

And this our Evangelist notices was "the third time" that Jesus shewed Himself to His disciples after He was risen from the dead. At the *first*, as we saw, He met the brethren to give them, as the heavenly family, their fellowship and ministry. At the *second*, he restored Thomas the representative of Israel's final conversion and life. And now at the *third*, He gives the pledge of Israel's final ministry and fruitfulness unto God.

Thus the three distinct visits give us the full view of the Church and of Israel. But I must particularly notice another acting of the consciousness of love, which is very sweet.* Peter knew that in spite of all that had happened, there was a link between him and the Lord, and Peter therefore is not afraid to be *alone* with Him. The last time they had been together, it is true Peter had denied Him, and the Lord had turned and looked upon him. But Peter knew that he loved his Lord notwithstanding; and now he is not afraid to cast himself into the sea and reach Jesus alone, before the rest of them. And there is something truly blessed in this. Law could never have brought this about, nor indeed have warranted it. The rod of the law would have beaten him off, and made him keep his distance. Nothing but grace could allow this, nothing but the cords of love could have drawn denying Peter the nearest to his slighted Lord after this manner.

Thus was it so far with the beloved and loving Peter. But there is more still. The dinner, as we read, was now ended, the purpose of this third visit was now answered; but in order to close all in wondrous grace and glory, and in a way also most

* Nathanael and Thomas are here joined in the fishing. And this is very significant, for both of these had been, in this Gospel, the representatives of Israel, as we have seen. So that this helps to confirm my conclusion, that this company of fishermen, typify the Jewish ministry of the latter day. John also is here named "the son of Zebedee," the name which he bore when first called into his ministry, but a name which he does not bear in any other passage of this Gospel.

The Apostolic testimony at Jerusalem and its abundant success, as recorded in Acts ii.—iv. is the pledge-fulfilment of this ministry and its fruit in the latter day, which is here typified.

* See a former instance of this, p. 223. Note.

suitable to, and characteristic of our Gospel, the Lord now turns to Peter making him again his special object. He addresses Himself to him in a way as could not, and does not fail to call his sin to remembrance. The *three* denials of his Lord seem to be quite brought to mind, when Jesus the *third* time says to him, "lovest thou me." Then was Peter grieved, for Peter was then convicted. But the Lord was only leading him into full blessing. He restores him to his ministry, for another was not to take *his* bishoprick; and then pledges him strength to serve his Lord in it without a second denial, or failure. He constitutes him His witness and servant in the full power of a martyr's faith. And having pledged this grace to him, that he should thus witness for him faithfully even unto death, he says to him, "follow me."*

This was a moment of sweetest interest. We know that if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him, and if we follow Him, we shall go after Him, that where the Lord Himself is, there His servant shall be also. Now this call on Peter, was a call to follow his Lord along the path of testimony and suffering, in the power of resurrection, to the rest in which that path ends, and to which that resurrection leads. Jesus had said to Peter before He left him, "whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards;" (chap. xiii.) and the Lord as we know, was then going to heaven and the Father through the cross. So here this call was, in spirit, making good that promise to Peter. It was a call on him to follow his Lord through death up to the Father's house. And upon saying these words to him, the Lord rises from the place where they had been eating, and Peter thus bidden, rises to follow Him.

But John listens to this call, as though it had been addressed to him also, and on seeing the Lord rise and Peter rise, he at once rises also. For he ever lay nearest the Lord. He leaned on His breast at supper, and was the disciple whom Jesus loved. He ever stood in the place of closest sympathy with his Lord. His

* Jesus knew *all* things, and that was Peter's comfort. Peter was sure that his Lord knew the *depths* as well as the *surfaces* of things, and thus that He knew what was in His poor servant's *heart*, though his *lips* had so transgressed.

eye, as it were, touched his Lord's eye, his mouth His mouth, his hand His hand. And thus, by a kind of necessity (blessed necessity) on the Lord's rising, he rises, though unbidden.

And thus we now see them. The Son of God has risen and is walking out of our sight, and Peter and John are following Him. All this is lovely, and deeply significant. We do not see the end of their path, for while thus walking, the Gospel closes. The cloud, as it were, receives them out of our sight. We gaze in vain after them, and the path of the disciples is just as far removed from us as that of their Lord. It was indeed, in type or in principle, the path that leads into the Father's house, which we know is prepared for the Lord and His brethren; the presence of God in heaven, which is through grace, theirs as well as His.

Surely we may say, the bridegroom at our feast has kept the best wine until now. If our souls could enter into this, there is nothing like it. St. Mark in his Gospel tells us of the fact of the Lord being received up into heaven (xvi. 19), and St. Luke shews us the ascension itself, while the Lord was lifting up His hand and blessing His disciples. (xxiv. 51.) But all that, sweet as it was, is not equal to what we get here. For all that left the disciples apart from their Lord. He was then going to heaven, but they were to return to Jerusalem. But here they are following their Lord up to heaven. Their path does not stop short of the full end of His path.

Surely this is none other than "the gate of heaven" to which our Gospel conducts us, and whereat it leaves us. Surely the Lord is in this place, in fullest grace to His chosen. The first resurrection, the receiving of the brethren into the Father's house, is here pledged to us. In this, Peter and John are the representatives of us all, beloved. Some, like Peter, may glorify God by death, and others as is intimated here to John, will be alive and remain till Jesus come; but all are to follow, whether Peter or John, Moses or Elias, whether asleep in Jesus or quick at His coming, all shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and be with Him in holy blessed safety, while judgments are taking their course upon the earth against the wicked. It will be

to them like the ark to Noah or Zoar to Lot. And being received unto Himself they will go with Him into the prepared mansions of the Father's house, as He has said unto us.*

And I may observe, this is the only view of our Lord's ascension which our Gospel gives us. And it is that view of it which is strictly in character with the whole Gospel, which gives us as has been observed, our Lord Jesus in connection with the Church as the family of the Father, the heavenly household. And so this ascension is not so properly to the right hand of God, or place of power where He abides alone, but to the Father's house where the children are to dwell also. For their path in that direction reaches as far as His, through His boundless grace; as here, wherever it was that Jesus went (some spot unknown and untold as to this earth), there did Peter and John follow Him. He is here acting as though He had gone and prepared the promised mansions in the Father's house, and had come again, and was now receiving them unto Himself, that where He is, there they might be also. And this will be really so at the first resurrection, when the brethren meet their Lord in the air. The Son of God was now at the end, as He had done in the beginning, shewing His own *where He dwelt* (see chap. i. 33); only at the beginning He was a stranger on earth, and they abode with Him but one day, but now He is returning to His proper heaven, and there they are to abide with Him for ever.†

Our Evangelist then just lets us hear the full response of the believing hearts of all God's elect to those truths and wonders of grace which had now been told out. "We know that His testimony is true." They set to their seal that God is true. And all is then closed with a simple note of admiration—for such, in principle, I judge the last verse to be. And indeed this is all He

* We must not assert that any individual *will* remain till the Lord come. That is condemned by verse 23. But the same verse allows us to assert that the Lord *may* come before our death, if He please.

† We have no mention in this Gospel of "the coming of the Son of man." That is spoken of in St. Matthew and the others, for that expresses the Lord's coming to *the earth* again for judgment on the nations, and for deliverance to the remnant; and does not imply the first resurrection or the rapture of the saints into the air.

could do. Was it not beyond His praise? what heart could conceive the full excellence of His ways whose name He had now thus been publishing?

Here the fourth section of our Gospel ends, and here the whole ends. And what a journey through it has that of the Son of God been! Made flesh at the beginning, He walked on earth as the stranger from heaven, save as He was occupied in ministering grace and healing to sinners. The prince of this world at length came to Him, but finding nothing in Him he cast Him out of the world. But this he could not do, until as the Saviour the Son of God had accomplished the peace of all that trust in Him. Then He triumphantly broke the power of death, and as the risen Lord imparted the life which He had won for His people, and finally by a significant action, as we have seen, pledged to them that where He was going, there they should follow Him, that they might be there also.

Thus our Gospel began with the descent of the Son, and closes with the ascent of the saints. And the time of this ascent, or being taken into the air, I judge is altogether uncertain. It may be to morrow, and it will be, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, when all the saints have been brought in the unity of the faith, to a perfect man. It does not depend on a certain lapse of time. No prophecy which involves computation of time, I believe, at all belongs to it. Such belongs only to the Lord's return to the earth, and not to the taking of the saints into the air to meet Him. At that return of the Lord to the earth, the saints will be with Him, and this earth will then be prepared to be their common kingdom and inheritance. And that return I grant, must await its prescribed time, and the full spending out of the days and years announced by the prophets. But no days or years measure out the interval from the Lord's ascension until the ascension of His saints. The Holy Ghost, it is most true, has given us *moral* characters of certain times, thus defining "the latter times," and "the last days." (1 Tim. iv. 2 Tim. iii. &c.) But He tells us also that even then, "the last time" had already come. (1 John

ii. 18.) So that faith is entitled to look for her joy in meeting the Lord in the air every hour; with patience, the while, to do the will of God. And the prophecies that compute time (as far as they are still future), will not (I merely give my own judgment) begin to be applied, or the times they notice begin to run, till this rapture into the air, this first resurrection, take place. Then indeed the suffering remnant in Israel may begin to number out the days for their comfort, and for food of hope. And in their deepest sorrow they may lift up their heads, as knowing that their salvation draweth nigh.

After all this, beloved, our God may well claim our confidence, and be our title to full holy liberty, and the sure and constant source of gladness to us. This is to honour Him as *the Father*. And if we now have a thought of Him that leaves a sting behind it, it is the thought of foolishness and of unbelief. All is brightness to faith. Such is God our Father—and in *the Son* of His love we are accepted. “He will not live in glory, and leave us behind.” And the language of our hearts towards Him abidingly should be, “come, Lord Jesus.”—And this confidence of present adoption, and this joy of hope we have through *the Holy Ghost* who dwelleth in us, our Companion by the way, our “other Comforter” till the Bridegroom meets us.

To our gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever! Amen.

DEAR BROTHER,

As my own mind and the minds of many have been exercised on the subject of oaths, I send you a paper treating the subject. The conclusions attained are, to my mind, satisfactory ; but I freely leave them to the spiritual judgment of the Church ; desiring only that the mind of the Lord may be apprehended.

SWEARING.—MATTHEW v. 33—37.

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths : But I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by heaven ; for it is God’s throne : Nor by the earth ; for it is his footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

Our Lord is, in this passage, prohibiting Swearing :—but what is Swearing ? There are certain commonly received interpretations of the passage : let us examine them. And may the Lord Himself direct us to the right decision !

I. That it is “Vulgar or profane swearing,” which the Lord is prohibiting—profane obtestation of the Deity through the use, in light or common speech, of the terms Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem, &c. ; which terms the Lord shows to be only covert forms of the great name of God, and to be equivalent to it.

II. That it is “Vowing,” which is prohibited—Vowing *generally*, but *especially* Vowing in a light and heedless spirit and upon every ordinary occasion.

III. That it is “Asseverations and protestations, as uttered unreflectingly and habitually,” which is prohibited.

IV. That it is “Judicial swearing,” which is prohibited.

V. That the thing prohibited is, together with Vowing generally, “The Judicial oath *promissory*, not the Judicial oath *declaratory*”—the obtestation of God *upon an engagement*, not the obtestation of God *upon a matter of fact*.

I. In examination of Head I. it may suffice that we assume its correctness, and paraphrase the passage conformably. “It hath been said by (or to) them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not swear falsely, but shalt swear truly—thou shalt not make false oath, but shalt perform thine oath : but I say unto you, Swear not *vulgarly or profanely*—take not the name of God lightly and irreverently. To them of old it was said, Do not forswear or perjure thyself : to you it is said, not anything about forswearing or about swearing, but some other thing altogether,—Do not wickedly or carelessly utter the sacred name of God. To them of old an act of unchangeable moral turpitude, viz. perjury, was forbidden ; and an act of unchangeable moral obligation, viz. performance of oath, was commanded : to you nothing is said about the one act or the other, but a certain other act, intrinsically and eternally evil, is prohibited. In my mentioning together “them of old time” and “you,” and the law or rule of those ancients and the law or rule now propounded by myself, I am not making any contrast or admitting any connection : I am simply forbidding something wrong.” Now, as such irrelevant and incoherent speech will not be ascribed to our Lord, it is manifest that it is *not* “Vulgar or profane swearing” that He is prohibiting.

It can be made yet more manifest. From the passage before us and from Mat. xxiii. 16—22, it appears that Swearing by Heaven, by Earth, by Jerusalem or the Temple or the Altar, by one’s head, &c., was seriously taught by the people’s “blind guides” as involving no obligation. Our Lord’s argument is, that to swear by Heaven, Earth, &c., is, in truth, to swear by God Himself ; and that, thus, this swearing, however informal it be, or however lightly and loosely it be considered, *does* involve obligation. Our Lord is exposing a wretched piece of casuistry of the Scribes and Pharisees, and solemnly reprehending them for their “blindness and misguidance.” He is exhibiting the

obligatory and awful nature of an Obtestation of God, under whatsoever form of words and in howsoever unreflecting a spirit : —He is *not* condemning “Vulgar or profane swearing.”

Again ; in the midst of such sublime and spiritual inculcation — in the grave act of amplifying the Divine Law, or of superseding it by a Law bearing upon the innermost springs and sources of conduct—in the proscribing, not of Killing, but of Causeless anger ; not of Adultery, but of Secret lusting ; not of Excessive vengeance or Overrecompensing of evil, but of *All* revenging of evil, and even of resisting of evil ;—in the formal propounding of the manner and order and principles of a Kingdom, not standing in outward equity and rectitude, but standing in truth and purity and heavenliness and GOD-LIKENESS *of heart*—is it, can it be, thought that the Lord turns to notice an evil practice of the wretched rabble ?

Again ; what is the connection or application of the argument of our Lord in v. 36, “because thou canst not make one hair white or black ?” Is this inability or incompetence a reason against “Vulgar or profane swearing”—a reason against wild or unmeaning utterance of the name of God ? Nay, surely. It seems indeed a reason against *Solemn* swearing (or Vowing)—against Obligation of self under the terrors of God.

Again ; in v. 37, “let your communication (or, rather, your word or say or speech, Gr. *ὁ λόγος*) be yea, yea ; nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these is from evil (or the Evil one).” Did this injunction to plainness of affirmation and denial stand solely in this place, our interpretation of it as bearing no reference to “Vulgar or profane swearing,” might not be conclusive : but it does not stand solely in this place. In James v. 12, it is most solemnly repeated, more definitely expressed, and more distinctly applied. “Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other oath : but let your yea be yea ; and your nay, nay ; lest ye fall into condemnation.” Here, the dehortation from swearing, being based upon the cogent dissuasive of the probability, through the evil that is in us or the evil-influences that are upon us, of falling under

Judgment, is, very manifestly, dehortation from *Solemn* swearing (or Vowing)—from that swearing in which obligation is contracted. And here, too, is furnished the explanation of the *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ εἶναι* of the passage in Matthew : viz. that Excess of speech above yea and nay either is from the evil of the heart, in that it manifests unconsciousness of heart-corruption, presumption of native strength, and recklessness or inapprehensiveness of Judgment ; or is from the Evil one, in that it manifests his instigation to incur obligation, and thus, obnoxiousness to Wrath. Of the *ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ* another explanation indeed may be suggested. The Lord may mean “is from the evil roundabout—the evil circumstances—the deranged and disordered state of the whole Human polity, constraining the subjects of it to act and be otherwise than with strict rightness—to confirm, for instance, and accredit a plain yea or nay with an oath or vow.” If this explanation be admitted, it will be still more clearly evinced that the Lord is prohibiting, not “Vulgar swearing,” but “Solemn swearing :” for, now we must understand Him as saying, “let *your* speech be yea and nay ; all excess beyond this cometh from that widely-prevailing evil, out of which ye are delivered, and against which ye are set to protest : *to you*, as truthful and honest, is not applicable the World’s wise expedient to repress falsehood : conform not *ye* to its unhallowed impositions.”*

It should not be overlooked here, that the reading in James v. 12, which the translators have followed, and which they have rendered “lest ye fall into condemnation,” is not so approved as the reading *να μη εἰς υποκρισιν πεσητε*, of which the rendering would be “lest ye fall into hypocrisy or dissimulation.” Under this alteration the meaning of the Apostle would be, “Swear not, brethren, by such oaths as by Heaven, by Earth, &c. lest ye, through the probability of your deeming suchlike oaths to be void

* It surely will not be argued that our Lord’s dehortation from conformity to the surrounding evil is equally interpretable as a dehortation from conformity to the evil-practice of Vulgar swearing : for, to *this* conformity there was not and could not be outward constraint ; but, contrariwise, there was against it full and effectual power in the very *vulgarity* and *disreputableness* of that practice.

of force, fall into the sin of *affecting* to confirm your speech whilst, in your mind, you believe you are making no confirmation : or, perhaps, into the sin of equivocation, in that, subsequently to your oath, you, seeing its sanction to be only a high-sounding word, deny its validity and break it.”* Still it would be manifest that the Apostle is forbidding, not a vulgar and disreputable vice, but a form of the serious and solemn act of Swearing or Vowing.

Yet another argument against the interpretation of the Apostle's words (and, therefore also, of the similar words in Matthew) as a prohibition of Vulgar swearing, is derivable from their exceedingly grave and earnest character. “*Above all things, BRETHREN, swear not.*” That the Apostle might, with all gravity and earnestness, and even in addressing Brethren, forbid weighty crimes and sins, we can understand : because, to such immoralities, notwithstanding their weightiness, there might exist or arise forceful temptation ; and, in fact, the truly weighty crimes and sins of Stealing, Defrauding, Lying, &c., *are* so forbidden : (See Ep. iv. 1. Thess. iv.) but, that the Apostle should, in such emphatic style, labor to dehort BRETHREN, CHRISTIANS, IMITATORS OF JESUS, from uttering the obscene and profane oaths and execrations of the lawless vulgar—from demeaning themselves as wildly and licentiously as the dregs of the people—i.e. from doing that against which man, even in his *fleshly* decorousness, is sufficiently opposed, and, in his *fleshly* strength, sufficiently fortified :—this is not intelligible and not admissible.

II. The examination of Head II. we may begin by citing Lev. xix. 12. Numb. xxx. 2. and Deut. xxiii. 21 &c. “Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God.” “If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.”

* Or, the Apostle's meaning may be, “Swear not, whether by Heaven, by the Earth, or by any other oath, lest ye, through the temptation which is ever present to man to *enforce* the reception of his words, fall into the sin of hypocrisy in thus affecting positive knowledge or firm assurance of a matter of which, in truth, you have, not knowledge or assurance, but only belief or conjecture.

“When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform.” The thing intended and regulated here is Oath, vow, or self-imposed obligation in general—Self-binding in the most comprehensive sense: this was the thing permitted “by or to them of old:” the thing, therefore, forbidden by the Lord is *this* thing. Though, betwixt Vowing and Swearing—betwixt making promise before God and making oath before a magistrate, we cannot draw any relevant distinction: all vowing and all swearing being, alike, acts *before God*, and solemnized by obtestation of God; and being alike, Self-binding to do under Self-imprecation in case of not doing: yet it clearly appears that it is *Vowing*, and not *Judicial swearing*, which the mind of the Lord is contemplating. One argument for this judgment is derived from the sense of the word ἀποδιδωμι used in v. 33 (ἀποδωσεις δε τω Κυριω τας ορκας σου), which sense is not so correctly rendered by “perform or do,” as by “give, pay, render, return, &c.”—a sense, then, bearing rather on the *giving* or *rendering* of a matter vowed, than on the *doing* (i.e. *speaking*) according to a judicial oath. Another appears in the form of obtestation which the Lord notices,—in the terms (by Heaven, by Earth, by Jerusalem, by my head,) which He particularizes: for, in such form, and in the use of such terms, Swearing in a Court of Judicature could not be required and would not be admitted. Another lies in the injunction “let your speech be yea, yea; nay, nay:” for, this phraseology, as it is exactly adapted to that plainness of consent and plainness of refusal, which we are interpreting the Lord to be enjoining in substitution of *Vowing*, so has no adaptation and no application to the *Deposition coram Magistrem*. Yea and nay, as they are terms pertaining to the language of consent and dissent, of simple promise and simple refusal, may well be recommended to be used in man’s social communications; but, as they have no pertinency and no significance in a *matter-of-fact-declaration*, they can have no place in a Court of Judicature. These terms too seem to respect the common proverb among the

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Jews, "the yea of the just is yea, and his nay is nay;" and they show therefore the mind of the Lord to be contemplating *Vowing*. Another is found in the manifest leaning of the above-cited scriptures towards *Vowing*, and "keeping that which is gone out of the lips."

If, now, we inquire into the *reason* of our Lord's prohibition of *Vowing*—prohibition of that which was so freely permitted "by and to them of old," we find it in v. 36, "because thou canst not make one hair white or black." The *Christian*, i.e. man under a dispensation essentially of abasement and confusion to man, and to the praise and the glory of the grace of God, must be apprized and kept mindful of his *IMPOTENCE*; and, thus, of the presumption and folly involved in *Self-binding*. The *Christian* must be made and kept self-abased, self-distrustful, and self-renouncing; and, unto this end, man's absolute inaptitude to good, utter instability in himself, and native worthlessness and nothingness must be declared and asserted. The *Christian* must be forbidden to vow, because *Vowing* involves an arrogation and avowal of truthfulness and moral power, and an invocation of vengeance in the event of moral failure; and because no two possible actings of a subject of *Salvation by Grace* are more abhorrent to the essence and vitality of this wondrous scheme than *Self-glorying* and *Self-imprecation*.

Should it be argued that the above reasoning, so conclusive against *Vowing*, is, as a vow and an oath are allowedly one—are, alike and equally, engagement to do and invocation of wrath upon failure,—conclusive also against *Swearing*, it is conceded, freely and fully conceded. Judicial swearing must, indeed, be understood as interdicted by the Lord; though the interdiction is rather in the implication than in the express enunciation of his words. But this is the subject of Head the IVth.

III. In noticing Head III. it may be promptly allowed, that "the habitual utterance of asseverations and protestations" was in the mind, if not of the Lord, yet of the Apostle James, in his solemn denouncement of *Swearing*. This habit was undoubtedly common amongst the Jews; and it is undisputedly evil. But it

is sufficiently clear that this vice was not the sole or the main object of the mind whether of the Apostle or of his Master. (See Heads II and IV.) We may just notice here the reiterate asseverations and protestations of the Apostle Paul. See Rom. i. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 31. 2 Cor. i. 23. Phil. i. 8. 1 Thess. ii. 5, : and, in explanation of them, See Rom. ix. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 31 and xii. 19. Gal. i. 20. In Rom. ix. 1. The Apostle says, "I say the truth in Christ, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." To any man, who, in like manner, is conscious of being filled with the Spirit of Truth, and of having his whole utterance under the Spirit's framing, it is freely permitted to invoke this Spirit or the True God, to witness his declarations. And, indeed, to the Christian in general it may be allowed, upon some important occasions and under great solemnity of spirit, to appeal to his God as Witness. (See the observation under Argument 6th of Head IVth.) Under this notice of "asseverations and protestations" it may be observed, that the solemn deprecation "God forbid" is, throughout the fifteen passages of the New Testament in which it occurs, the exclamation, not of Paul, but of the English Translators :—the expression of Paul being simply *μη γένοιτο* or May it not be ! Far be it !

IV. In examination of the interpretation under Head IV. let the observations under Head II. be considered. That the Lord was *intending* and interdicting *expressly* Judicial swearing, must be disallowed ; but that, as He was interdicting Vowing upon grounds and reasons altogether as applicable to Judicial swearing, He was interdicting it *impliedly*, may be affirmed without hesitation. Certain arguments, which are sometimes adduced against the conclusion that the Lord was forbidding Judicial swearing, may here be briefly examined. 1st, The act of the Lord Himself before the High Priest is alleged. "And the High Priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ." (See Mat. xxvi. 63.) This swearing of the Lord Himself is alleged as satisfactory comment upon the doubtful direction, and as full precedent for the faithful disciple. Against this argument there are numerous particulars.—

Our Lord stood *as a Jew* before a *Jewish* tribunal: He stood before the High Priest, not as the Great Lawgiver superseding Moses, but as a Jew obedient to Moses' Law, and as a man arraigned for a crime: In his answer to the adjuration, He answered to a form of address *never* intrinsically wrong, but *then* dispensationally right, and of divine prescription (See Ex. xxii. 11. Lev. v. 1. Deut. x. 20. 1 Kings viii. 31, 32.): He did not Himself swear—He made no oath to perform, and He gave no consent to penalty (although most congruously with his position and circumstances He might have done both); He did what, howsoever be determined the question of the propriety of *adjuring*, his disciples at this hour may do—He *answered to an adjuration*. 2nd, It is alleged, that God Himself is, throughout the Old Scriptures, represented as swearing; and that even in the New (See Heb. vi.) the swearing of God and the swearing of man are spoken of together, and as proceeding from the same motive and directed to the same end. It is true. God is able to perform his oath, and he swears rightly. Man too, though not able to perform his oath, may swear if God permit him. And the upshot is, that Swearing, whether of God by Himself, or of man by God, is not *intrinsically* wrong; and that Man, as he was permitted to swear under the Old Dispensation, so might swear still if he had still the permission. Upon the allegation, however, that the swearing of man is noticed with approbation, (See v. 16.) it may just be remarked that it is *not* so noticed: it is referred to simply as a matter of fact, for the purpose of illustration; and neither approbation nor disapprobation is expressed or implied. 3rd, In support of Judicial swearing an argument is derived from Is. lxv. 16. and from Jer. xii. 16. "that he who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth, and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth." "If they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The Lord liveth, then &c." (See also Jer. iv. 2. and Ps. lxxii. 17. &c.) It is rendered probable by these scriptures that Judicial swearing shall prevail on the re-organization and on the righteous and glorious administration of the Jewish polity at

and during the Millennium. By all means. Swearing *was* congruous to man : it yet again *may be* congruous :—is it congruous to man as the subject of the HEAVENLY CALLING—is it congruous to the CHRISTIAN ? 4th, It is urged that, as the powers that be, are ordained of God, the Christian, if summoned before a Court to furnish evidence, ought to acknowledge the high authority of the Court, to obey its summons, and to furnish the evidence demanded. Certainly, most certainly. But our inquiry is, not whether the Christian may depose in a Court, but whether he may explicitly avow to all around the goodness and moral ability of man “to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth ;” and whether he may solemnly invoke, correspondingly with his truthfulness or falsehood, “the help of his God.”* May the Christian proclaim to the World that man’s heart has virtue and strength, and that the Dispensation of Christ has the character of Law?—*this* Brethren, is our inquiry. But surely we forget that the congruousness to the Christian, whether of Swearing or Vowing or of whatever form of Self-obligation, has been already examined and decided for us by the Apostle James, in his interdiction of the comprehensive “I will.” See Jam. iv. 13—15. Say not *I will*, but say, *If the Lord will*. Rightly then may the Christian depose before a Court ; and rightly may the Christian say, and most solemnly say, “I will speak the truth &c.,” if he say also “the Lord, my Strength, strengthening me to do so.” 5th, It is argued that the deposition of the Christian, howsoever ready he be to yield it, will not be admitted without the customary oath—without the tremendous sanction of the name of God. His path is clear :—*let him render obedience to man under obedience to God*. 6th, It is contended that the Christian, if he may not *swear*, may, in some formal and emphatic manner, express himself as conscious of the eye of God upon him,—as depositing under deep impression of the presence of the God of Truth. Certainly the Christian may do this ; and the Powers of the

* For what is this but to call on God to reward him according to his works, and to deal with him according to his iniquities?—and what man standing in Grace may do or can do this?

World would soon learn to rate it as of higher worth than the gabbled oath of the ready swearer. Let then the Christian this do.

Brethren! Let it be solemnly pondered, that of an oath **SELF-BINDING THROUGH SELF-IMPRECATION** is the essential virtue and life—the very constitution and being. An oath among men is truly “for confirmation and to end all strife:” it is ever imposed whether to enforce a deponent to be true or to constrain a promiser to be faithful; and it well succeeds both in effecting truth or faithfulness in the party adjured, and in inducing credence or confidence in the party adjuring:—but whereby and how is it thus efficacious, and thus confirmatory and assuring? Because it is, ever and essentially, **A BINDING OF THE SOUL THROUGH A BARING OF IT TO WRATH.** (See 1 Kings viii. 31. 32. Deut. xxiii. 21.) What then is the implication of the act of administering an oath? That man is radically and constitutionally fraudulent and false—a very liar. And what is the implication of the act of adjuring a Christian? Even that the Christian is as man naturally—may deceive and lie, like the Adam-man and the Old creature. But what is the Christian? Brethren! The Christian is “of the Truth,” is “begotten by the word of Truth,” is “the new-born offspring of the true God,” “has fellowship with and abides in Him that is true,” is “the temple and the habitation of the Spirit of Truth,” is “a child of the Light, a member of and a transcript and manifestor of Jesus the Light,” is “not natural, but spiritual, not of the Old creation in Adam, but the New creature in Christ, endowed with Divine power, partaking of the Divine nature, and called unto and capacitated unto all truthfulness and holiness and Godlikeness.” (1 John iii. 19. James i. 18. 1 John v. 19. 20. and i. 3. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. John xiv. 17. Ep. ii. 22. Ep. v. 8. 30. 2 Pet. i. 3. 4. &c. &c.) Lastly, let it be clearly seen that, though a Jew, i. e. man living under a dispensation of Law and under God as a King and Judge, might, most correctly and appropriately, “swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond;” a Christian, i. e. man under a dispensation of Grace and under God as a Father, neither *may* congruously, nor *can* possibly, expose his soul to the award of

Righteousness. An oath may well appertain to the condition of a subject and servant—to a condition, characteristically, of obligation and obnoxiousness to Judgment. Brethren! can an oath appertain to the liberty and exaltation and excellence of SONSHIP?

V. The examination of Head V. may be brief. Betwixt the two characters of oath distinguished there is indeed a material point of difference. In the *Declaratory* oath there is no engagement to do—no avowal of moral power and goodness. But in the adduction of this case is there not a fallacy? Is there such a thing as *The Judicial oath declaratory*? Is not the Judicial oath essentially *promissory*—ever a vow “to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in the matter before the Court”? And is it not subsequently to this promise or vow, and consequently upon it, that the *Declaration* or *Deposition* is rendered? Is not the *Declaration* one thing, and the *Oath* another? There *might*, however, be such a thing as the Declaratory oath*; and an oath declaring the truth of a deposition *previously given*, would be this thing: and such an oath would, confessedly, be clear of the sins of Self-binding and Self-vaunting. Yet, Brethren! there would be in this oath, as there is in the other oath, and as there is in every conceivable character or quality of oath, SELF-IMPRECATION—solemn appeal to the Avenger of evil, and invocation upon one’s self of Righteous retribution:—and there would be wanting that proclamation of the Christian’s God, and that exhibition of the Christian’s standing, which the Christian feels it blessed and joyous to make.

It appears then that our Lord is prohibiting, not “Vulgar or profane swearing,” and not “Loose asseverations and protestations,”—not two practices which are intrinsically and eternally wrong: but some practice intrinsically right, and in “the old time” permitted, viz. all kinds and forms of VOWING and SWEARING—all the actual and all the possible modes of SELF-BINDING TO DO UNDER PENALTY ON NOT DOING. And wherefore, dear brethren, wherefore? Surely because our thrice blessed Saviour and Master and Lord most graciously designs to teach us

* The oath appended to the bills of Disbursers of the public money is an instance of the Declaratory oath.

1st, That a sinner saved only through the absolute and utter condemnation, crucifixion, and destruction of himself naturally, i.e. of his own nature, has not, in himself or that nature, the faintest shadow of profitableness or the feeblest foundation for trust or glorying :

2d, That a sinner saved after a manner declarative of the absolute disallowal and rejection, not only of his nature, as the seat of any worth or good, but of himself, as the possessor of any property or powers or rights ; and of his redemption and salvation through the strictest purchase ; and of his present standing and being altogether in the nature and life and possessions and powers of another—even of Christ ; has not, in the whole sphere of himself or his, any thing to stake—any one possession or peculium but Sin :

3d, That a sinner saved only BY GRACE, and standing altogether IN GRACE, may not return under the Law, and re-subject himself to the requirements and inflictions of Righteousness :—may not yield his stable standing *in Grace*, and descend, by SELF-IMPRECATION, under the domain of the *Judge* and *Just Awarder* :

4th, That the New workmanship of the true God, created in Christ Jesus unto all righteousness and purity and holiness, and standing as the very temple and habitation of the true God by his Spirit, should not sanction the oath's implication that he is, as men, living and moving and having his being in the darkness, deceitfulness, and falseness of the old and condemned and resisted nature.

THE ZEAL OF JEHU.

THE most dismal picture of Old Testament history, is that of the kingdom of Israel. From the time of Jeroboam to the carrying away of Israel captive by Assyria, we read of nothing but the extirpation of family after family as they successively filled Israel's

wicked throne. All this is in direct contrast with the kingdom of Judah, where all went on in orderly succession, because the Lord had spoken to David "of his house for a great while to come." (2 Sam. vii. 19.) So that the Lord could say by his prophet, "Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints." (Hos. xi. 12.)

The darkest period of the house of Israel was during the dynasty of the house of Omri. A new feature of apostasy was then introduced into Israel by Ahab, the second king of that house. "Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him; and it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him; and he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria; and Ahab made a grove, and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." (1 Kings xvi. 30—33.)

This fearful exhibition of evil served to bring out in a remarkable manner the patient grace of God, even at the very moment He was announcing the most tremendous judgment awaiting the house of this king so fearfully preeminent in wickedness. "There was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Such is the way of our gracious God, that when judgment is near to approach, then testimony is multiplied. And it affords a kind of relief to this dark history, to find it the period of the extraordinary ministry of those "men of God," Elijah and Elisha. God had His witnesses and His hidden ones; and if there was iniquity so abounding as to make the heart faint, there was a superabounding energy of God's Spirit to testify against it, and to sustain the soul of faith by the largest expectations. It was Elijah who delivered to Ahab the message of God's judgment on his house, averted from himself personally by his immediate humiliation. The man of God was indeed bold in testimony to the very face of the wilful

king ; but it is not in the man of God, but in God Himself to know the resources of grace, and to say by a fresh revelation, "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil on his house." (1 Kings, xxi. 29.) If even in such a case as this there was grace and respite, what blessing might not those obtain who are now awakening to the sense of what it is to have added the sin of their own generation to the sin of their fathers, if they were really humbled before the Lord? "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

But to return. Elisha, by the hand of one of the sons of the prophets, anoints Jehu to be king over Israel, and to execute the judgment on the house of Ahab threatened by Elijah. (2 Kings ix.) This was his commission, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel. I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel, and thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hands of Jezebel," &c. &c. (verses 7—10.) Never was a more fitted instrument for the work whereunto he was appointed than Jehu. Jehoram the son of Ahab falls by his hand, and Ahaziah king of Judah, by the hand of his servants, for he also walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord as did the house of Ahab: *for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.*" (2 Kings, viii. 27.) Through this connection was the wickedness of Israel introduced into Judah; and the word of the prophet came to Judah as well as to Israel. "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels: that I should make thee a desolation and the inhabitants thereof a hissing." (Micah vi. 16.) But the hand of vengeance had not yet fulfilled God's purpose. Jezebel was trodden under foot by Jehu in the street of Jezreel. Ahab's seventy sons were slain by the elders of Samaria; and, on seeing their heads in two heaps at the gate of Jezreel, Jehu says, "Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the

Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab ; for the Lord hath done that which he spake by his servant Elijah. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his kinsfolk and his priests, until he left him none remaining." Nor did his vengeance end here. The family of David was all but cut off, and the kingly power left in the hands of a woman of the family of Ahab. Such was Judah's portion in having joined affinity with Ahab. Such ever the sorrowful portion in having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness !

" Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah, and said, Who are ye ? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah ; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen. And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, even two and forty men ; neither left he any of them." (2 Kings, x. 13, 14.)

It was after blotting out all that remained of Ahab in Jezreel, and nearly extirpating the family of Jehoshaphat (the queen mother destroying all the seed royal but one rescued infant), that Jehu invites the companionship of Jehonadab to be witness of his zeal for the Lord. " Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord. So they made him ride in his chariot. And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which He spake to Elijah." It was no part of the commission received from the Lord by Jehu to destroy the worshippers of Baal. To this he was led by his own zeal, which ended in his destroying Baal out of Israel :—a mighty achievement indeed. Such as has not been wrought by either of God's faithful witnesses, Elijah or Elisha. But was it zeal for the Lord, or was it policy cloaked under this fair name ? The family of Ahab had established the worship of Baal, and doubtless Ahab's partizans in the kingdom would have followed the king's religion : policy, therefore, would have required the suppression of Baal's worship as much as godly zeal. And how constantly do we find the policy of mere worldlings used by God, either in judgment on

corruption, or for the deliverance of His remnant. This, man sees, and to this only he looks, as the spring of all the movement in the Church of God; and hence is he emboldened to think himself as competent to order God's household as to order the world. And the principle of convenience is that which he carries into his reformatorys, instead of the holiness of God. Now whatever Jehu himself might think of his zeal, whether he acted in dissimulation or self-deception, it is certain that the Lord did not own it. If there be an intelligent zeal for the Lord, it cannot stop short of the Lord's end: but of this Jehu did stop short, and in this was proved the defectiveness of his zeal. He was zealous for God so far as it served his purpose, but the moment it came to interfere with himself, and to have gone further would have involved self-sacrifice, then Jehu stopped. "Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. *Howbeit* from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel and that were in Dan." How different was this zeal in its character and in the judgment of God, from that which actuated Elijah. His was zeal according to knowledge, but ignorance of God characterized the zeal of Jehu. To the eye of man, Jehu was much more zealous than Elijah, and accomplished a far greater work. But not so before God, who regards the honour of His own name in all that we do, and sets more by the feeblest consistent testimony for Him, than the greatest outward reformation which stops at man's need. "And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him: and *he repaired the altar of the Lord, that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob*, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. * * * * * And it came to pass, that at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,* *let it be known*

* Elijah goes back to the covenant made with the fathers, addressing Jehovah, as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; of which God Himself

this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, "that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." (1 Kings xviii.) In Jehu's zeal for the Lord, it was that Jehu might be known; in Elijah's, that Jehovah might be acknowledged.

It was *Jehu* that destroyed Baal out of Israel:—this sufficed him. But the zeal of Elijah, disappointed indeed at the time, could not stop short of all the purpose of God with respect to Israel. He saw the earnest to the answer of his prayer, when the people, falling on their faces, cried out, "the Lord, He is the God, the Lord, He is the God." Jehu, like a wily politician, rested satisfied with that reformation which satisfied the exigencies of the times; but Elijah, the real reformer (for he shall restore all things), must have the altar of Jehovah raised as the centre of *Israel's* unity—of the *twelve* tribes and not of the *ten*,—and the heart of the children turned back to the fathers. Jehu, as a reformer, attacks the immediate evil and is satisfied with removing this; not looking back to the covenant of Jehovah with the fathers, nor forward to the purpose of God as to Israel, not in its divided state, but in its oneness; for the object of the faith of Israel as to blessing is "our twelve tribes." And any measure of reformation which did not take in that object as its guide, would always stop short of God's measure. It does not appear from the Scripture that the Lord at all owned the zeal of Jehu, however mighty the work he achieved, "And the Lord said unto Jehu, because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, *and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart*, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." Surely God is a God of Judgment, and by Him actions are weighed; and He will own all that He can in that which any do, but they shall have the reward which they seek. It sufficed Jehu

had said, this is my name for ever and this is my memorial unto all generations. (Ex. iii. 15.) I should therefore gather from this that Elijah entirely pleaded on the ground of promise and of that covenant which had reference to Christ (Gal. iii. 17), and that he was not looking to the reconstitution of the law.

to know the security of himself and family on the throne of Israel. He had his reward. "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel *with all his heart* ; for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam which made Israel to sin."

Now I believe that we may draw very solemn and seasonable instruction from this which has been written for our admonition. The value of the Scriptures of the Old Testament in this light, has not been sufficiently attended to. God is not now exhibiting *His ways in action*, but they are *recorded* for our instruction.

There is nothing more fair and plausible than the desire of reformation ; but there is no desire which more often cloaks the selfishness of the human heart. A zeal against public wrongs is found a most convenient screen for the blemishes of private character. And it is far more easy with the eagle-eye of self-interest to detect and expose a thousand faults, than for a man in any one thing to deny himself. In a day like the present, when the spirit of improvement is so widely and so busily stirring, it is no wonder that the same spirit should have arisen in the Church, and have manifested itself in schemes for its reformation. And this especially when the Church's inconsistencies with its pretensions and profession are so glaring as to be the taunt and jest of the infidel, and when many real Christians are groaning under the burthens imposed on them by human traditions. It is "good indeed to be zealously affected always in a good thing ;" but unless the zeal be according to knowledge, it will just end where the zeal of Jehu ended, in cutting off, it may be, many things which are outwardly offensive, but in leaving entirely untouched the root of the evil, the selfish wisdom of man ; for it is this whence has sprung all the disorder in the Church of God. But reformation in the Church is not that which answers the purpose of God. If there were the most awakened zeal, the most decided energy, and the most sincere desire of heart largely engaged in the reformation of the Church, this would not be effectual because it is not according to the mind of God. In the first place, the very notion of attempting such a reformation is not the confession of our sin and of our failure, but is rather an assumption of our own competence to

remedy the Church's failure. But secondly, reformation, simply as reformation, has never been the plan which God has pursued, and it is not the plan which God will pursue. God has never brought back any thing that has fallen to the standing from whence it fell. He has indeed taken the occasion from the failure to magnify His own grace, and to introduce something far more blessed. Now man naturally looks back to some point as the point of attainment, whilst God is looking forward ; and hence, supposing it possible that the reformer attains his object (which the revealed wisdom of God forbids us to suppose), he would not attain the object of God. Yet it is to that object, that the Holy Spirit constantly leads, witnessing that in that alone there will be no failure. Hence it comes to pass that the power of real reformation in the Church is not only by the most just apprehension of the Church's original principles, but by acquaintance with the purpose of God as to that which is before it. The effect of attempting to work our way back simply by the apprehension of what the Church once was, would be such disappointment as to constrain us either to give up the attempt as hopeless, or to stop short in some little circumscribed association, and thus to merge into the worst form of sectarianism, or perhaps to assume pretended powers as successionaly derived or anew received, and thus to set up official claims as the Church, and effectually to destroy the distinction between the Church and the world. For this has invariably been the effect of the assumption of power, standing in office, and not in the energy of the Spirit. We see in the case of Jehu an instance of reformation, very great indeed in its immediate result, and carried on by an energy which promised permanent blessing : but whatever apparent zeal for God there was in the matter, the very first element of godly zeal was wanting, and that is the fear of the Lord. There was no humbling of himself before God for his own sins and the sins of the people : there was no recurrence at all to the law of Moses, so as to learn the real extent of their departure from the Lord : there was no acting on faith. The evil was before him, and it was remedied. Baal was destroyed ; but the national sin, that which

hung over Israel, and awaited the Lord's judgment, the calves of Bethel, was unthought of. It had been tolerated ; it had become venerable ; so that it had ceased to affect the conscience at all : and the bringing back of the people from Baal to this worship, was quite sufficient to satisfy this great reformer in Israel, and to make him boast of his zeal for the Lord.

The zeal of the prophets of the Lord was a zeal according to knowledge. They themselves were brought to see the sin and the evil in which the nation was, and to be in their own souls so exercised as became the condition in which they saw the nation to be. However personally exempt from the fearful evils around them, they were led to humiliation and confession of sin, as being themselves part of the guilty body. (Dan. ix. Is. vi. lxiii. lxiv.) This was zeal for the Lord because He had been dishonoured in Israel. We do not find therefore any self-complacency in exposing or denouncing evil ; but while doing this in faithfulness to the Lord, committing their judgment unto Him, and appealing to Him as knowing the desire of their hearts for Israel, that it might be saved. Such was the spirit of the sorrowful prophet, living in the midst of apostasy and commissioned to declare God's judgment on it ; and this spirit brought him into constant trial from his own countrymen. Yet he could turn to God and say, "Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them." (Jer. xviii. 20.)

But there is another thing. We do not find in them any contentedness with any reformation which their own ministry might have wrought : for the same spirit of Christ, which had shown to them the extent of the evil, testified also unto God's remedy for it, and that was in Christ, who alone would be able to bring the nation into righteousness, and to sustain them in it. It was by the power of this hope, that their ministry became efficient in sustaining the souls of the feeble remnant amidst abounding evil, and bringing them more and more back to what God had originally constituted. Reconstitution was hopeless : and the spirit of faithful individuals must have sunk within them, had the blessing been suspended on reformation. But it was held out to them in hope :

there was no uncertainty in that: neither was it a thing to be compassed by their own powers. Hence in the worst of days, whether of idolatry or of formality, any single individual walking in the ordinances of God would have been sustained, and encouraged to separate from that which was not of God. Such do we find to have been the sustaining power to the very feeble remnant at the period of the coming of Messiah. "And there was one Anna *a prophetess*, the daughter of Phanuel.....She was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day; and she coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all who looked for *redemption* in Jerusalem. (Luke ii. 36, 38.) The looking for redemption was the power of present acceptable worship to the Lord. The people were content with outward reformation (and such it was compared with former times) and decency of order, and it was most fair; but the Spirit of Christ in the prophetess could not be satisfied with this; she was looking for redemption, and consequently, aloof from the mass, she spent all her time in the temple *in fastings and prayers*. God was calling the people to this; but there was no real zeal for Him, but joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine." (Isa. xxii. 12, 13.)

In Josiah king of Judah, we find one zealous indeed for the Lord, and whose conduct is a remarkable contrast with that of Jehu. The discovery of a copy of the law in repairing the temple, led this young king to a farther discovery, and that was the departure of his fathers and all the people from the commandments and statutes of the Lord. "When the king heard the words of the law, he rent his clothes, for great, said he, is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book." Here was the very first element in real godly zeal—no self-sufficient strength or wisdom to set all right, but deep self-abasement and confession of sin. His next step was to enquire of the Lord; and although the word of the Lord was His determinate purpose to bring "all the curses that were written in the book" upon Je-

Jerusalem and its inhabitants, yet to the king himself the message is, "Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest His words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes and weep before me, I have even heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace; neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same." Here then was the occasion for showing a zeal for the Lord; the judgment on the nation was determined, and the blessing to be taken away from the evil to come, was promised to the king. Surely here was the occasion for saying, as the people did say to Jeremiah, who prophesied at this period. "There is no hope; I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." (Jer. ii. 25.) But without the ostentatious display of zeal for the Lord; the king, immediately on receiving the message from the prophetess, "assembled the elders of Judah and Jerusalem and all the people, small and great, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood in his place,—and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments, and His testimonies, and His statutes, with all his heart and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present to stand to it." Here was zeal for the Lord. No reformation short of the standard of the word of God, would satisfy one awakened to the sense of the dishonour cast on the name of the Lord. He must go back to the original constituted blessing of Israel, however hopeless he might be of attaining it. Something much short of this might have satisfied others, and have been regarded as a great reformation, yea, so as to become the pattern for others to refer to. He might well have referred to the reformation of his pious ancestor Hezekiah; but he had the word of God to refer to, and he could own no other standard of reference. Doubtless the king was encouraged in his testimony against evil, and in the sure prospect of blessing for Israel, notwithstanding present failure, by the word of the Lord

by Jeremiah the prophet. He looked to the hope set before him, even that day in which "Jerusalem should be called the throne of the Lord; and all the nations should be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." Sustained by this certain promise, he could say, "Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. . . . We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God."* (Jer. iii. compare verses 14—19 with verses 22—25.) With the word of the Lord for his guide, and the certainty of the final glory of Israel before him, the king would not stop short of all the blessing which present obedience might procure. "And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the Lord your God, *as it is written in the book of this covenant*. Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem." (2 Kings, xxiii.)

Surely, Brethren, we have watchfully to guard against such zeal, as Jehu exhibited. There is nothing easier than to detect inconsistencies, and to inveigh against them; and this can be done by the light of our own understandings, quite apart from the Spirit of Christ. It is not the way of His Spirit merely to expose evil, or to draw away from evil by exposing it, but by the setting forth of the attractiveness of good. Nothing is more injurious to our own souls, than the habit of searching out and exposing evil in the Church, and then in self-complacency attempting to remedy it. It always leads to a false estimate of ourselves, by making us forget that we have been implicated in the evil, and that it is charge-

* Jeremiah began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. His Passover was in the eighteenth year of his reign.

able on ourselves as well as on others ; for the body of Christ cannot suffer as a whole, without our being affected by it. The word therefore is, Be zealous and repent. The Church of God is not to be brought into a better condition by the most wise and judicious arrangements ; yea, I would say, not even by the most scriptural re-construction, for there would be no repentance in setting about such a work as that. God can dwell in the humble and contrite heart, and it will be just in proportion as the souls of the saints are made sensible of from whence they have fallen, and are exercised before God on that account, that they will be blessed. No measure short of God's measure will satisfy Christ and the Spirit of Christ in the Church. Jesus has prayed that those who believe in Him might be one ; and his heart's desire shall be given Him, and the request of His lips not withholden. But when shall this be ?—even when the Church shall be manifested in the glory which Jesus has given to it, and the world *shall know* that the Father has loved the Church, even as He loved Jesus. This therefore, can be our only legitimate end. The Father and the Son are working hitherto unto this, and we wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. It is not reformation, but glory, which is the end of God. And if the saints of God are looking backward for the pattern after which they are working, instead of forward unto the glory for which God is working ; however honest and zealous they may be, yet since their zeal will not be according to knowledge, it will only make the disappointment greater by having excited larger expectations. It is most needful to look back to God's perfect work in the Church, in order to humble us, and this indeed is repentance : but this cannot animate us, nor indeed, can any thing which is not taken entirely out of our hands, and which does not rest simply in the hands of God. It is this which makes the hope of the Lord's coming so blessed and so practical. There can be no failure in it, and therefore we can rejoice in it. There must be disappointment all the way of reformation, but there is none here : this hope maketh not ashamed ; the hope of our calling is nothing short of God's purpose in the glory of the Church. If that purpose had been to

bring the Church to its original standing, then, most properly, would that be our object and the pattern too after which we are to work. But it is not so : and therefore, if it were possible to retrace our steps, so that the Church could be planted again in its Pentecostal power, still we should have to say, "not as though we had attained." The glory would still be before us, and therefore we should have to forget the things behind us. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ realized to the soul, will be that alone which will prevent the saints from settling down into contentedness with a reformation in the Church, which meets their own desires, instead of God's end. That end is glory. "And He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." There can be no missing it. Here are we encouraged to go on in the path of faithfulness ! we may be convinced of failure in ourselves ; we may be disappointed in others ; but there is no failure with God. He fainteth not, neither is weary ; there is no searching of His understanding. But He hath also given us the earnest of His Spirit ; and what is the desire of the Spirit, but that Jesus may *now* be glorified in the saints, even as He will be in that day. Hence the present power of this hope is to bring into the place of real worship and acceptable service. The Spirit witnesses unto the coming glory of Christ, and works in the saints according to that which He witnesses, for He is the Spirit of truth.

It will not therefore, be ever so great a zeal or an awakened energy for reformation, which will answer God's end, or the need of the Church ; but a zeal according to knowledge. The very first element in that must be a remembrance from whence the Church is fallen—a recurrence to nothing short of God's original, as presented to us in the word. This, as we have seen, was that which gave its character to the Passover in the days of Josiah. Every thing was done according to the word ; whereas even in the days of Hezekiah the thing was done suddenly.

Now the same word which shows what the Church was, most plainly testifies of coming judgment on that which bears the name of the kingdom of heaven ; and therefore reformation is not the question, but how to be separated from those things which are

about to be judged. "The day of the Lord is upon every thing that is high and lifted up." Hence it becomes a simple matter of obedience to the ascertained will of God. Judgment on the vine of the earth is God's settled purpose ; therefore cease to do evil—learn to do well. But again the same word comforts all who tremble at it, by the assurance that it shall be well with the righteous, and that when the Lord comes to be exalted in judgment, He is, at the same time, to be glorified in the saints. Hence their zeal must be regulated by all these considerations ; and then it will be zeal according to knowledge—zeal for the Lord ; for they will not be proposing to themselves an object of attainment, because *that* is the hope of the glory, but only how the name of the Lord may be magnified. There is the one hope of our calling to be realized in God's own time. But the present power of that hope is to draw the saints together, because it is an unselfish hope. It leaves no room for rivalry or emulation, neither for our plans or our wisdom ; it is a thing settled in God's purpose. And the saints having now the Spirit, are enabled to wait for the hope of righteousness through faith. Acting on this hope, they would not be elated by any apparent success, nor be cast down under any sense of failure. They are not acting for a present object of attainment, but only seeking to be found in that path which the Lord will bless.

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is thus a truth of the greatest practical power ; so that it would be vain to expect to see the Church brought into a standing more according with the mind of God, without the steady apprehension of it in the souls of the saints. It rests on the sure warrant of God's word, and thus throws those who have been led to receive it, on that word alone for their guide. So that prayer *with the understanding*, and prayer with the Spirit, appear to be almost impossible where this truth is not recognized. The prayer will be guided by man's judgment, instead of God's revealed mind ; and it is written, if we ask any thing according to His will, that God gives it unto us. Hence the worship of the Church, its confession, and its petition, will draw their character from the object which is before it. If

this object be the removal of any existing evils, this will characterize our prayer, and a great deal of apparent zeal for the Lord may be stirred up ; but there will be no relinquishing of the constitutional sin of the Church, nor confession of it, in that it has departed from the ways of God, and followed its own ways. The sin of the Church has been to substitute human arrangement and official appointment, for the order and energy of the Holy Ghost. And until this be relinquished, any thing like real reformation in the Church cannot be looked for. The lopping off of a few of the excrescences, and the introduction of the spirit of the age into the things of God, will be all that will be effected ; and the end of all zeal for reformation, will end where the zeal of Jehu ended—in self-satisfaction, and an unhumbled heart. It is very hard indeed to see how the real blessing of the Church is made to depend on individual faithfulness and obedience. “*He that hath an ear.*” “*To him that overcometh.*” It is much more according to the slothfulness of our hearts to be very zealous for some corporate reformation, than to walk in the trying path of individual responsibility.

But the wisdom of God has ordered it otherwise. He calls individuals to hear the voice of the Shepherd, and to follow Him. He sets before them the hope of the glory, and there are they attracted together. And thus being gathered into unity by God Himself, and not by any self-willed association, as it is a unity of truth and not of convenience, there is blessing. And among many other blessings there is this one, to consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works, and to exhort one another, and so much the more as they see the day approaching. They are bound together by obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, with an open door before them, so that there is no hindrance for their walking on in the path of obedience when they have ascertained it. They have settled nothing but to believe, to obey, to follow, and to rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is their liberty—the liberty of serving Him and following Him in His ways. This liberty, human arrangement invariably hinders ; and the trials of a great many very dear saints arise from this, that rules of

human prescription prevent their obedience to Christ, as much as the calves at Bethel and Dan prevented those of the Kingdom of Israel from obeying and worshipping God.

It is not the zeal of the reformer which is needed, but the humble and contrite spirit, trembling at God's word. It is not the ability to detect and expose inconsistencies in others, but the spirit which maketh quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord, which really worketh unto profit. It is not to attack the evil which exists, with ever so fervid a zeal, but an object to look to sustaining and purifying the soul, which leads into profitable service. Alas! after the most zealous protest against Popery or any other corrupt system, either by individuals or a body; the spirit of truth will often have to testify, "*they took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord with all their heart.*" When there has been much separation from evil, how often will the testimony be that there has been a stopping short, and the original sin of the dispensation may remain untouched. God will bless all He can—but He cannot bless self-complacency or lukewarmness. Surely the word to us is, "as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; *be zealous therefore and repent.* Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me."

THE END OF VOL. V.

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