

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

VOL. VI.

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THE
CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

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SAUL.—1 SAMUEL, viii.—xxxi.

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God." James iv. 4.

THERE is not in scripture a character that furnishes more solemn warning than that of king Saul. As we pass on from stage to stage through his history, it fills the soul with very awful thoughts of the treachery and corruption of the heart of man; and as we are sure that it has been written for our learning (Rom. xv. 4), we may well be thankful to our God for the counsel that it gives us, and seek His grace that we may read the holy lesson to profit.

But this we should know—that though the Spirit of God may have thus graciously *recorded* these acts of the wicked for our learning, they were all *executed* by the hand and according to the heart of the man himself. God is to be known here and in similar histories, only in that holy sovereignty, which draws good out of evil, and in that care for His saints, which records that evil for their admonition.

The 1st Book of Samuel has a very distinct character. It strikingly exhibits the removal of man and the bringing in of

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God.—It accordingly opens with the barren woman receiving a child from the Lord ; this being, in scripture, the constant symbol of grace, and the pledge of divine power acting on the incompetency of the creature. It then shews us the Priesthood (which had been set in formal order and succession) corrupting itself and removed by judgment, and upon that God's Priest (who was to do according to his heart, and for whom he was to build a sure house) brought in. (ii. 35.) And then, in like manner, it shews us the Kingdom (at first set according to man's desire) corrupting itself, and removed by judgment, and upon that God's king (who was also after His heart, and for whom He would also build a sure house) brought in. Thus, this Book exhibits every thing, whether in the sanctuary or on the throne, while in man's hand coming to ruin, and the final committal of every thing to the hand of God's anointed. And this anointed of God, we know, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, is to be none less than the Son of God Himself, God's king to hold the immoveable kingdom, and God's Priest to hold the untransferrable Priesthood.

The history of king Saul properly begins with the 8th chapter of this book. There we find the revolted heart of Israel, which had been departing from the Lord, as He there tells Samuel, ever since He had brought them out of Egypt, seeking still greater distance from Him, and desiring a king in the stead of Him. The ill government of Samuel's sons at this time was their pretence, but it was only a pretence. There is no doubt that they did act corruptly, and Samuel may have been at fault in making them judges, consulting perhaps, too much with flesh and blood, and too little with Israel's welfare, and the Lord's honour. But the Lord discloses the real source of this desire for a king, saying to Samuel, "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." Like Moses in such a case (Ex. xvi. 7), Samuel was nothing, that the people should murmur against him or his sons ; their murmurings were not against him, but against the Lord.

"Israel would none of me," says the Lord, "so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own

counsels." (Ps. lxxxi. 12.) They shall have what their soul was now lusting after, but they shall find it to be their plague. Their own king shall be their sorrow and ruin, as all our own things are, if we will follow them and have them. "He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside." What but ashes (sorrow and death) does the labour of our own hands gather for us? So is it always, try it in what way we may, and so was Israel now to find it in their own king. (viii. 11—17.)

But, in wonted grace, the Lord here gives His people space to repent of this their evil choice before they reaped the bitter fruit of it. And this was just what he had done before at Mount Sinai. When they were there bent on accepting the fiery law, as though they could keep it, and live by it, Moses is made to pass and repass between them and the Lord, in order, as it seems, to give them space to turn and still trust in that grace which had redeemed them from Egypt, and not cast themselves on the terms of Mount Sinai. (See Ex. xix.) And so here, I believe, with the same intent Samuel passes again and again between the Lord and the people. But as they there listened to their own heart in its confidence and self-sufficiency, so here they will have a king in spite of all God's gracious warning. They take their own way again.

And I ask, dear Brethren, is not this His way, and, alas, too often our way still? Is He not often checking us by His Spirit, that we go not in the way of our own heart, and yet are we not like Israel, too often heedless of His Spirit? And what do we ever find the end of our own way to be, but grief and confusion? For the Lord has only to leave us to ourselves, if He would fain leave us for destruction. *Legion* is the fearful witness of this. (Mark v.) He presents man in his proper native condition, choosing the captivity of Satan, and, as such, being one whom nothing could relieve but that sovereign grace which does not stop to take counsel with man's own desire (for then it would never act), but which goes right onward with its own purpose to rescue and to bless.

But such was Israel now, knowing only their own will in this matter of the king. And this at once prepares us for the manner

of person that we are to find in their forthcoming king. *For the wilful people must have a wilful king.* Of none other could it be said that *all the desire of Israel was on Him.* Of none other could Samuel have said, "behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom *ye* have desired." None other could have been the king of this people.

But all this forebodes fearful things in the king, and fearful days for Israel. And so shall we find it. In the divine order, such a time as the reign of King Saul has its appointed uses. Shewing us the kingdom in man's hand, it serves to set off the kingdom in God's hand—mischief and corruption and disaster marking the one, honour and blessing and rest the other. The kingdom brought in by their own desire would let them see how unequal they were to provide for their own happiness, just as "this present evil world," which our own lusts have formed and fashioned, is found unequal to satisfy, leaving us subject to vanity still. But with all this, God's workmanship will stand in blessed contrast. The kingdom under Saul in all its wretchedness and shame might set off the glorious and peaceful days of David and Solomon, as this world of ours will set off "the world to come," in the days of the Son of man.

But however the Lord may thus serve His own glory, and His people's comfort by this, it is Israel that now brings this season of shame and sorrow on themselves. They sow the wind to reap the whirlwind. Saul comes forth, the chosen one of a wilful and revolted nation, to do his evil work. And thus he stands in one rank with another more wicked than himself. He stands as the type and brother of that king in the latter day who is to do "according to his will"—the one who is to come "in His own name," and say in his heart "no God." Saul was now coming forth the first of that line of shepherds or rulers who were "to feed themselves and not the flock," to eat the fat, and clothe them with the wool, (Ezek. xxxiv.) and do all that evil work that is here prophesied of Israel's own king, and fill out all that character that is here drawn of Saul.*

* Saul is expressly treated of as "the violent man" or last enemy of Israel in 2 Sam. xxii. and Ps. xviii. This last enemy, or the last of these

Into the hand of such shepherds, Israel is now cast, seeing they had rejected the Lord their good Shepherd, and desired one after their own heart. The first of them, as we here find, was of that tribe of which it had been said of old, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf, in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." (Gen. xlix. 27.) And he was of that city in that tribe, which had already wrought such mischief in Israel, and been the occasion of nearly blotting out the memorial of one of the tribes from among the people of the Lord. (Judges xix.—xxi.)

But we further learn of him, that though belonging to the least of all the families of his tribe, and that, too, the smallest tribe in Israel, his father Cis was "a mighty man of substance." And from this description, I gather that Saul and his father had prospered in this world, being men who were wise in their generation, people of that class who "will be rich," though nature and family and circumstances are all against them. And Saul is first shewn to us searching his father's asses. Something of the family property was missing, and it must be searched for—their *own* ass had fallen into the ditch and it must be taken out. But though thus careful of his own things, he seems, as yet at least, to have had no great care for the things of God, for he does not at this time know even the person of Samuel, who was now the great witness of God in the land; and soon after this, his neighbours, "who had known him aforetime," wonder with great wonder that he should be found among the prophets, so that to this day he is a proverb. All these are notices of what generation he was, telling us that though as yet in an humble sphere, he and his father's house had been formed rather by the low principles of the world, than by worthy thoughts of the Lord of Israel. And such an one was just fit to be directed to Samuel at the time when the worldly heart of the people was desiring a king. His mind was upon the asses, as Samuel seems to hint. The world was set

kings of the people, will give place to the true David, who shall feed God's heritage with integrity of heart and skilfulness of hand, as this first of them is succeeded by David the son of Jesse, the man after God's own heart. This last of them is called "the foolish shepherd" in Zech. xi. 15.

in his heart, though from circumstances it had not as yet been developed in many of its proper fruits. And this is awful warning, beloved. Circumstances, as here, may indeed be needed in order *to prove* the ground of the heart, but it is the heart itself that determines the man before God (chap. xvi. 7), and sooner or later will determine the life before men. (Proverbs iv. 23. Matt. xv. 19.)

In accordance with all this, on being introduced to the intended king, we have no mention whatever of any moral qualifications that he had. All that we learn of him is this, "that he was a choice young man, and a goodly, and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he, from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." Thus and thus only is he spoken of. He is judged of simply after the flesh, looked at only in the outward man, and thus was suited to man who had desired him, for "man looketh on the outward appearance." Therefore when the people saw *his stature*, and nothing more, they cry, "God save the king." This was the king after their heart. He was of the world, and the world loved its own.*

And here let me say, that if Saul be thus the man after man's heart, and David as we read afterwards, the man after God's heart, we learn in the one what *we* are, and in the other what *God* is. And the distinctive characters of the two kings is this. Saul would have every thing his own and be every thing himself; David was willing to be nothing and to have nothing, but still in whatever state he was, to be the diligent unselfish servant of others. And thus man, to our *shame*, is presented in the narrow-heartedness of Saul, but God to our *comfort*, in the generous self-devotement of David.

All this character of Saul will be awfully disclosed in all the

* Absalom, another of the same generation with Saul, is described only in this way also. "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him." And surely both of them are types of the beast or the wilful king of the latter day. And will not he be decked out with the same beauty in the flesh? Will he not have his parts and comely proportions all to admiration? Will he not be perfect in all subtile attractions and forms of beauty as the serpent in the garden?

passages of his future history, but the same principles are even now early at work. It may be that the less practised eye cannot discern this, and it is indeed well and happy to be "simple concerning evil." But heart will sometimes answer to heart, and make some of us, beloved, quicker to detect its treachery than others. Thus in Saul keeping back Samuel's words touching the kingdom, in hiding himself among the stuff when the lot had fallen upon him, and again in holding his peace when some would not give him their voices, there is in all this, I judge, only the shew of virtue.* For the love of the world and of its praise can afford to be humble and generous at times. It can even send forth those or any other virtues, taking care, however, to send them forth in such a direction, as to make them bring home, after a short journey, some rich revenues to the ruling lusts.

In the hand of such an one is the kingdom of Israel now vested, but such an one was not "God's king." To give them a king, however, appears to have been God's purpose from the beginning. The prophetic words of both Jacob and Moses upon Judah, as also the words by Balaam (Numb. xxiv. 17), intimate this. As also Moses' title, "king in Jeshurun." And more than these, the ordinance touching the king in Deuteronomy xvii. and the fact that the Lord Jesus Himself sought the kingdom when He was here (Matt. xxi. 1), and in the end, at His second coming, will take it (Ps. ii. 6), prove that God's first purpose was to give Israel a king.

But things were not ready for the king all at once ; various previous courses must be accomplished, ere that top stone in the divine building could be brought forth. Israel at first had to be redeemed from bondage—then to be carried through the wilderness to learn the ways and secrets of God's love—then to get their promised inheritance delivered out of the hand of the usurper. Till these things were done, all was not in readiness for the king. Had these things been simply accomplished, the king without delay

* Another indeed hid himself when they would have come to make him a king, (John vi.) but he was acting according to God's glory and will in that ; Saul in this was resisting it, however his modesty, as it might be thought, may attract the judgment of the mere human mind for awhile.

would have appeared to crown the whole work with the full beauty of the Lord. But each stage in this way of the Lord, Israel had sadly interrupted and delayed. After redemption from Egypt, they had given themselves through disobedience, forty years' travel in the wilderness; after taking the inheritance, they had again, through disobedience, brought pricks into their sides and thorns in their eyes; and now they forestal God's king, and through disobedience and wilfulness again, bring their own king, as another plague upon them. But this is the way of man, beloved, the way of us all by nature. Through unbelief and wilfulness we refuse to wait God's time, and we procure a Saul for ourselves. It was thus that Sarah brought Ishmael into her house, and Jacob his twenty-one years of exile and servitude upon himself. Our own crooked policy and unbelief must answer for these sorrows. God if waited for, would bring the blessing that maketh rich and which *addeth no sorrow with it*, but our own way only teaches us that he that soweth to the flesh must of the flesh reap corruption. To this day Israel is learning this, and reaping the fruit of the tree they planted, learning the service of the nations whom like Saul, they have set over themselves; and their only real joy lies in this, that God's counsel of grace, in spite of all is to stand, and his own king shall still sit on his holy hill of Zion.

But in spite of all this, and though Israel is now transferred into other hands, God will prove that nothing should be wanting on his part. He had not only signified Saul to Samuel, and Samuel had then signified Saul at the sacrificial Feast, and anointed and kissed him, (ix. x.) but in the mouth of several witnesses the divine purpose had been established, and the spirit, as faculty for office, had been imparted, and an "occasion," as Samuel speaks (x. 7) for proving that God was thus with the king, now arrives. The insult of Nahash the Ammonite towards Jabesh-Gilead was this "occasion," and the Lord gives Israel a complete victory over him by the hand of their king. For this battle was the Lord's inasmuch as the Lord would fulfil his part in this matter. We need not enquire where Israel got their instruments of war, if now there was "no smith found throughout all the

land," for this day was won not by might nor by power, but "by my Spirit, saith the Lord." This victory might therefore have been gained as well with lamps and pitchers, or with the jaw-bones of asses, or with slings and stones from the brook, as with the battle-axe and bow.

Thus again, as in ancient days, the Lord approves Himself not wanting, however wilful and stiff-necked His people may be found. And after this, the king is accepted again of the people; (xii.) and this chapter reminds us of the 20th of Exodus, as the 8th chapter reminded us of the 19th of Exodus. For in the 20th of Exodus, Moses transfers them into their new position, but convicts them of the terribleness of it; and here Samuel formally plants them under their king, but convicts them again as with the thunder and tempest of Mount Sinai. The thunder and rain came upon them here, as the fearful pledge and prelude of the end of their own kingdom, as the shaking of the earth at Sinai pledged the end of their own covenant. And under it they cry out in terror here, as they had done there. There they had said to Moses, "speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us lest we die,"—and here they say to Samuel, "pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not, for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." And in mercy Samuel here, as Moses there, encourages them still to hold fast by the Lord, who, in spite of all, was still graciously owning them as His people.*

These two occasions are thus in strict moral analogy, and shew us *that king Saul was introduced into the Jewish system now, as the law had been at Mount Sinai, through the wilfulness and unbelief of the people, Saul being no more God's king, than the law was God's covenant.* Israel has again lost their peace by all

* This thunder in harvest is noticed here as something remarkable; and so it was. Jehovah was the husbandman of the land of Israel, (Deut xi.) and had Israel been in simple allegiance to Him, every thing would have witnessed the care and skill of the divine husbandman, and the blessing of that people that had the Lord for their God. There would have been nothing out of season—the early and the latter rain would have fallen only in their appointed months. Thunder in harvest would not have been known, or known only in judgment, as it is here.

this, and cast themselves into sorrows and difficulties that they little counted on ; but the Lord pardons and accepts them, as He had done at Sinai, and now sets them in the way again in their new character.

And now comes the trial again. "Fear not," says Samuel to them, "ye have done all this wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart." But, ere the first scene in the kingdom closes, all is broken and forfeited, just as the covenant from Sinai was broken ere Aaron and the people had left the foot of the Mount. There the people grew impatient at the delay of Moses, and in violation of the very first article of the covenant, made a golden calf. So here Samuel had left Saul for awhile, telling him to go down to Gilgal, and wait for him there till he should come and offer the sacrifices, but now Saul offers the sacrifices himself. (xiii.) He forsakes the word of the Lord. The first act of the king was thus again a violation of the first command he had received. And thus was it all again, as at Sinai so at Gilgal, the immediate breach of the covenant on the part of man. The Lord, it is true, had grace in store for Israel while they were thus destroying themselves ; as at Sinai He shewed the witnesses of mercy on the top of the Mount, while Israel was sinning away all their present blessing at the foot of it. But still, in the king's hand now, as in the people's then, all was disaster and loss.

Speedy and yet fully ripe fruit was this of their own way. But beside this one great act of forfeiture, there are traits of character now displaying themselves in the people's king that strongly mark his generation. We see him acting now after the manner forewarned of Samuel. He chooses three thousand men of Israel to wait upon him, sending the rest to their tents, thus dealing with them as his property, having right to do what he would with his own. "When Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him"—taking thus their sons and appointing them unto himself, as Samuel had said. And all his ways are in the same tone of self-will, fully opposed to the manner of God's king as prescribed by Moses. (Deut. xvii.) In the sovereignty

of his own good pleasure, the people's king now does his own will, exalting himself above his brethren, blowing the trumpet throughout the land, speaking as with the voice of a god and not of a man, and saying, "let the Hebrews hear;" thus bringing, as it were, the people to his own door posts, and there boring their ears, that they might be his servants for ever.

And he would be Priest as well as king. He would fain sit in the sanctuary as well as on the throne. In disobedience, he will himself offer the sacrifice; in all these things giving us awful pledges of the ways of him who is still to be more daring, magnifying himself above all, planting his tabernacles on the glorious holy mountain, and sitting in the temple of God.*

Such was Saul, and such will be his elder brother or antitype in the latter day. But as in spite of all the trespass and breach of covenant at Mount Sinai, the Lord did not allow the enemy to triumph over Israel, but brought them into the good land that He had promised them; so here in spite of all this, He works deliverance for them from the Philistines as He had promised, and that, too, in a way that more marvellously displays His hand than the day of Gideon or of Samson. (xiv.) This victory at Michmash, like the victories of Joshua, verified the faithfulness of the God of Israel. Not one good thing could fail. He had promised strength against the Philistines now, as He had promised the land of the Canaanites then, and this day of Michmash and that which follows fulfils the word of the Lord. (ix. 16. xiv. 47, 48.)

But all this, as every thing else, serves only to develop the people's king more and more. The ways of a wilful one are strongly marked in all that he does. His course is uncertain and wayward, because it is just what his own will makes it. But in the midst of all the present gathering darkness, there is one object of relief to the eye,—the person and actions of Jonathan. He is the one in the apostate kingdom who owns God and is owned of Him, the remnant in the midst of the thousands of Israel, the one

* To mark the wilful, infidel character of Saul still further, I may observe that the Ark of God was not once consulted all through his reign. (1 Chron. x. 13, 14.)

who stood in the secret of God, and knew where the strength of Israel lay. And thus he is in full readiness for all the openings of the divine purpose. We see him in immediate sympathy with David, as soon as David appears. (xviii. 1.) His deeds in Israel before David is heard of, savour of the very spirit that animates David afterwards ; for the victory of Michmash which his hand won, was in full character with that in the valley of Elah, which David afterwards achieved. God was trusted in both of them, as the only giver of victory. The spirit with which Jonathan entered the passages between Bozez and Seneh, carried David into the front of the battle against the giant. And this, I may say, is the character of every remnant—they walk in the spirit of the hope set before them, so that when it is manifested they are ready for it. As here, Jonathan was ready for David : Anna and Simeon waited for “ the consolation of Israel,” and embraced the child the moment they saw him. In the latter day, in like manner, the remnant will be looking for the Lord as an afflicted and poor people ; and so, in the meanwhile, we should watch for the *heavenly* glory in the spirit of holy retirement from *the world* and the things of the world. In spirit and conversation we should be as “ children of light and children of the day,” thus signaling our remnant character, though the night is still around us, so that when the light of the morning breaks, and the day of the kingdom comes, we may find our *native* place in it. The oil in the vessels of the wise virgins tells us this. It tells us that they had counted the cost of being wakeful to the end—that they knew themselves only as “ prisoners of hope” in this world, and that it was still but night-time, which would need the lamp, till grace should be brought to them at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

And the character of the apostate is marked in the very opposite way. It is this remnant that they hate, and their hope that they are not preparing for. It is this righteous Jonathan who now moves Saul’s envy. Saul it appears would now have sacrificed him to his lust, as we know he afterwards sought to slay him. For envy, or the love of the world, cares not though it have even a child of our own bowels for its prey, as we know in the case of

Joseph, it craved a brother for a sacrifice. In Saul it also hunted David like a partridge in the mountains, and even would have killed Samuel, to whom under God, Saul owed every thing. (xvi. 2.) As says the divine proverb, "wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before envy."

And with all this, he had no courage in the Lord's cause when the trial came. He makes a stir and bustles a good deal with his six hundred men behind him at Gilgal, but as we follow him to Gibeah, where the battle was at hand, he tarries in the uttermost part under a pomegranate tree, nor do we see him in the field till the day is won. He rages after the fight, but strikes no blow in it; and all that he does, is to sacrifice the honour of Israel to his own will, for in the mere exercise of his own good pleasure, he adjures the people not to touch any food till the evening, and that curse hinders the full overthrow of the Philistines.

Thus all that he really is, on this memorable day, is the Achan in the camp. Jonathan is the strength, and he but the troubler of Israel. But with all this, he can be very religious, when religion does not turn him out of his own way, or when, like Jehu, he can serve himself by it. After the offence of the people eating the blood with the flesh, he orders the table of the camp himself in due religious form. But this instead of crossing his own desire, only serves it, for by this he seems to take the honour of the priesthood to him, and thus to exalt himself. He bustles again as though he were the one object of importance in the whole scene, thus gathering the thoughts of man to himself, and walking in the full light of the world's countenance, which was every thing to him, the thing that he lived for.

All this is indeed darkness, but we have gloomier shades to penetrate still.

When Israel entered the land, they received a commission to destroy the nations, for the day of their visitation had come. But here I would observe, that it was not the whole earth that was thus to be destroyed, but only those nations which had been guilty of doing despite to God, and had filled up the measure of their sins. The Canaanites had had God's witnesses among them in

old time, for Abraham Isaac and Jacob had been there, but they remained Canaanites still. The Egyptians had known Joseph and the grace and power of the God of Joseph, but they had ceased to remember him. And Amalek had seen the God of glory leading his hosts out of Egypt, with his cloud over them, and the water from the rock following them, but the hand of Amalek was at that moment raised against the throne of God. Of these three, Egypt, the Canaanites, and Amalek, Egypt and the Canaanites had been already judged, and the day of Amalek had now come ; for surely when the Lord's cup was passing, they could not be forgotten.*

But Israel had not been fully faithful to the commission which they had received against the Canaanites, as the 1st chapter of the book of Judges shews us ; and now our 15th chapter is just that chapter again under the hand of king Saul. The kingdom was now received, as the land had then been, and the king gets his commission now, as the nation then did. "Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that he hath," says the Lord to Saul by Samuel. But Saul makes terms with Amalek, as the tribes before had done with the Canaanites. He spares Agag, as Benjamin had spared the Jebusites, Manasseh the people of Dor, Ephraim the people of Gezer, Zebulun the people of Kitron, Asher the people of Accho, and Naphthali the people of Bethshemesh. (Judges i.) And thus we have here with the king as there with the tribes, the disobedience of man, and the consequent forfeiture of all blessing and honour. "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord," says Samuel to Saul, "he hath also rejected thee from being king." (xv. 23.)

And this was as the loss of Eden to the Lord. The land of Israel

* And I would further observe, that in the same way will be the judgment of the nations in the latter day. It is not all the earth that is then to be destroyed, but only those nations among whom God's witnesses have previously been, those who will then make up the confederacy against the Lord's anointed. The kingdoms of the world shall then become the Lord's, and not be destroyed ; the isles afar off shall form the train of the earthly glory of Messiah, as the distant cities and people of old were to be left in order to become tributaries to Israel (Deut. xx. 10—18), and those only to be cut off, as I have noticed above, who had filled up the measure of their sin, and done despite to God. (Gen. xv. 16.)

should have been the earthly rest, where God would have kept his sabbath. But now it was defiled, as paradise of old ; and as of old God repented that he had made man on the earth (Gen. vi. 6), so now does he repent that he had made Saul king over Israel. (xv. 35.) Thorns and briars and sorrow of heart, the kingdom was now to yield, as the cursed earth did then. Samuel goes away to weep, and the Lord takes no pleasure in the kingdom.

Thus all is ruin under the hand of the people's king, and the lust of his heart is seen again to work in this scene with fearful power. For he seeks at once to turn this conquest of Amalek to his own profit and glory, careless as he was of the word and glory of the Lord. He first flies upon the spoil, and then sets him up a place (xv. 12), that is, erects some monument to his own name, thus seeking to make this victory serve both his pride and his covetousness.* It is true, he says, "I have sinned"—but so said Balaam before him, and Judas after him. And even in that confession, the desire of his heart was not towards God's forgiveness and peace, but towards his own honour before men. For these are his words to Samuel, "I have sinned, yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel." This was his lust—he loved the praise of men. He would at all cost, have the honour that cometh from man, and Samuel now delivers him over to a reprobate mind. He turns for a moment with him towards the people, but then leaves him for ever.

Thus the judgment of God lies upon him, and an evil spirit from the Lord comes to trouble him. (xvi.) And now the time has arrived for revealing again "the secret of God." For in all the seasons of man's destruction of himself, there has been another thing going on in the plans of the blessed God. Thus of old, the promised seed is sown in man's field of briars and thorns, (Gen. iii.)—while his brethren are filling up their sins and sorrows in Canaan, Joseph unknown to them, is growing up in Egypt for

* We read also of "Absalom's place." (2 Sam. xviii.) But Saul and Absalom as I have already noticed, were children of the same generation, both types of the Great Pretender of the latter day.

their help—while Israel is in the heat of the furnace, Moses is preparing to be their deliverer in the distant solitudes of Midian.—And again, while disasters follow sins in quick succession, the judges are brought forth as God's deliverers for the people ; and at last when the priesthood was defiled, and the glory gone into the enemy's land, Samuel the child is brought forth to raise the stone of help.

Thus had it been before, and so is it now again. Saul and the kingdom are bringing ruin on themselves, but David, "the secret of God," is under preparation to set the throne in honour, and the kingdom in order and strength. And what are all these things but notices to us of Him who is the true secret of God. For as such, the blessed Son of God is now, though flesh and blood decay, the hidden seed in the believer, that is to burst forth in the resurrection a plant of glory. And as such He will by-and-by bear up the pillars of the earth, when all things else are dissolving. He will then come forth out of His secret chambers, as Joseph or as Moses, as Samuel or as David, and shall be as the light of the morning, after a dark and dreary night, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.*

And this is always the way of grace—it comes into exercise after man has been convicted of entire insufficiency. It speaks on this wise—"except the Lord had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Man makes Jerusalem a Sodom, a filthy ruin, and then out of that ruin, God in His own grace and strength builds again "a city of righteousness." (Is. i.) And this grace ever takes for its instrument the weak thing and the foolish thing of this world. Such was Jesus of Nazareth—such was Paul with a thorn in his flesh, and such is David now. "Man looketh on

* Moses preaches Christ as "the secret of God" in Deut. xxix. 29. In connection with that, in the next chapter (xxx. 11—14), he speaks of a certain "commandment," which he there describes; and St. Paul in his ministry refers to those words of Moses as descriptive of "the righteousness which is of faith," or, the word of Christ. (Rom. x. 6.) And thus the Apostle fully discloses what the Lawgiver had only darkly intimated, and shews that Jesus is the secret that belongs to God—God's true resource for sinners. And I may further observe, that one of the names of Christ is "Secret." (Judges xiii. 18. Is. ix. 6.)

the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart." Man had already, as we have seen, looked on the outward appearance, and found his object in Saul, who in person was the goodliest of the children of Israel. But God's choice was not to be ordered by such a measure. (Ps. cxlvii. 10.) A rod out of the stem of Jesse is His object, a root out of a dry ground in which there was no comeliness before the eye of men, the one of whom his father, "according to the flesh," says in scorn, "there remaineth yet the youngest, and he keepeth the sheep"—the one, who like a greater than he, man was thus despising and the nation abhorring. (Is. xlix. 7.) This one, this youngest son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, the keeper of a few sheep in the wilderness, is now God's object. "Arise, anoint him," says the Lord to Samuel, "for this is he."

And here again I must notice something that seems to me to have great moral value in it. I allude to what appears to have been the different condition of Saul's house and David's house, when they are severally brought before us. Saul's house, as we have seen, was of no repute in Israel, but had made a fortune as people speak. David's, on the other hand, had once been in honour, was of the tribe of Judah, and in its genealogy bore the distinguished name of Boaz, who had been perhaps, the first man in his generation. But now it seems to be otherwise with them, for David and his father and his father's house have no distinction now, but simply take their place among the many thousands of Israel. But what of all this? the world finds its object in Saul ("for man will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself"), and God, in David. And these things teach us, beloved, that it is safer to be "going down," than "getting up," as the word is, in the world. And they tell us also that whom God will exalt, He first abases; whom He will glorify, He first humbles. He puts the sentence of *death* in the children of *resurrection*. But with the wicked there are no bands, their strength is firm.* (Ps. lxxiii.) Saul went through no sorrow up to the throne, as David did. Esau, the man of the

* Ps. lxxiii. is the trial of the soul in learning that death and resurrection is God's principle.

earth, had dukedoms in his family, while Jacob's children were still homeless strangers on the earth, (Gen. xxxvi.) yet it is written, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated."

God's way is according to this, hard indeed for flesh and blood to learn, and God's hand thus found its object in David, and we now have accordingly, a new feature in the scene before us. We have David, God's chosen, as well as Saul within, and the Philistine without. David is before us in the strength of the Spirit of God, and he soon gives proofs of his ministry both upon the rejected king and upon the uncircumcised. Both are made to own the power of the Lord that was in him. Whether it were the harp or the sling, his hand is skilled to use either. The king had an evil spirit in him, and the uncircumcised is breathing out slaughter, but David stands above both in the strength of the Lord. The unclean spirit goes out from the king at the bidding of his harp, and the Philistine giant falls under his sling. (xvi. xvii.) It might be thought that king Saul's evil course was interrupted by this, but it soon appears that this was rather only another stage in his downward way. The sow was to return to her mire. The unclean spirit goes out only to gather and bring in seven other spirits more wicked than himself. This quieting of the evil spirit was but a flattering of God with the mouth, for the king's heart was not thereby set right with Him. He was not estranged from his lusts by it. His love of the world and its praise, his self-will, and hatred of the righteous, rule him still, and God and His word and His glory are as little regarded as ever.

And in all this we see Israel ; for like prince, like people, Saul is the representative of Israel in apostasy, as he is the forerunner or type of their king in the latter day. This way of Saul under David's harp, has been the way of Israel under God's ministers. Elijah raised among them for a moment the cry, " the Lord He is God, the Lord He is God," but all was quickly " Baal" again. In the light of John the Baptist they afterwards rejoiced, but it was only for a season ; and when the hand of the Son of God Himself was among them to heal them and bless them, for awhile they flocked to Him in thousands, and when He preached they won-

dered, (Luke iv.) and when He entered their city they cried "Hosanna," (Matt. xxi.) but all soon ended in the cross. The evil spirit had been charmed, the unclean spirit had gone out, but the house was still ready for it, and for it only. And thus the harp of David and the grace and ministry of the Son of God, were only the same stage in the downward paths of the king and the people. They were both of them, disobedient and gainsaying still. And it was this case of David's harp, as I judge, which our Lord had especially in mind, when He said, "if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out"—thus likening that generation of Israel to whom He was preaching, to Saul, and making the power of David's harp the same as the power of that preaching. And the parable of the unclean spirit going out and returning with others more wicked than himself, which the Lord then delivers, (Luke xi.) is thus a setting forth both of the history of Saul and of that generation. And so we shall find, that the spirit which now went out of Saul came into him again with increased strength, as the casting out of devils and cleansing the house of Israel for a time by the Son of God, ended only in his becoming the victim of their lusts and enmity. For Saul was the man after Israel's heart, the full representative of the revolted and unbelieving nation.

But Saul's sin is not to hinder God's mercy. David has a work to do with the Philistine, which must be done, be the king never so unworthy. And in this we still see the way of the Son of God. He came to destroy the power of the enemy, as well as to heal the daughter of Zion; and though she like Saul, may refuse to be healed, the Son of God must do His work upon the great Goliath. He must lead captivity captive. He must make an end of sin. He must break down the middle wall of partition and nail the handwriting to His cross. He must slay the enmity and abolish death. He must accomplish all this glorious triumph over the full power of the enemy, though He find none in Israel, who were His own, to receive Him, nor any in the world, that He had made, to know Him.

This again is shame and comfort to us—shame, that we could

thus treat his love ; comfort that his love survived such treatment. And upon this, I would further notice (for it carries another lesson to ourselves), that though Saul knew the power of David's harp for a time, he never knew David himself. *He had not learnt David*, if I may so speak—David was still a stranger to him. (xvii. 56.) And how does this tell us of man and of Israel still.* Man will enjoy the rain from heaven, and the fruitful season ; but remain ignorant of the Father who orders all this for him. Israel was healed of Jesus, but did not learn Jesus ; many *pressed* on Him in the throng, who never *touched* Him. And all this is like Saul who could be refreshed by David's music, but still have to ask, "Abner whose son is this youth?"

And this, beloved brethren, is truly sad and solemn ; and I think I can say that I never felt more awed, while meditating on scripture, with thoughts of what man is, than in this meditation on poor wretched miserable Saul. The subject is indeed very solemn. It gives us the way of man, the way of a child of this world, who goes on in self-will, with desperate purpose of heart, to take the world for his portion at all cost. And it is no theory, nor singular thing. It finds its counterpart in our world every day ; and would in ourselves, but for the gracious keeping of our God. And I do pray, beloved, that neither my pen nor your eye may travel on through these dreary paths of man, without our heart feeling what a thing it is thus to live and thus to die a lover of this present evil world. "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. xxix. 1.)

Through the next chapters (xviii.—xxvii.) David becomes the principal object ; and all that we see in Saul, is only the course of a vexed and disappointed man of the world, who by the goading of his own lusts rushes on to destruction, as a horse to the battle.

* The transposition of the latter part of chap. xvii. to chap. xvi. in order to meet the objection which has been made, to the fact of Saul not knowing David in chap. xvii., when he had been so much with him in the preceding one, is, I judge, quite uncalled for—and it does strike me, that such efforts as that, arise from the book of God being handled more with a *critical* than a *moral* mind. We want the temper of "little children," for "the wise" are taken in their own craftiness.

He feels that he is losing the world, and that is every thing to him. He cared nothing for the kingdom, for its own sake ; and valued its welfare, only so far as that served the world in his heart and his honour among men. The evil spirit now returns with others more wicked than himself. Before, it was a spirit that *troubled* him, but now it *irritates his lusts*, and is too strong for the harp of David. (xvi. 14, xviii. 10.) He had now become one of that generation who will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. (Ps. lviii.) The song of the women had, the rather, awakened all the evil passion of his soul ; and envy and wounded pride and hatred of the righteous work, and express themselves fearfully through all these scenes. That fatal song was to Saul, what Joseph's dream had been to his brethren, and what the tidings of the wise men was afterwards to Herod—it stirred up all his enmity, and David's first successes are, of course, only fresh irritations of his lust (xix. 8, 9) ; and nothing roots it out. Convictions, disappointments, resolutions, all fail. And the ruling passion is strong even in death ; for while he confesses that David shall soon have every thing, and he himself be laid in the grave ; still he says, “swear now, therefore, unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.” Truly this is all a solemn warning to us. Saul's eye was set on fire of hell, and he kept it fixed on the righteous as its prey. “Saul eyed David.” And it is not in the power of the prospect, or the approach of death, to heal “the evil eye.” The spirit of envy and of strife will work in us, even to the very last gasp ; and the only divine cure for it is, to learn through the Holy Ghost, with enlarged hearts, to cease looking to our own personal honour or interest, and to take our place in God's interests ; to know that we have our honour, our enduring honour, only in that mighty and glorious system to which the ten thousand of others, and our own thousand are all contributing. That will give divine victory over the world. But the world was Saul's end, and he must get it at all cost. He knew nothing beyond “his own,” and had never learnt the glorious and enlarging lesson, that

all things are our's, if we are Christ's, for Christ is God's.

But Saul would have David fall by the hand of another, rather than by his own, for he had some stings of conscience in the business as it was; and beside that, he saw that David was "accepted in the sight of all the people." He plots against his life first by the Philistines, then by his daughter, and at last solicits even Jonathan to be the executioner. But these failing, and only forcing David out from the court and the camp, he then proclaims him a Traitor; and would have his people treat him as an outlaw. But no weapon formed against him can prosper. Every snare of the fowler is broken, no craft can surprise, no strength can overthrow him. When the officers of the Jews came to take Jesus they had to return, saying, "no man ever spake like this man;" and Saul himself and his officers are turned into prophets, that every band that would bind this anointed of the Lord might be loosed also.

And David in the exile and shame of an outlaw, gathers round him a company, in the world's esteem, as dishonoured as himself; but who prove the real strength and the only honour of the nation then, and who afterwards shine in the brightest ranks of the people, when the kingdom is set up in righteousness. For it is to this David, this exiled David and his band of distressed and discontented ones, that Israel look in their trouble (xxiii. 1); and the enemy is made to know, that the presence of the God of Israel is with them. The Philistines are routed by them, and the Amelekites spoiled; but they defend and rescue their exposed and threatened brethren. (xxii. xxv.) Such and other famous deeds are done by them, and the priest and the prophet and the sword of Goliath (the symbol and the spoil of glorious war), are with them. As afterwards with the greater than David, there was another dishonoured company, who still were the "the holy seed" of the nation, the publicans and harlots, the Galilean women, and she out of whom He had cast seven devils. Saul and his friends kept court, it is true, and the Scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat, but these were whited sepulchres; and the only place of real honour was to go without the camp, and there meet David and Christ, and their dishonoured bands. For this is the

blessed way of Him who stains the pride of man, and lifts the beggar from the dunghill.

But because David was thus the Lord's chosen, Saul is his enemy, the victim that his envy lusted after ; and the more wisely David carries himself, and shows that God is with him, the more with infatuated heart, Saul fears him and hates him and would fain kill him. In all this, going the way of Satan who, knowing the Son of God in his day, trembled before Him, and yet sought to destroy Him. So fully was Saul found to be of "the children of this world," and "the children of the wicked one." A suitable king for revolted Israel ; his whole course shewing us that nothing is too horrid for man, when God gives him up because of his wickedness. Does not the massacre at Nob by the hand of his Edomite, shew us this ? Does not the massacre at Bethlehem by another Saul, shew us this ? And these are but samples of the ways of that "violent man," in the latter day, who doing according "to His will" shall "go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many."

But Saul can weep when he meets David ; but so did Esau when he met Jacob. There is however, no trusting these tears. They may but indicate the stony ground at best, while all the time the heart is not right with God. David could not trust Saul's tears, but turned away from them to his hold in the wilderness, and says, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." (xxiv. xxvii.) So with the Son of God. When many were believing in Jesus, beholding the miracles which he did, he would not commit himself to them ; (John ii.) so unworthy is man, though he put forth his best, of the confidence of God.

And Saul can prophesy too. But so have others of the same generation. Balaam the prophet prophesied while he was loving the wages of unrighteousness. Caiaphas the priest prophesied, while he was thirsting for innocent blood. Judas the Apostle wrought miracles while he carried the heart of a traitor. And Balaam the prophet, Saul the king, Caiaphas the priest, and Judas the Apostle, are all of one generation. A new heart, or "another heart," as a gift for office, had been imparted to each

of them, and in the Spirit they prophesied or wrought miracles. But all this tells us that it is not gifts that make us what we should be, and that nothing will do, if the heart be not right with God.

My present business I will not forget is with Saul ; but I cannot entirely pass by further notices, which these chapters suggest, of David and of Jonathan.—In David we see much that is indeed beautiful and excellent, richly savouring of the Spirit of God. But still we see also the failing of man. Troubles prove temptations to him, and such temptations as are at times too strong for him. He lies to Ahimelech, feigns madness before Achish, purposes vengeance on Nabal, and seeks a refuge among the uncircumcised. For such is man found to be even in this, one of his best samples. But such was not the Lord. He stood faultless, the author and finisher of faith. The faith of David at Nob or at Gath was not what it had been in the valley of Elah, but all was full and equal brightness in Jesus from the manger to the tree.

In Jonathan also we see beautiful faith. His soul was knit to David the moment he saw him, and he empties himself in order to fill David—he strips himself that he may clothe David. For God gives Jonathan clearly to see the divine purpose touching David. But then the question is, this being so, did Jonathan go far enough ? ought he not to have more fully left his father, and joined the little outcast band in the cave of Adullam ? and is not his inglorious fall at Gilboa the wages of his unbelief ? I judge that it is so ; and thus Jonathan gives us another proof that there is none perfect but the Lord, that none but He has ever gone the walk of faith without some backward step, some error to the right hand or to the left.*

* Nabal and Abigail I would also, in addition, notice here for a little. Their history is quite in character with that of Saul and David—gentler in its tone, but still of the same general character. It is a scene in which the woman, the weaker vessel, acts, but acts in the same spirit of faith with David, while the same person, “the fool,” or “the violent man,” shews himself in Nabal as he had done in Saul. And David and Abigail meet at last, while Saul and Nabal alike perish under the hand of God. David leaves the court of the apostate, and Abigail the house of the fool, and they meet, first, “without the camp,” and then “on the throne.” And so with the Lord and the Church. He, like David, has the scene of deeper trial to go through, and the more extended field of toil to go over, but the Church, the weaker vessel, has to know in her measure, something of the same, and like

But I must now hasten to the closing scenes of this solemn and affecting history. For the night of Israel is now setting in with many a dark and heavy cloud. (xxviii.) Samuel is dead, the Philistines as strong and threatening as ever, David the deliverer of the people, forced without the camp, and our poor king, the slave of his lusts, all fear and confusion. He enquires of God, but there is no answer, because it is written, "because I have called, and ye refused, I will mock when your fear cometh." The Lord was now building against him, and setting him in dark places—he was hedging him about, and making his chain heavy, and when he now cried, he shut out his prayer. It was indeed a day of darkness and trouble to Israel, as it will be, by and bye. There was now a forsaking of the living for the dead, and a seeking unto wizards that peep and that mutter, as there will be in the vexation of the latter day. The day of Israel's final iniquity is now anticipated—it is "trouble and darkness and dimness of anguish," as it will be then. (Is. viii. 20—22.)

At different seasons of the ripening of man's iniquity, there has been a confederacy of kings and their counsellors against the Lord and His Anointed. Thus Pharaoh took council with the magicians to withstand Moses. Balak sent for Balaam to curse Israel. The Jews with Caiaphas their counsellor, rage against the Lord, and imagine evil. And so in the latter day, the confederacy of the beast and the false prophet will form itself against the power, and in despite of the glory and worship of God. And thus at the close of the iniquity, whether it be in Egypt, in Midian,

Abigail to forsake her home in the faith of her beloved, to leave the house of the fool for the Lord's anointed."

And here let me add that nothing but faith could have warranted either Jonathan's or Abigail's conduct. The one would have been a rebellious son, and the other a rebellious wife, had they not both understood and believed God's purposes concerning David. But God's claim upon faith knows no rival, and calls for the sacrifice of the claims either of a father or a husband. Human claims fall before it. And thus the Lord, makes upon us the claims of God himself, when He says, "He that loveth father or mother *more than me*, is not worthy of me." Had He not come with the very authority of God Himself, He could not have claimed thus much from us; and the heart that answers that claim can say nothing less to him than, "my Lord, and my God."—This is one way in which the scripture preaches his divine glory to us.

in Israel or in Christendom, man puts forth his full strength, forms confederacies between the wise ones and the great ones of the earth, "the carpenter encourages the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smites the anvil;" but all this is only made to shew forth the greater glory of Him who sits above all waterfloods. His patience has then been despised, his waiting to be gracious has then been neglected, and "the grounded staff," the decreed vengeance, has only to take its course.

And now in our history, we get another instance of the same desperate effort of man at the consummation of his sin. Saul and the witch of Endor, is another apostate king in consultation with his evil counsellor for the filling up the measure of his iniquity. (1 Chron. x.) The cup was now about to be full, and judgment at the doors, ready to enter.

Saul, I may here observe, had never set up an idol in the land, though that had been so much the way of Israel both before and after him. He had rather been moved with the desire of setting up himself, thus more clearly marking his brotherhood, as I have before observed, with that wilful one of the last days, who is not to regard any God, but to magnify himself above all. And with this desire, he had already cleared the land of wizards and witches.

But even this light was darkness in him, for it was himself and not the God of Israel that he would fain bring in instead of the idol. But now that he is losing himself, and the world, as he fears, is departing from him, he will readily enough strike hands with any helper, and form confederacy with even the witch of Endor.

The way which the Lord now takes in hand to deal with this confederacy, is very striking. By his prophet Ezekiel he has said, "Every one that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him according to the multitude of his idols." (Ezek. xiv. 1—8.) Now this, I judge, was just the way of the Lord in this case. Saul was a corrupt man, in whose heart, and before whose face, the world, as his idol and stumbling block, was set; and because of this, the Lord now answers him Himself. He takes the business out of the hand of the witch

altogether, gives Samuel for a moment according to Saul's desire, but it is only in judgment, only "according to the multitudes of his idols," only to tell him of the vengeance that was now at the very doors prepared for him, his house, and his people. The witch is set aside, just indeed as Balaam had been. Balak, like Saul, had consulted the prophet; but the prophet, like the witch, had been overruled and disappointed. He could not go beyond the word of the Lord, but simply speaks as the Lord constrains him, as here the witch is confounded, and cries out in fear, not knowing what she saw, for the Lord had taken the business into His own hand according to the word of the prophet. And thus, this appearance and word of Samuel was another hand-writing upon the wall, marking judgment against another profane king *with the finger of God himself*.*

The Lord thus in Saul illustrates His own principle of acting as revealed by Ezekiel. It was too late now for any thing but an answer in judgment. Like Esau, Saul might have had God for his portion. The birthright was his, but he sold it. For the honour that cometh from man, he sold it, as Esau did for a mess of pottage. And now there is no place of repentance for him. He beseeches Samuel, but the door was shut, and the master of the house had risen up.

And Saul was no more renewed by all this, than God was led to repentance by it. The prophet going from the dead will not persuade, where the living prophet has been refused. Esau might weep at the loss of the blessing, but he still hated his brother. So here, Saul for a while is amazed and troubled, lying on the earth and refusing to be comforted, but the trouble and amazement pass by, and he takes of the woman's hand, and is refreshed by her dainties. Thus all this is only another stage in his downward path, rather progress than interruption in his dark and evil way. Like Israel His people afterwards, the raising of Lazarus did but strengthen the enmity against the Lord, and carried them onward only the more rapidly to finish their sin at Calvary. (John xi. 47.)

* See another instance of this in the case of Jeroboam and Ahijah. (1 Kings xiv.)

And now we have only to follow our infatuated king to the place of judgment, the "day of visitation." He had rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord had rejected him. His sin had gone before unto judgment—no inquiry after it need now be made. Every passage of his evil reign had declared it, and now he has only to meet the judgment. Accordingly in the strength of that food which he had received at the hand of his evil counsellor, he goes out against the uncircumcised, but it is only to fall before them. (xxxi.) But not the death of all men does he die. He dies as a fool dies, slain by his own sword; his sons fall with him, and his army is routed by the enemies of the Lord. "Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men that same day together." For it was the Lord, and not the Philistines that had a controversy with him. The day was the Lord's, and in the day of the Lord, the apostate king and his host fall. "They lie uncircumcised with them that go down to the pit"—and he comes to his end, as another shall do, and there is none to help him. (Dan. xi. 45.)

Thus all ends in the fearful day of Mount Gilboa. Our king has presented us with a fearful pattern of the apostate and his end. He was one indeed who left his first estate. Chosen, anointed, gifted for office, he stood at first in the full title and exercise of the throne; but by transgression he fell, and his office another is to take. Lost, infatuated child of this world. Here was death the wages of sin again, here was the end of man's and of Israel's way, ruin and confusion and the full power of the enemy, the harvest of whirlwind from the wind which they had sown, the end of that storm of rain and thunder which they had been called to listen to at the beginning of their sin. (xii.)

Our Lord has said, "for judgment am I come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." So is it in these scenes (xxix—xxxi.) Here "the lame take the prey," and the stout ones "bow down under the prisoners." The poor outcast David with his little goodly band does mighty deeds which are still to be had in remembrance; but Saul, with the strength of his camp and the

glory of his court perishes, the sport and reproach of the uncircumcised. The spoils of Amalek go among David's friends, while Saul's armour hangs in the house of Ashtaroth, and his head in the temple of Dagon. "This is David's spoil," was said over Amalek; while the Philistines had to publish every where among their people, that "Saul was dead."

Thus are the bows of the mighty broken, while they that stumbled are girded with strength. Because for judgment has the Lord come into the world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.

Well, beloved brethren, surely we have reason to remember Saul, as we are charged by our blessed Master to remember Lot's wife. In him we see the man of the earth perishing in his own corruptions; and in his history we read the end of one whose inward thought was that his house should have continued for ever, but whose way proved his folly. "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness."

Can you and I sit down on the ruin of all that which Saul lived for, and still find that we have lost nothing? Can we look at the world failing us, and yet know that our real inheritance is untouched? Has "the God of glory" as yet led us out from the world? Have we as yet cast our anchor within the veil? Is our "good thing" with Jesus? O brethren, is there not a cause to sound the warning of the history of Saul in our ears? Does it not shew us, that "the friendship of the world is enmity against God?" He sought its honour, and what it had to give; and that he might make sure of that, he gave up God. And are not we pressed and tempted by the same world that ruined him? O that our blessed, blessed Lord, may, by His grace, set our hearts upon Himself, and our eye upon His glory, so that we may stand on the wreck of all that can be wrecked, and still find that our portion is like the everlasting hills! Amen, Lord Jesus!

LEADING THOUGHTS IN EACH BOOK IN THE BIBLE.

THE key to the Bible is Jesus. To Him, every page and word in it relates. No part of it is understood till we see its connection with Him.

As our Lord has many offices, and these offices differ in themselves, and in the services which pertain to them, His glories are diverse and various. In like manner the different parts treat of the different glories of the offices, &c. found in Jesus.

The following is little more than a hasty attempt at the *leading thoughts* of each book in the Bible, given indeed as the full conviction of the writer's mind as the result of much study, yet still merely as hints or suggestions *to be tried* by others. May those who read, "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

GENESIS.—The *whole* of truth revealed, in a state of embryo and type ; like the pot in which a tree is planted, full of roots.

EXODUS.—The revelation of the material, or subject matter of the witness, and the partial dispensation of its form, in the organization of the SANCTUARY. (Much instruction is derived from the study of Job and Exodus together, both being the Enosh state of man.)

LEVITICUS.—Administration of the laws of the sanctuary, or the Priests law book. The Levites are not mentioned till Numbers. Observe. Under Moses it was a form developing a principle ; not (as with us) a principle (itself the rule of administration) organizing a form.

NUMBERS.—The KINGDOM. The administration of the rest of the form in the organization of the camp, Levites, &c. with their laws.

DEUTERONOMY.—The LAND. A resume of the whole given in

LEADING THOUGHTS IN EACH BOOK IN THE BIBLE. 31

Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, in its special connection with the land, and its immediate result and final blessing.

JOSHUA.—Full entrance into and establishment in the land, presenting the moral principles and mode of entrance into blessing.

JUDGES.—The *character* of Israel's past possession of the land, the present evil and God's mode of dealing with it.

RUTH.—God's principles and man's in contrast, and their result.

N.B.—*God as king*.—Elimelech, had a *pleasant purpose of grace*—Naomi, revealed in separateness from himself and his own estate, under two forms, both of which failed as exhibited at a distance from Him : but the purpose of one remained true and when brought under *strength*—Boaz, brought forth *a servant*—Obed, the mean and heir of blessing.

Ruth—satisfied, the } grace—Adam the second.
life-giving spirit. }

Orpah—nakedness, } works—Adam the first.
the living soul. }

1 SAMUEL.—Failure of the office of prophetic judge—man's king and God's—the proof of each.

In type, outline from the birth of Jesus to the fall of antichrist, Jesus as prophetic judge the appointer and sustainer of kingly power in man and God's king.

2 SAMUEL.—Man's king having fallen without hand and none to help him—the internal revolutions, sinful works, &c. leading to the development of the kingly power which is of God.

In type, from the fall of antichrist when Christ is in connection with Israel as king, to the full recognition of them as His people.

1 KINGS.—The establishment and glory of the kingdom and its failure in man's hand.

2 KINGS.—The perfecting of the apostasy and its judgment from the Lord.

1 CHRONICLES.—The thread of redemption traced up to the time of the establishment of the kingly office.

2 CHRONICLES.—The thread of grace traced through the glory failure and judgment of the kingly office up to its first deliverance. Judah only the channel of the stream.

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N.B.—1st and 2nd Chron. are a resume of the genealogy of Christ till Lo-Ammi is written on Israel.

EZRA.—The scribe. Temple built—worship restored.

NEHEMIAH.—City built.

ESTHER.—Secret or hidden. The witness of God's providence when Lo-Ammi.

JOB.—Man in his Enosh state, between God and the devil.

PSALMS.—Fragments from the drama of redemption, contains seventeen books perfect in themselves, all connected with Christ.

PROVERBS.—Principles of conduct for man when God's glory is displayed in the earthlies.

SONGS OF SOLOMON.—The Church in glory in the heavens, and Jews in glory upon the earth.

ISAIAH.—The purpose of God to the Jews as a whole. The latter-day glory,—eyes resting upon the land in its *moral* connection.

JEREMIAH,—[and Ezekiel and Daniel are the prophets of the captivity] at Jerusalem—the man of sorrows—eyes upon moral evil—his heart with the captives, because amid evil, judgment is with God, the place of mercy.

LAMENTATIONS.—The sorrowful privilege of the remnant amid apostasy.

EZEKIEL.—At Chebar—eyes upon the land in its external connection and dependence.

DANIEL.—Outline of Gentile dynasty the skeleton of the prophecy.

HOSEA.—The ten tribes.

JOEL.—The final woe threatened to the land is by the humiliation of a remnant turned upon its enemies.

AMOS.—Ten tribes—nation with the land.

OBADIAH.—Judgment necessarily depends upon and is proportionate to separateness from God's purpose and objects.

JONAH.—God's last address to the heathen, ere it got a beast's heart, on the basis of natural religion.

MICAH.—Abstract principles of Isaiah, beginning before Israel taken away.

NAHUM.—The Lord's complete revenge on Nineveh, showing His abiding gracious connection with Israel.

HABAKKUK.—The oppressor of God's witness must perish, for it stands in the place of judgment: it stands as it were covering the witness, thus given up to it for sin: and iniquity the principle on which it acts, cannot bide in the place of God's witness.

ZEPHANIAH.—The moral judgment of God in Jerusalem, the connection in judgment, and mercy of the nations and Jerusalem.

HAGGAI.—The Lord's gifts no blessing save when used to His end and object in them—the proportion of blessing according to our measure of identification with God's purpose.

ZECHARIAH.—*Though* the Lord will be gracious yet in His own way, through His own appointed means. To chap. vi. generic—a highly prophetic and continuous book. Is the figurative character of the book a proof of the state of the people?—so far gone from God as unwilling to hear—not so far gone as to be unable to understand.

MALACHI.—A last lingering look at Mosaic economy. “Thus do ye.”

MATTHEW.—The history of the king of the Jews.

MARK.—The picture of “the servant of God” full of grace and truth.

LUKE.—The memoir of the Son of man.

JOHN.—The living portrait of the Son of God.

ACTS.—History of the acts of Peter (Apostle of the Church among the Jews), and of Paul (Apostle of the Church among the nations.)

OR.—The history of the formation of the Church of God by Paul, with a brief notice of its state the moment before its birth, i.e. while at Jerusalem.

OR.—History of the progress or transition of the disciples from their Jewish position and state to their proper Church position and state.

ROMANS.—A digest of the doctrines of the dispensation.

1 CORINTHIANS.—The internal order and management of the Church by the Spirit without officers.

2 CORINTHIANS.—Ditto.

GALATIANS.—Justification by faith alone.

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EPHESIANS.—The richness of the stream flowing from Christ Jesus in the privileges of the Saints.

PHILIPPIANS presents us with the fellowship of the Apostle's heart, as a living exemplification of the truth taught in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

COLOSSIANS.—The perfection of the fountain Head of blessing provided by God.

1 THESSALONIANS.—The second coming of Christ the power of the Church's health.

2 THESSALONIANS.—A caution as to the consequent danger of abusing it or turning it to its wrong use.

1 TIMOTHY.—*As to government in the Church.*

1st. God's word in exhortation is the power of rule in God's house.

2ndly. To be able to use this,—a man must be clean himself, of a pure heart, good conscience and faith unfeigned.

2 TIMOTHY.—From the character of the circumstances in the Church and from the end for which the word is used ; the ruler must always expect suffering.

TITUS.—When there is palpable evil among the Saints the word is to be with authority.

PHILEMON.—When there is uprightness and integrity in the Saints, the word is to be used with persuasion not authority.

These four Epistles are the direction of Him that rules among the Saints.

HEBREWS.—The person of the Mediator *within* the tabernacle and its services and offices which are of God, eternal in the heavens.

JAMES.—The outward order of life in the Church, or visible order the result of secret communion with God.

1 PETER.—(The elect stranger and the elect strangers) especially bearing on Jews, or the risen Jesus a Jewish hope in His second coming.

2 PETER.—As the first, only *to all believers* (instead of being as in the First to Israel) and the consequent connexion of resurrection with the apostasy of the Gentiles.

1 JOHN.—The springs of the gospel as found in God, and then

in the Saints and their bearing on the world—on the Saints—on evil in the Church.

2 JOHN.—Receive not seducers.

3 JOHN.—Receive true witnesses.

JUDE.—Apostasy in principle as developed from Cain.

APOCALYPSE.—Answers to Acts. The Acts is the link of connexion between the last and the present dispensation. Apocalypse is the link of connexion between the present dispensation and the next.

THE RESURRECTION, THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

WE have perhaps been able to see, in looking at the Church's hope in Christ, the importance of the doctrine of the resurrection; but the more we search the scriptures, the more we see in this doctrine, the fundamental truth of the Gospel; that truth which gives to redemption its character, and to all other truths their real power. For instance; who does not know that christianity has its root and its foundation in that mysterious and important event, the death of our blessed Saviour? But if it had been possible, that death could have held the Saviour in his power, death, instead of being the foundation of joy and the certainty of salvation, would have been the source of a black despair which nothing could have dissipated.

It is the resurrection which throws its bright beams even into the dark tomb of Christ, tomb of the only righteous One, and trophy of the apparent victory of the prince of this world; it is the resurrection which explains the reason of that momentary submission to the power of the devil, and to the necessary judg-

ment of God. We see also how this truth characterizes the preaching of the Apostles—we read Acts iv., that the priests were “grieved that they preached, through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead.” “God (said they), has raised up this Jesus, whereof we all are witnesses;” and when they were about to choose some one to fill the vacancy which the crime and death of Judas had made in the number of the Apostles, Peter standing up in the midst of them, declared that the resurrection ought to be the solemn subject of their testimony. “Wherefore, said he, of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.” And not to multiply passages, St. Paul says “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins:” (1 Cor. xv.) and the whole chapter shews us the importance of the resurrection of believers, who are His body, as well as that of Christ Himself, who is the Head:—two truths indissolubly united and developed in the New Testament. And it is a remarkable thing amidst the subtleties and resources of Satan, that as he opposed the pretended righteousness of the Pharisees to the perfect and divine righteousness of Christ our Saviour, so had he prepared the incredulity of the Sadducees, to oppose this fundamental doctrine of the resurrection, preached by the Apostles who were the witnesses of it. (Acts v. 17.)

It is by this doctrine of the resurrection, and by the glory which shall follow the resurrection itself, that the *foundations* and the *hopes* of the christian faith are bound together; and by the same doctrine it is that justification and that which is the power of the christian life, sanctification, are necessarily united.

It is commonly said that the resurrection of Christ is the proof of the truth of the christian religion, and the demonstration that the work of Christ in His death was fully accomplished. That is indeed a truth for infidels. If we would prove the truth of christianity to those who do not believe, the fact of the resurrection is the pivot, so to speak, on which the evidence of its truth turns.

God gave it for this end. But for christians, for those who already believe in the blessed Saviour, for those whose hope is already founded on the certainty of the word, and who desire to find the power of that word in their regenerate souls, the resurrection, as set forth in the scriptures, contains much more.

The misery of the Church, and one of the consequences of her long slumber, has been to be satisfied with having, by the grace of God, recovered this portion of the truth. There we are too often apt to stop ; we little think of searching the word to discover the riches contained in it, to find the revelation of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, the portion and heritage of every regenerated soul.

Sometimes this indolence of the flesh excuses itself under the name of wisdom, which would avoid speculative knowledge ; sometimes even under an outward activity which has little real power, because it is, or at least it is the consequence of habit and of duty, and not the expression of the life of a soul constrained by the love of Christ, acting powerfully in it. It is not thus with lively christians. They hunger and thirst after God, and where shall they find that which shall satisfy their desires, if not in Christ, and in all the glory which is His in the goodness and power He has shown forth, and which alone can satisfy the souls of His believing people.

St. Paul had none of those thoughts, wise according to the flesh, when he spoke of the doctrine in question. He regarded all things as loss in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung, so that he might win Christ and be found in Him, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but that which was of faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith ; that he might know Jesus Christ, and the power of His resurrection from the dead. One thing he did, forgetting the things which were behind and reaching forth to those which were before, he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. iii.)

He found then in the resurrection, not only the evidence of the

foundations of his faith (Rom. i. 4), and the accomplishment of the satisfaction for sin (1 Cor. xv. 17), but much more still. The resurrection was to this Apostle of the faith as well as to St. Peter, the object and source of a living hope, the power of the life within. He sought to know the power of the resurrection. He suffered the loss of all things, if by any means he might attain unto it. If the Church has lost her life, her spiritual power, it is not by concealing from herself that which acted with such energy on the soul of the Apostle Paul, which presented itself as the dawn of blessing to the mind of Peter, that she can hope to recover it. Beloved brethren, let us then seek the truth on this point, and examine the blessed word of our God, that we may be instructed on these powerful objects of faith, and that the Spirit of God may guide us into all truth according to His gracious promise, a promise He never fails to fulfil, let us then expect its accomplishment.

I said that the *foundations* and the *hopes* of the christian faith, are bound up together in this truth. The 15th chapter of the 1st Corinthians, clearly shews the resurrection to be the object of christian hope. As it regards ourselves, the same chapter teaches us that it is also its foundation. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins."

As it regards the person of Christ (the fundamental truth of the whole of christianity), we find that He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead. (Rom. i. 4.) In the same Epistle we read, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (iv. 25.) In the 8th chapter of the same Epistle, we find that the glory of the risen Christ, is the object of our hope. "He has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." (Ver. 29.) What can be more beautiful, more striking! The manner in which these are brought together is very clear. The Church sees Christ glorified at the right hand of God. There she sees the evidence that all has been accomplished for her, and that a righteousness belongs to her, in the person of Christ, which will not defile even the throne of God. But in this glory

she also sees the result of that righteousness. (See Phil. ii. 6—10.) She sees in the person of Christ the glory consequent upon it, that is to say, the glory which belongs also to the Church herself, as participating in this righteousness, by union with Christ. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them;" here we have the true sense of Gal. v. 5. "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." We do not wait for righteousness, we have it already in Christ by faith; there, is specially the position of the Church; justified by faith; but seeing in Christ not only this righteousness accomplished, but also the glory, and so to speak, the recompense consequent upon it; we as justified, as filled with the Spirit, through which we thus behold Christ, the Spirit whose presence is the seal of that righteousness, we wait for the glory as that which belongs to us, as that which is due to the righteousness in which we participate.

The use which St. Paul makes of this truth as regards the justification of the sinner, or rather I should say of the Church, is very remarkable; and we see that, by laying the resurrection as the foundation of justification by faith, how that justification is inseparably united to sanctification. In the end of the 3rd chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle had spoken of the blood of Christ, as the thing which God had proposed as the object of justifying faith. In the 4th chapter he continues the subject, and speaking of the justification of Abraham, he proves that he was justified by faith; but the subject of his faith was, that his seed should equal the stars in number. How could such a truth as this become the subject of a justifying faith? We have the Apostle's answer; "he considered not His own body now dead," "being fully persuaded, that what He had promised, He was able also to perform; and therefore it was imputed to Him for righteousness, not to Him only but to us also, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." Faith, then, in the resurrection power of God, was the faith that justified Abraham. St. Peter gives the same character to justifying faith. "You," says he, "who by Him do believe in God that raised Him up from the dead." (1 Pet. i. 21.)

The Church sees Christ dead for the sins that she had committed : this is the end of all that she had done, as descended from the first Adam ; of all that she does, as having in her, by extraction from Him, the nature of the first Adam. The amazing love of the Saviour, led Him to put Himself in the place of the Church, and to become her substitute in meeting the pains of death, the just judgment of the most holy God, and the sufferings consequent upon His wrath ; a judgment which He felt in all its power (because He was Himself holy), even according to the power of God ; wrath of which He felt all the weight, all the horror, because He loved according to the love of God.—He, I say, having given Himself unto death for that object, giving up the ghost, bowed beneath the weight of our sins. Satan the prince of this world, who had the power of death, though finding nothing in Christ to give him power over Him, rejoiced in his victory over the only just one, the only hope of the world, saying by the mouth of his servants, “ Aha ! Aha ! ” and death boasted of having swallowed its only noble victim. But its joy was short ; the triumph of the prince of darkness was but the display of his defeat. He had had to meet, not the Church captive in his power, in the first Adam, but the captain of our salvation. He had had to enter into combat with Him—he had had to put forth all his power, all his strength against Him who had taken our cause in hand. But Christ had submitted Himself to the justice of God, not to those who persecuted Him whom God had stricken. The devil executed the sentence, because he had the power of death over us by the judgment of God ; but the sentence itself was God’s justice against us, and God’s justice was satisfied and Satan’s power destroyed. “ Through death, He destroyed him who had the power of death.” (Heb. ii. 14.)

The resurrection shone upon the world, like the rising of the sun. Faith alone beheld it, the faith of those whose eyes were opened to see the great and sure result of the combat, the consequences of this judgment of God ; the faith of those whom God had chosen to give testimony to the complete victory of Him, who alone had undertaken, who alone could undertake the combat ; to

give testimony, I say, to a world whose blinding by Satan was clearly demonstrated. The victory was gained by Christ alone; but the Church as the object of it, participates in all its results. It is very much to lower the position of the Church, merely to say she is blessed by Christ, blessed of God. She is blest *with* Christ, she is the companion of His glory, the co-heiritor of all the promises. She has fellowship with Him who blesses, she enters into the joy of her Lord; partaker of the divine nature, she feels derivatively, and in communion with Him who is its source, the joy, the delight which the God of love finds in blessing, because He is love itself. How is it then that the Church participates here below in the victory of Christ, and in the fruits of that victory? It is by union with Him, the Second Adam, who is a quickening Spirit, and who quickens the members of His body.

They receive a life, which by uniting them to Christ, renders them partakers, in virtue of this union, of all the consequences of *what* He has done, of all that is in Him as risen, of all the favour in which He stands before God—a life, which makes them the objects of the satisfaction which God takes in Him, and which will make them, when the time is come, *participators* in all the glory to which He is heir, and in which He will be manifested. The Church is looked at by God, and consequently by faith also, as dead with Christ, her sins being put upon Him, the remembrance of them before God is buried in the grave of Christ. As the just God, He remembers them no more: to do so would be not to estimate aright the blood of Christ, not to be just towards Him. “He is faithful and just to forgive us.”

The blood of Christ and not our sins, is before the eyes of God. He esteems us as bought with the price of His blood.

But the Church is also looked at as risen with Christ, living before the Father in the life of Christ, chastised by the Father (who loves her perfectly as He loves the Son Himself) when she turns aside from the ways which please Him, ways suitable to such a life, to such a union; “I am the vine,” said Jesus, “my Father is the husbandman.” God righteously regards us in Christ, as perfect before Him, as Christ Himself is perfect. Our sins buried in

His grave. In love He chastens us as being in Christ, when we do not walk in His ways according to the power of the risen Christ, as inheritors of the glory which He inherited by resurrection.

The scriptures speak thus on the subject: "giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son," (Col. i. 12, 13.)

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. ii. 12—15.) The victory of Satan over the first Adam, rendered him master of his possessions and of his inheritance. "The creature is subject to vanity." The victory of the Second Adam over Satan, spoiled him of all that which he had taken from the first Adam.

God in the loving kindness and wisdom of His counsels, has not yet manifested the results, but the victory is fully gained. The Church knows it, at least, she ought to know it. The consequences to us are these; "if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 1—4.) The prayer of the Apostle for the Ephesians on the same subject, runs thus: "That the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of His calling," the calling of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory (He is called the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, because Christ is regarded as head of the Church), "and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in

the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all : and when we were dead in sins," continues the Spirit by the mouth of the Apostle, "He hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." (Eph. i. 2.) The Church then is regarded by God as risen with Christ, and consequently perfectly justified from all her sins—she is clean, according to the cleanness with which Christ appears before God, being presented to God in Him, and with Him. But how does the Church actually now participate in blessings so great ? It is by partaking of that life, in the power of which Christ is risen. Thus it is then, that, by the doctrine of the resurrection, as it is set forth in the scriptures, justification and sanctification become necessarily united ; it is that I share in the righteousness of Christ, by being quickened with the life in which He was raised from the dead, coming up out of the grave in which He has buried all my sins. But this life is the power of holiness here below. It is the source of holiness in us, it is holiness itself, the life of God in us. It is in this that we have the will to belong to God, acknowledging the grace which has redeemed us, and convinced that our life is not of us, but of God. It is in the power of this life, that we seek the things which are above, which are in Christ, and which are His, that our affections are carried out towards God ; and in this consists true sanctification, the old man being judged as dead, because Christ is dead on account of it—"the body is dead on account of sin"—that is its only fruit—"the spirit is life because of righteousness." Christ then in giving us the life, which is the power of holiness in us, makes us partakers

of all that **He** has done for us as risen from the dead, and of all **His** acceptance before the Father of glory.

Moreover we cannot rightly estimate sin, but by the resurrection; and for this reason it is the doctrine of the resurrection, and of our being raised with Christ, which teaches us that we are dead in sin. Otherwise it would perhaps be a healing, an amelioration of man such as he is, a preservation from death by the help of Christ, a troubling of the waters, that we might plunge into them ourselves and be healed. In this way it is that the natural man looks at the extent of sin, as the Jews, and Martha and Mary expressed it, when they said, "could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

But if we have been raised with Christ, it is because we were *dead* in our sins. The doctrine of our entire misery, our complete fall, flows from, and so to speak, springs out of this truth, and the blessing is proportionate: for death is passed, and every thing that belongs to the old man is dead, through faith with Him. We have another life quite new in which we live, saying, "we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh." There is another consequence, namely, the feeling of the entire favour of God attached to the idea of being a Son; "the grace in which we stand." Having entered by the Cross, we stand in the favour of God in the holy place, having received, not the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption, we cry, Abba Father. Our participation in the resurrection, is our being born of God. As delivered from our sins, because Christ was delivered for them, we stand before God as **His** children, **His** accepted ones, **His** holy ones. Love was manifested towards us in that Christ came to die for us on the earth. Love was accomplished towards us in that we are in Him, such as He is before God, even in this world, because we are united to Him by the Spirit He has given us. Our filial relation to the Father, as being purified from sin, clothed with the robe of righteousness, a relation which gives joy to the soul, flows from this doctrine. He has given us the

privilege to become children of God, not servants but children. Here then are some sweet results from this truth which exist even here, but union with Christ is the foundation ; we may follow these results as regards our body, even into the glory. The resurrection of Christ is the first-fruits, that of the Church the harvest. There is an intimate connection between the resurrection of the Church, and the resurrection of Christ, on account of the union of the Church with Him, because of the one Spirit which is the Spirit of Christ, and which dwells in Him and in the Church.

It is not thus with regard to the wicked, although it is the power of Christ which raises them ; yet it is not because of union with Him, nor by His Spirit dwelling in them ; for the Spirit does not dwell in them : therefore actual resurrection is a thing which belongs to the Church, as the accomplishment of the effect of her union with Christ, not as a necessary preliminary to her judgment ; indeed Christ has already been judged for her, and suffered the penalty of all her sins.

Resurrection is the consequence of the Church having passed the judgment of her sins in Christ, not the preliminary to her judgment by Christ.

It is the reception by Christ of the Church, who suffered with Him, that she might be in the glory with Him in His kingdom. As in John xiv. "In my Father's house are many mansions ;" Christ is not gone there to be alone, "if it were not so I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." This is the judgment of the Church at the return of Christ. I will just remark in this place, that this does not deny a difference of glory among the saints—it does not deny that some will be on His right hand and others on His left in His kingdom ; but this passage only shows us that the resurrection of the Church is the accomplishment of her judgment in Christ, and the accomplishment of the life which she already possesses as risen with Him, the effect of her union with Him as a habitation of the same Spirit. It is neces-

sary that when Christ is manifested, the bodies of those who are His, should also enjoy the privileges of the kingdom, as part of that which He has purchased ; thus delivering them completely and finally from the power of Satan and of death. “ If the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead, says the Apostle to the Romans, dwell in you, He who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by His Spirit which dwelleth in you ;”—a passage which evidently reveals to us, that the resurrection of the saints is a consequence of the resurrection of Christ ; that in fact, the redemption of the Church is a consequence of the interest which God takes in her, as He does in Christ her head. We shall see then, that many passages manifest this special interest of the Church in the resurrection, and that the scriptures speak of the resurrection of the Church, as a thing entirely distinct from the resurrection of the wicked. In this manner St. Paul in a passage already quoted, says, (Phil. iii.) “ if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead, (*ἐξανάστασιν*.) Also in 1 Cor. xv., “ Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at His coming.” In the 20th chapter of St. Luke, we find in one of our Lord’s discourses on this subject, that the existence of the relation between God and Abraham, necessarily supposed the resurrection, not the life of his separated spirit. Many other passages declare also this truth, and moreover that this resurrection was a thing which belonged exclusively to the children of God. He speaks of “ those who shall be found worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead.” How found worthy to obtain the resurrection, if the resurrection is a thing common to the Church and the world ; in a word, if the Church and the world are raised together ? The Lord adds, “ They can no more die, because they will be like the angels, and will be children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” See how the power of the resurrection is identified with this privilege of being children of God. The subject is treated of in a connected manner in John v. 21. “ 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 honour the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into the judgment, but is passed from death unto life..... The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection *of life* ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." Here are two great means of upholding, and of vindicating the glory of the humbled Son. He quickens—He judges.—He quickens, and the Father quickens also.—He alone judges, the Father judges no man.

The saints are quickened in order to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Christ in judgment, claims and maintains His glory, and His right, over all those who have neglected Him, or who were opposed to His glory, in order that all, even the wicked, should honour the Son as they honour the Father.

To this end we find that there are two resurrections, the resurrection unto life, that is to say, the fulfilment of His work in the quickening of the saints, applying to their bodies the power of the resurrection, which had already been applied to their souls, when they were regenerated ; and the resurrection unto judgment, in order that those who have done evil should be judged. I do not here speak of the interval, but I merely say that there are two resurrections which are different, as well in their objects and character, as in the persons who will take part in them. I will just remark by the way, that the expression, on which those who object to the interpretation which supposes an interval of time between these two resurrections, *rest* their opinions, has in no respect the force which they attach to it. The Lord says, "the hour is coming." See, say they, a proof that the resurrection of the just and of the unjust will take place at the same time, forgetting that the Lord uses the same word in the 25th verse, to specify the time of His ministry, and at the least 1,800 years of a new dispensation, which commenced at His resurrection.

These two characters of the two resurrections of which I have

spoken, are very important, and distinguish in every sense these two events. The one, I say, that of the Church, which has suffered with Christ, being the application to our bodies of the power of the life of Christ, who has saved us in order to accomplish His work towards us—resurrection being the redemption of the body, and the consequence of what Christ did when He saved us from the judgment; the other, the vindicating His glory in judgment, and the exercise of the justice of the living God against all those who have sinned. The first resurrection consequently is that which we anxiously wait for, to the end that when Christ appears, we may also appear with Him in glory; an epoch which the whole creation is expecting: see Rom. viii. 19, where it is called the manifestation of the sons of God, the glorious liberty of the children of God. There is a passage in the scripture which has struck me much on this subject, and which conveys a special instruction on the difference there is between viewing the resurrection as an event common to the Church and the world, or as a privilege which belongs separately to the Church in consequence of the power of the life which is in Christ. I speak of the 11th chapter of St. John.—Jesus says to Martha, “thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that He shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Here is real faith, a truth she had well learnt. She was not a Sadducee. This is the faith of the Church generally, “he will rise again at the last day” without doubt. The same thing might be said of the most wicked men. “Jesus said unto her, *I am* the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die: believest thou this?” that is, the power of Jesus when present, the power which He will manifest when He comes again. “She saith unto Him, yea Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God, which should come into the world.” Here again is a good confession: those who are saved doubtless believe it also. But here in fact the faith of the greatest part of the Church stops. “And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly,

saying, the Master is come and calleth for thee." Why *did she do this?* why so much haste to quit Jesus, that good Comforter, and to call her sister? Was there not the secret consciousness that she could not hold converse with Jesus on subjects such as these? She believed Him to be the Son of God, but "I am the resurrection and the life" was something too deep for her, her heart was not at ease in the company of Jesus speaking thus. And have we nothing similar to this? are not the sweetest, the most blessed privileges of the Church, too often the things which send the children of God away? They are not at their ease when Christ speaks of such things, they must go and seek some Mary. It is a call for some other person than for them. What were the different characters of these two women, both loved of the Lord? "A woman named Martha received Him into her house, and she had a sister called Mary who sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving. The heart of Martha was not at ease through her want of communion with Jesus, and could not enter into the most blessed and encouraging truths in the things which the heart of Jesus, full of consoling power poured forth, to relieve the miseries by which it was broken. To understand them was beyond the habits of Martha's mind, and saying all that she could say in answer to Jesus, she goes to seek some one who her conscience tells her, is more capable of understanding that which had just proceeded from the heart of Jesus, more capable of maintaining communion with Him, and of sustaining a conversation which was painful to herself, because her spiritual understanding *was unequal to it*. How often is Martha's state called wisdom? how often are the things with which the heart of Jesus—overflows the revelations of our blessing, designated things likely to trouble the Church, perhaps even regarded as reveries. How often does the Church persist in remaining in darkness, fleeing from Jesus and His goodness to conceal from herself her incapacity of communion with Him in these things—satisfied with herself, because she can make the confession of Martha, because she can say with her, "Yea, Lord, thou art the Christ the Son of God who should come into the

world." I am rich, I have need of nothing. Poor Church,—yes, poor—every one of us! May the love of Jesus shine upon thee! O may He give thee such confidence in His love, that thou mayest never tire of drawing from His heart, those sweet truths which are enclosed therein; truths, which attach the soul to Him, and which give strength of soul to walk in the world, separated in heart unto Him. Truths which give power to that secret communion with Him which will make us faithful in His absence, joyful in His presence, calm in soul in the midst of all the misery of a world ruined by death, hastening to run towards Him when we hear these sweet words, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." Be it so, oh! Jesus our Lord: deign, oh! deign to look upon thy Church, thy poor Church, who loves thee and whom thou lovest; if she is weak, oh! strengthen her—if she has turned aside, O God she loves thee, bring her, O bring her back to thyself, even to thyself; her blessedness and her joy, her eternal joy, her Saviour and her strength. Bring her near to thee, where can she find that which shall renew her strength, if not in thee who art the resurrection and the life?

One thing only remains to finish the sketch which I have attempted to make of this important subject. I well know that far from having exhausted, I have but slightly touched upon it.

With respect to the dispensations of God, the resurrection is the fundamental subject of the word of God, since sin and death entered into the world, and sin reigns unto death. If sin reigns unto death, then resurrection only can be the victory over it, and it is a complete and final victory. For he that is dead is free or justified from sin; "now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom. vi. 7—9.) Throughout the scriptures we find this truth, more or less fully disclosed,—the foundation of every hope and of all moral judgment. (See Ps. xlix. xvii. Isa. xxxviii.) And even the restoration of the Jewish people is described as a resurrection. (See Ezek. xxxvii. Is. xxvi.) There is the source of joy as in Ps. xvi. Job xix. And it was a truth so positive—a

notion so necessary to the thoughts of God and of His righteous ones, that when God said, "I am the God of Abraham," the Lord explains it as showing that Abraham was to be raised, for "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." (Matt. xxii. 32.) I said that one thing only remained. It is generally thought that the 20th chapter of the Revelation, is the only support which the word of God gives to the notion of a separate resurrection of the Church. We have already seen that this idea is connected with all the truths in the word of God.

That the Church will rise when Christ comes is a thing acknowledged, as we have seen 1 Cor. xv. 23. Phil. iii. 20, 21. 1 Thess. iv. 15—17.) In the Apocalypse xix. xx. we get the details, there we see that the resurrection of the Church will precede by a thousand years, the resurrection of the rest of the dead, in order that the Church which has suffered with Christ, should also reign with Him when He takes the kingdom, and that she should appear with Him in glory when He appears who is her life. This is the important and striking completion of this great truth—a completion which crowns with results so important a truth, which having its root in the lower parts of the earth, that is, in the grave of Christ, drawing its strength from the life of God, stretches out its branches and lifts its glorious head towards heaven, covering with its spreading boughs all the inhabitants of a blest earth,—the tree of life from which are gathered the fruits of all the promises of God.

Christians, do you know the power of the resurrection of Christ? Are your thoughts those of one who is risen with Him, set on things above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God? Is your salvation a thing accomplished for your soul, so that in the perfect confidence of a new life before God, you can, under the conduct of the good Shepherd, as sheep known of the Lord, go in and out and find good pasture in the fields of His delight? Are you, as being raised up with Him, dead to sin, dead to the pleasures, to the greatness, to the fading glory of a world which crucified the Lord of glory? Do the things of the world exercise no longer an influence over your thoughts, over your life? those things, which as far as man was concerned, caused the death of

Jesus. Do you not desire to be something in the world? Ah! you are not dead; the darkness which surrounded the Cross is still upon your hearts, you do not breathe the fresh air of the resurrection of Jesus, of the presence of your God. Oh, dull and senseless people of God—people ignorant of your real treasures, of your real liberty. Yes, to be alive with Christ, is to be dead to all that the flesh desires.

But if the risen life of Christ, the joy of the light of His presence, the divine and tender love of which Jesus is the expression and the object, beam on you—if the beauty of holiness in the heavenly places—if the universal and perfect homage rendered to God by hearts which never tire, whose adorations serve but to renew their strength—if all things full of the glory of God, giving occasion to praises, whose source never dries up, and whose subjects never fail—if these things please you, then mortify your members which are upon the earth. “Ye are come unto Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” And think you that the honours, the glory, the greatness, the pleasures, the lusts of this world, of which Satan is the prince, can enter there? The gate is too narrow, the gate of death, the death of a crucified and rejected Christ—the gate of death, which if it be deliverance from the guilt of sin, is also deliverance from its yoke. By that gate sin enters not—there must be left all that pertains to the flesh. Those are things which cannot be hid with Christ in God, they have played their part by crucifying Him on earth.

The friendship of the world is enmity with God.—Christian, do you believe this? It is a new life which enters into those holy places, where all things are new, in order to be the joy and enjoyment of a risen people. Christian, christian, death has written its sentence on all things here; by cherishing them you only fill

his hand. The resurrection of Christ gives you a right to bury them, and to bury death itself with them in the grave, the grave of Christ ; that “ whether we live we may live unto God,” inheritors with Him in a new life, of all the promises. Remember that if you are saved, you are risen with Christ.—May He from whom all grace and every perfect gift proceeds, grant you this !

FALSE INTERPRETATIONS.

It is often profitable to examine errors out of which we have ourselves escaped ; for in so doing we discover the false principle which was at the root of the error, which may still be at work in ourselves, though not now in the same way as formerly ; and also we derive instruction as to the proper mode of treating the same error in others. Frequently the view which did once seem to us so unquestionably true, and so accordant with scripture, as to be accredited as “ an axiom of interpretation,” is in aftertimes found to be so entirely devoid of foundation, and so completely opposed to the scriptures, as for us to be convinced that the only thing proved by our past admission of it, is, that we were subject to tradition, and guilty of making the word of God of none effect thereby. This, I believe, to be fully the case in the view still so common, that “ the Church,” as set up at Pentecost, is the subject of the prophetic record of glory among the prophets of the Old Testament ; that she is “ the Jerusalem,” “ the Zion,” “ the circumcision,” “ the Israel,” to whom such glorious promises were given, as are recorded in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c.

I can find no authority for this opinion, after a careful research, of more antiquity or validity than the translators of our authorized version of the scripture. In the fac-simile of the English Bible,

as printed by king James, I find "promises to the Church," "the authority of the Church," &c. given as headings to some chapters and Psalms ; yet from the character of the testimony of the portions of scripture to which these headings are affixed, we might suppose that they were studiously selected as proof that the Church, with the translators, had some other meaning than that more precise and definite meaning, which attaches to it as the name of the present witness upon earth ; the character of the privileges, and the nature of the authority which such portions present, being for the most part, if not always, strictly speaking Jewish ; and the very reverse of those proper to the present witness.

The evils of such an error I shall briefly consider presently ; the inexcusableness of it will be evident, when we consider that any one that reads the bible with ordinary attention, cannot fail to observe that hardly ever does a promise of glory occur in the Old Testament, to any of the parties represented by these names (if indeed ever) without the context containing upbraidings for sin and iniquity, to those who then bore the name ; and in many such passages it is expressly said that the very same subject of rebellion shall be ashamed, by the mercy promised. (See Isaiah i. & ii. Jer. xxxi. &c.)

- On my asking whence arose the idea that the Church is the Jerusalem of prophecy ? I am told Cruden says, Jerusalem is put for the Church militant in Is. lxii. 1. Well, let us look at the passage, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Certainly in this passage alone, there is no evidence that by Jerusalem was meant the Church militant ; and no mind that had not settled the question both upon other and very insufficient evidence could have adduced such a verse as evidence. The context is altogether Jewish, and the period is evidently not connected with that time of long-suffering of our God, under which we live, but with a time of judgment as we see by looking at verse 2 of chap. 61 and at chap. 63. The word in itself is a word of comfort to

Zion and Jerusalem, and we find this time thus introduced in chap. 61, verse 2, "and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn—to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, &c." Now when we consider the conduct of our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth (see Luke iv. 16—19), how in quoting this 61st of Isaiah "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God," how, I say, he closed the book and gave it to the minister after quoting the words, "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—to say that the rest of the verse should have been quoted, seems very like correcting him as well as proving a want of ability in him that makes the assertion, to understand the meaning of what is written, for the day of vengeance is not the time of long-suffering but the very opposite. Again in the same context we have the Lord treading the wine-press alone; in His anger treading those of the people who would not help Him, yea, trampling them in His fury and sprinkling His garments and staining His raiment with their blood—for verse 4 "the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

I have been told also that the Church is called Jerusalem in the New Testament, I say where? The Church is NEVER, not even once so called, neither is there a *single* passage in which the word Jerusalem occurs, so ambiguously used as to admit the *possibility* of its being supposed to mean the Church. In the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, Jerusalem occurs about 70 times, of the city near which our Lord was crucified, and which was afterward overthrown by the Romans. None of these passages can be supposed to mean the Church. The word is found also in Galatians iv. 26, "Jerusalem, *which is above*;" and in Revelation iii. 12. xxi. 2, 10, "The New Jerusalem which cometh down from God out of heaven." Now to say that Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all, is the Church militant on earth, is too plainly a contradiction to need refutation; for that which is above cannot be that which is below, and the mother and the children are also evidently distinct. The New Jerusalem also in Revelation is evidently not the name of the Church militant, inasmuch as

entrance into it is the reward, the still future reward of faithful service. From the New Testament then I find no warrant whatsoever for applying Jerusalem to the Church. As to the New Jerusalem, I would only remark it is evidently *a place*; the place as I judge, which Jesus has gone to make ready for us. (John xiv.) It is not heaven, for it descends out of heaven; as yet Jesus is not in it, for He is on the Father's throne—but He shall be there when it shall be the tabernacle of God with men—His bride there in all her beauteous attire, and Himself the light thereof.

Let us now consider the somewhat similar misapplication of the word "Zion." How constantly in prayer meetings do we hear "our Zion" and our "little Zion" prayed for! how frequently from the pulpit and by the press is Jesus announced as though He were now King in Zion! How many a hymn depends for its whole sense upon the false assumption that the Church or heaven is Zion. Now I can find nothing of the kind in scripture, no not even any thing about a heavenly Zion—Zion in Palestine is all I can there read of. It is *assumed* that by Zion, God means the Church; I say assumed, for it certainly is not written, neither do I remember ever to have heard it said so, constantly as I have heard the assumption made. Now as to its use in the Old Testament, I would only say I cannot find one single passage which any one who had not assumed that Zion meant something else than the literal Zion, would ever venture to quote. In the New Testament the word occurs but seven times, and in each of these places nothing but the literal Zion is meant. In the two first, Matt. xxi. 5, and John xii. 15, our Lord speaks of the inhabitants of the earthly Jerusalem as the daughter of Zion. In Rom. ix. 33, and 1 Pet. ii. 6, the Holy Ghost speaks of the Lord Jesus as being laid in Zion a stumbling-block and rock of offence—these also I judge can refer to nothing but the same subject as the above. 1st.—Because in 1 Cor. i. 23, I find the same idea presented, and that in contrast with the aspect in which He appeared to the Gentiles. We preach Christ crucified unto the JEWS a *stumbling-block*, and unto the GREEKS *foolishness*; and these two different views of our Lord were natural to the peculiarities of the

two parties, and largely exemplified in scripture. The feelings of Peter, when our Lord was opening His approaching sufferings, and Peter's conduct in those sufferings and after, forcibly show how naturally the humiliation of Messiah was calculated to be a stumbling-block. While the cry of the Gentile philosophers, "hear what the vain babbler saith," fairly exemplifies the light in which the Cross appeared to them, as foolishness. 2ndly.—Because neither to the Church nor to those in heaven is He a stumbling-block. But (1 Cor. i. 24) unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. And 3rdly.—Because the context whence the quotation is made, most emphatically binds the word upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The quotation seems to me to be made up from two different chapters in Isaiah. In Isaiah xxviii. 16, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.—And (chap. viii. 14) he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." The humiliation of our Lord in Jerusalem is plainly marked here, and His rejection by its inhabitants; and our Lord Himself, in quoting the 118th Psalm in Matthew xxi. 42, plainly gives us the outline of Israel's judgment for rejecting Him, as well as the yet future judgment of the Gentiles, on whom it shall fall and grind them to powder (v. 44), yea, broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away. (Dan. ii. 35.) The word occurs again in Rom. xi. 26, "there shall come out of Zion the deliverer." The force of this so much depends upon the meaning of "Israel," to which we shall have occasion to look presently, that I shall not rest upon it now, further than to notice that the context presents us with the Church, now in blessing, warned that by reason of unbelief, it will be rejected, cut off, and Israel the nation (at the time Paul wrote "enemies") brought into favour again, and purged from their then ungodliness. Now this prepares the mind at least to find the Zion here spoken of, no

other than the literal one ; and if in addition, the question be asked, “ In the latter-day glory, is Zion, in any way, mentioned as a point whence blessing shall flow,” the answer might be given in these and similar quotations.

The Redeemer shall come to Zion (Is. lix. 20) : The Lord will roar from Zion (Amos i. 2) : The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, &c. (Mic. iv. 2.)

The two remaining passages are Heb. xii. 22, “ Ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem,” &c. ; and Rev. xiv. 1, “ a lamb stood on Mount Zion.” In both of these I believe the literal Zion and none other is meant. He who does not see this in the passage quoted from Hebrews, will I think, be in danger of overlooking the most blessed part of his privileges,—the knowing the glory to be given as ours now already. To faith and to the Spirit time is not, and thus we by the divine nature given to us, know and act upon things which are not as though they were. To me the same blessed fulness of grace is exhibited here, as in Rev. xxi. where, after showing to John the new Jerusalem with all its blessed glory in prophetic vision, it is written, and he said unto me, *It is done.* I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Oh, wondrous God, with whom we have to do ! oh, wondrous world into which the revelation of thy glory in the face of Jesus hath ushered us ! may we know the sweet power of this as the little ones dwelling in thy bosom, and gathered within the blessed range of thine own family, enjoying all that thou hast, as well what is not exhibited to sense as what is. In this passage (from Hebrews) I see just the same blessed grace, the Jerusalem which is above not presented in its present state (whose glory to us would be sadness, until Jesus be there ; to Himself no pleasure till the whole bride is there), but as having coming down ; and where is first to be displayed this tabernacle of God with men ; this glorious dwelling-place of the King of kings and of His bride the Church ? Surely where the kingdom is, over which they are jointly to reign : in Revelation it is seen “ coming down from God out of heaven ” and presented as being so, for the nations of them that are saved to walk in the light of it ;

for the kings of the earth to bring their glory unto, &c. ; and I do surely gather from Isaiah iv. 5, 6, that *there* this glory is to be seen : and the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a defence ; and there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, &c.

As to Rev. xiv. a lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand—I believe this is the literal Mount Zion, simply because in chap. vii. I find the same hundred and forty four thousand are mentioned as being sealed *upon the earth* before God's judgments are allowed to be poured upon *it* ; and secondly as contrasted verse 9, with the great multitude in heaven out of all nations, kindred, tongues, and people. I know it has been objected to the understanding of these, as of the twelve tribes of Israel, that it cannot be so because Dan is omitted. But this objection has no weight with me, until it has been shown why Simeon is omitted in the blessings of the twelve tribes by Moses in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. From none of these passages can I find any warrant for allowing myself to use Zion, as the name of the Church on earth.

I would now make a few remarks concerning the CIRCUMCISION. It has been broadly asserted by some, that "the faithful" now are, properly speaking, Jews—and, though not so boldly affirmed by all, I fear, the evil of this view is practically acted upon by all who see not the heavenly calling, and the strong contrast between its blessings and those of the Jews, the former altogether spiritual and heavenly ; the latter altogether temporal and earthly. In conversing with the advocates of this statement, their argument, as far as I could gather it, was this, that after Israel's rejection of Messiah, the Holy Ghost had made known that He had a hidden meaning in circumcision, even purification from evil, and that it was those who had this, which were accounted the seed. The verses brought forward in defence of this, were such as the following : Rom. ii. 25, for circumcision profiteth if thou keep the law, but if thou break the law, thy circumcision becomes uncircum-

cision ; verse 28, nor is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh, but (verse 29) it is of the heart in the Spirit whose praise is not of men but of God (iii. 30)—one God shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith ; iv. 11, he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness which he had, being yet uncircumcised ; verse 12, a father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision ; 1 Cor. vii. 19, circumcision is the keeping the commandments of God ; Gal. v. 6, in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith working by love ; Eph. ii. 11, called uncircumcision by that which is circumcised in the flesh ; Phil. iii. 2, 3, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh ; Col. ii. 11, ye are complete in Christ, circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, in whom (iii. 11) there is neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision. It has been said more than once to me, it is plain from these passages, that the Holy Ghost has said that His hidden meaning in circumcision was purification—He opened this after Israel's rejection of the Lord, and thus shews us that He has taken up a new line for blessing, and that we are to think no more of the old.

Now to this or any other deductions from these passages I object not, *provided* the following truths be borne in mind.

1st. That so far as purification was implied in circumcision, it was no new truth divulged in latter days ; in Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6, Lev. xxvi. 41, Is. lii. 1, Jer. vi. 10, and we have the same truth taught us where circumcision of the heart and ear, &c. are enforced.

2nd. This *did* not at all interfere with the meaning of the outward ordinances as given in Genesis xvii., and distinctly recognized I think,

3rd. By Paul (Acts xvi. 3) circumcising Timothy ; though of the Gentiles he said, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing ; so chap. ii. 3, Titus being a Greek was not circumcised.

4th. At the present time certainly God acts not upon the out-

ward rite, but it could easily be proved from such passages as Isaiah l., Jeremiah xxxi. 31, that this will not continue always, but yet again He will remember the literal circumcision.

5th. What are the promises to the circumcision? [Circumcision is rather presented to us as one of God's boons and gifts to Israel, than "the circumcision" as those to whom are the promises.]

The same things I believe may justly be said on the use of Israel—the Holy Ghost certainly does call some of the faithful in the Apostle's day (Gal. vi. 16) the Israel of God, and in Rom. ix. 6, he asserts that they are not all Israel who are called Israel; but this neither gives us the right to appropriate to ourselves the position and promises given to Israel in the Old Testament, nor does it prove that God has cast off for ever his people—can any thing be more plainly set forth, than this in the 11th of Romans? Let any one that doubts this read the passage substituting "the church" in place of Israel; verse 16, 17, the introduction of the Gentile wild olive into grace, is spoken of; verse 18—22, warning is given to the wild olive to remember its origin, and present standing by grace; verse 23 onward, he declares that what was broken out can and shall be grafted in again? What was this? Israel as a nation, for God had not rejected individual Israelites—Now I do say, let any one bear these things in mind, and also that the Apostle was writing to the Church of God at Rome, and they will see at once the folly of substituting the Church of God for Israel. Let any one read the passage and say had blindness in part happened to the *Church of God* till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all the *Church of God* shall be saved? Was the *Church of God* enemies for the *Church of God at Rome's* sakes? did the *Church of God* now, not believe? or was it concluded in unbelief? certainly not—and the assumption of a Jewish standing by the Church, can alone account for the currency of such thoughts.

The same remarks equally apply to the word Jew, as found in Rom ii. 25, Gal iii. 28, and Col. iii. 11.

The object of the adversary in these mis-interpretations is perfectly plain—the disastrous effect is already but too evident in

those that hold them. If the Church is now exhibited in the subject of the promises and predictions given to the nation Israel, then judgment is not before us, but a gradual increase of light and glory upon earth. This has proved an inclined plane into the world, to the heart and mind of many a saint : no man can hold it honestly but to his own injury.

It is not the want of knowledge which most grieves me in these false interpretations—but the sad want of fellowship with the divine mind, and the ways of Him with whom we have do. Did God ever hold under continued chastening, so supporting that which was chastened as to hinder its consumption, and not give an end of mercy and blessing? Is not every principle on which God is dealing with us as individuals, laden with hopes for Israel? His truth, His grace, His faithfulness, His sovereign power, His election and remembrance of the fathers—all pledged to the nation Israel. With one more remark I shall conclude.—In all His dealings with the earth, our God has ever kept the day of Christ before Him—its glory is twofold. There is a glory celestial, and a glory terrestrial in it, even a combination of all the glory of nature, providence, and grace, in heaven and on earth. To Abraham there were two promises; one of glory celestial in the Spirit—the other of glory terrestrial in the flesh. The ministration of condemnation by Moses typified the terrestrial glory; we live not properly speaking, in the antitype of this, but in the type and foretaste of the celestial glory.—And I am bold to say, that if any one will prayerfully study the Acts and the Epistles, taking nothing for granted, but proving all things, they will soon see, that, while after Israel's rejection of Messiah, the faith, and grace and Spirit, which were concerned in all the promises made to Abraham were acted upon, without any exclusive preeminence to the circumcised flesh—all this was done simply upon the assumption that that flesh would be again recognized and honoured. When the Mediator, Priest, and King, was rejected, He went into a far country there to seek a bride; but this (the unlooked for actings of His love) no more interferes with His grace to His own nation after the flesh, than did Moses' journey into Midian, or Solomon's consort from Egypt—it all had respect thereunto.

SPECIFIC MEANINGS OF SOME OF THE WORDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

USUALLY REGARDED AS SYNONYMS.

DEAR BROTHER,

I would gladly submit to the consideration and to the spiritual judgment of our brethren in Jesus, a few observations respecting some of the terms in the New Testament ; the ground work of which, I have either drawn from the Latin work "Tittmann de Synonymis," or have collected in reading the Greek Testament with brethren. They may lead others to weigh more discriminatively, and consequently to apprehend more accurately, the meaning of some passages in scripture. They commend themselves to my own judgment, still I would only wish them to be put forth as the communication of a correspondent, who desires no further weight to be given to them, than their consistency with truth is found on examination to warrant.

The words *αγαπω* and *φιλω*, which are both rendered in English by the word "to love," have distinctive expression in Greek, though it is rather a shade of difference than a broad line of distinction invariably preserved. The former expresses regard, consideration, and affection ; but to my apprehension, the latter is more expressive of intimate and tender endearment. The former is used in Mark x. 21, where Jesus beheld with compassionate and considerate regard the young man who was striving though blindly, to approve his own ways before God. It is recorded "Jesus beholding him loved (*ηγαπησεν*) him." Again men are said *αγαπαν τον θεον*, but never *φιλειν*. God indeed is said both *αγαπαν* and *φιλειν ανθρωπους* : but even in this expression of God's love I observe some difference ; thus in John iii. 16, God so loved (*ηγαπησεν*)

the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever &c. ; but in John xvi. 27, where the intimate communion of believers is spoken of, it reads "the Father Himself loveth you (*φιλει*) because ye have loved me." (*πεφιληκατε*)

Simon Peter's reply to the question of Jesus in John xxi. 15—17, may be another instance of *φιλεω* being used as a term of more intimate communion than *αγαπω*. Though I would observe that the reverse holds with regard to the substantives *αγαπη* and *φιλια* : and consequently when the substantive is used with the verb. (John xvii. 26.) "The love wherewith thou hast loved me" (*αγαπη ην ηγαπησας*), it must undoubtedly be understood of the tenderest love of the Father.

The use of *αγαπω* in Matt. v. 43, "Love your enemies," seems to show that it may be spoken of love towards an object that is insensible of the affection (as in John iii. 16), as well as of an object that is worthy and responsive to it ; but *φιλεω* seems more decidedly to infer something responsive or cognate in the object, thus in John xv. 19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ; (*εφιλει*)—and again (John v. 20), "For the Father loveth (*φιλει*) the Son."

Both the terms are used where Jesus's love is spoken of in the affliction of the family at Bethany. The Evangelist's account is "Jesus loved (*ηγαπα*) Martha and her sister, and Lazarus ;" but there seems a tenderness in the expression used in the message of the sisters, an appeal to the affectionate heart of Jesus in quiet confiding dependance : "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest (*φιλει*) is sick. And again the Jews who beheld Jesus weep, said "behold how He loved (*εφιλει*) him."

Αγιος, *αγνος*, *οσιος*, *ιερος*, *καθαρος*, are respectively applied, *αγιος* to sanctify, *αγνος* to purity, *οσιος* to piety, *ιερος* to sacredness or consecration, *καθαρος* to that which is simple, unmixed, *clean*.

So *κλησις αγια* 2 Tim. i. 9, a calling that invests with holiness in the same way as *κλησις επουρανιος* Heb. iii. 6, is a calling which places believers in a heavenly position in Jesus.

In 1 John, iii. 3, we see the peculiar force of *αγνος* "purifieth himself even as he is *pure*."

In 1 Tim. 2, 8, by observing the power of the word *οσιος*, we understand the precept to be, pray every where, lifting up hands that have been *employed in pious service*. Some interpret the clause “without wrath and doubting,” as meaning generally “apart from angry contention ;” others explain it as meaning “without resentment in case of persecution, without disputation or doubt as to their being cared for without protecting themselves,” and apply it in connection with the precept, to pray for kings and all that are in authority. In Titus i. 8, it is said a bishop or an elder having oversight of the flock must be *pious* (*οσιος*), temperate.

The special force of *ερος* enters into the expression *εροπρεπης*, Titus ii. 3, “in behaviour as becometh holiness,” i.e. as consistent with the character of those sacredly devoting themselves to the Lord.

By consideration of the force of *καθαρος* (clean), and also noticing the force of *θρησκεια*, service to God; we see the meaning of James i. 27, to be the “service of a believer that is clean and approvable with God, is to visit the fatherless,” &c. and that this verse gives no definition of religion as it has been wrongly stated to do.

Απιστια—απειθεια.

The distinction between these is, that *απιστια* is unbelief of heart, whereas *απειθεια* is that unbelief proceeding to overt acts of disobedience. We see therefore the father of the child (Mark ix. 24) owning and lamenting over the former, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief ;” whereas he would indeed have shrunk from *απειθεια*. The former we may have to struggle against as a sore trial, but the latter cannot be admitted at all without positive sin. It develops the evil principle which was before cognizable to God, and it seals home guilt. It was therefore to the disobedient Israelites in the wilderness, or those “*that disobeyed*” that God swore they should not enter into His rest (Heb. iii. 18), though the secret principle is made known in the next verse. Still where the subject is taken up again (Heb. iv. 6), it is *disobedience* and not unbelief which is assigned as the barrier which prevented their entering into the rest ; and a caution is added in verse 11, “lest any fall after the same example of *disobedience* (not unbelief simply.)”

Αἰων—κοσμος—οικουμενη.

Αἰων (in the singular), the moral world—the dispensation or dispensations in which the moral world exists, and specially of this *age* in contradistinction to the millennial age. In the plural however it is used for the material world. (Heb. xi. 3.)

κοσμος, the material world, the state in which it may be, its greatness and pleasures—the mass of the people—or the unenlightened.

οικουμενη.—lit. “the inhabited” the portion of the world which is the sphere of prophecy more particularly—or that which formed the territory of the Roman empire at the first advent of the Lord. (Luke ii. 1. Acts xi. 28.)

Therefore the passage 1 Cor. viii. 13, which is translated “while the world standeth,” introduces an idea of the material world, which is not in the original.—The Greek is simply “for ever,” (See under *αιων* and *χρονος*.)

Satan has in his power (subject indeed to an overruling control) *βασιλειας του κοσμου* during this *αιων*—and no longer.—He is only *ο αρχων τον κοσμον* for a time, but he is termed even *ο θεος αιωνος τουτου*. (2 Cor. iv. 4.)* The world and its kingdoms will be redeemed into the possession of the Lord of the whole earth, according to the voice: “the kingdoms of this world (*κοσμου*) are become (the kingdoms) of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.” (*εις αιωνας των αιωνων*.) Rev. xi. 15.

The *οικουμενη μελλουσα* is “the world in its future state of millennial blessedness in the Lord’s day—in contrast to the world in man’s day, the manifestation of the glory being more especially in the portion of it above defined.

Αἰων—χρονος—ωρα—καιρος.

The two first are terms of indefinite extension—the two last are definite. *αιων* is an extended duration of time, the limits of which are not cognizable by mere human forecast, but which are settled with God. *χρονος* likewise is an indefinite course of time, but spoken of time as it were in transition. *ωρα* is a definite space of time or punctum temporis, be it long or short.

* I do not think that Satan rightfully had the *βασιλειας του κοσμου* when he offered them to the Lord—that he was not at that time *αρχων του κοσμου* and only became so by the *κοσμος* having rejected Christ.

καιρος,—the opportune season.

According to the above definition of *αιων*, when it is used without any accompanying word of limitation, it signifies time of indefinite extent, either antecedently or yet to come. Thus in John ix. 32, *εκ του αιωνος* of unlimited antecedent time, which is translated loosely “since the world began.” Again of unlimited time to come, in Matt. xxi. 19, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.” (*εις τον αιωνα*.)

The termination of an *αιων*, or the limits of several *αιωνες*—ages or dispensations—being subject of revelation, it will be man’s wisdom to observe attentively every ray of divine truth which teaches us to discriminate the peculiar character and appropriate circumstances of each of them.

χρος is the expression of time as the space for the occurrence of any event as 1 Peter i. 17, “pass the time of your sojourning here in fear;” Matt. ii. 17, “enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.”

We may trace its distinction from *καιρος* in Acts i. 17. “It is not for you to know the *space of time*, and the seasons.” I find the observation made in p. 192 of the fifth volume of the Christian Witness, on the expression—“Time shall be no longer,” confirmed by two considerations. First, wherever *χρος* is used by St. John, it is in the sense of lapse, duration, or interval of time. Secondly, the use of it in Rev. vi. 11, affirmatively, as spoken of the commencement of a further interval, enables us to understand Rev. x. 6, negatively, as the termination of that interval.

ωρα (John iv. 21)—“the hour cometh when,” signifies a definite space of time, viz., that during which the Jews should be rejected; whereas in the 23rd verse, “The hour cometh, and now is,” shews that a definite space of time for spiritual worshippers is also appointed; so again in John v. 25—28, definite periods are spoken of.

But in *καιρος* we have another kind of definite time, viz., that which is the *fit season*. So Mark i. 15, “The time is fulfilled, i.e. the fit season is fully come; and in Ephesians i. 10, “in the dispensation of the fulness of *times*,” we have not only one season,

but the concentration and convergence of all *των καιρων*—when the *καιρος* of Gentile supremacy—the *καιρος* of Israel's rejection—the *καιρος* of the Church's suffering—the *καιρος* of creation's thralldom, should all be complete, and terminate together. Applying this to Eph. v. 16, “redeeming the time because the days are evil—Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is,”—we learn that we are to discriminate the opportunity or fit season—ascertaining the mind of the Lord, and enacting His will in it. If the sense were making simply good use of time, one would expect it to have been *χρονον*, not *καιρον*.

Consistently herewith we have *κατα καιρον* in due time, Rom. v. 6, (the absence of the article is noticeable.) We have also *προ καιρον* (1 Cor. iv. 5), as signifying prematurely.

In Thess. ii. 17, *προς καιρον ωρας* is perhaps rather too briefly rendered for a short time—the full meaning of the words is “for the season of a short period.”

Βλεπειν,—*οραν*,—*ιδειν*,—*οπτεσθαι*,—*θιασθαι*,—*θεωρειν*.

All these words, which I believe have singly their peculiar meaning, are translated by one word in English—“to see.”

βλεπειν is to look upon, or to see face to face—it is also specially to see by faith, or to have one's spiritual vision acute.

In the first sense it occurs Matt. xviii. 10, “do always behold the face of my father.” And in the latter sense its distinction from *οραω* is strongly marked in Heb. ii. 8, “we see not yet all things put under Him” (*ουπω ορωμεν*), but we see Jesus, *βπεπομεν*, i.e. by faith we see Jesus, &c.

Rev. iii. 18, anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see, i.e. that thy spiritual vision may be improved.

οραν.—The characteristic force of this word is, to see any object—the object being specified.

There is an apparent exception of the imperative mood and a few other passages, in some of which there may be an ellipse—“be circumspect,” i.e. look on objects about you, lest &c.

In Mark viii. 24, there is a remarkable juxta-position of the words *βλεπω* and *οραω*, “I have a sight of men, for I see them as trees, walking.

In John xx. 25, *οραω* and *ειδω*. The other disciples said unto him, We have seen the Lord (*εωρακαμεν*), But he said unto them, Except I shall see (*ιδω*) in his hands &c.

ιδειν.—To see anything intelligently, so as to understand its nature or consciously to recognize it, as in the last quotation.

Thus also it is said, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John iii. 3.)

It does not however retain this meaning invariably, nor do I regard it as absolutely necessary, that when the specific meaning of a word in contradistinction to other synonyms has been pointed out, one need expect to find that sense distinctively retained on all occasions, nor is its distinctive character nullified by a less strict use of it in some passages.—For instance, though empire, kingdom, commonwealth, have specific meanings, it is not unusual to find them interchanged in common authors: there may however be more precision in the use of terms in scripture than we hitherto have observed.

οπτεσθαι—to have a view opened to one, or a revelation made which one could not by one’s own powers attain to. (We see therefore readily why it has no active voice.) Thus Matt. v. 8, “for they shall see God,” and 1 John iii. 2, “for we shall see Him as He is.” We shall indeed see the Lord personally, but it will be in consequence of His manifestation of Himself to us—not any matter of our attainment.

θεασθαι and *θεωρειν*—to view deliberately—the former having in it a sense of admiration or astonishment, as Matt. xi. 7; the latter, of quiet contemplation, noticing or viewing an object. I would instance John xvi. 17, as a verse where the peculiar force of the Greek words *θεωρειν* and *οπτεσθαι* is lost in the translation—“a little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me:” The sense is, a little while, and ye view me no more deliberately as ye have to this time done; and again a little while, and I will manifest myself to you; and accordingly we have the view of Jesus opened to His disciples apart from the world. (John xx. 19.)

There will be now greater facility both in tracing terms that are

synonyms, and more readiness in verifying what is the specific meaning of each, by reference to the Englishman's Greek Concordance.—For any reader however slight a proficient in Greek, or indeed without any knowledge of that language, will, by reading down the series of passages given under each word, ascertain in what sense it is specially or predominantly used in the New Testament; and therefore can test, and so reject or admit critical observations of the above nature. And by applying the result of such observations to the passages cited in each series, he may find several passages opened to him of which he had previously but a vague and perhaps inaccurate idea. And not only will the differential speciality of the verbs and nouns be thus traced—but the distinct power of each of the prepositions, and the peculiar signification of the conjunctive and other particles will be brought under more searching discussion, and being accurately defined, will cut off a host of erroneous statements and misconceptions.

I shall be happy if these remarks should be found profitable, and purpose (the Lord willing) to add at a future time some further notices of the same kind.

I am,

Dear Brother,

Your's with much regard,

G. S.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

VAGUE and indefinite thoughts as to what is meant by “the communion of Saints,” and what is the blessedness of it, are too common in the present day. The extent of the ignorance is indeed fearful, because it is amongst Saints who ought to be living

in the known and felt enjoyment of their communion, instead of standing in need that any one should teach them as to its nature and extent. The following citations are from the passages in which the term *κοινωνία* [communion] or some word kindred to it occurs. It will be seen at once that COMMUNION means simply “possessing in common.” Two or more are said to have communion in that which is *common* to them all.” “Possessing in common” then, and not “sympathy” as is generally thought, is the correct meaning of communion.

κοινος (Acts ii. 44.)—And all that believed were together, and had all things *common*.

Acts iv. 32.—The multitude of them that believed....had all things *common*.

Titus i. 4.—Mine own son after the *common* faith.

Jude 3.—Write unto you of the *common* salvation.

κοινωνέω (Rom. xii. 13)—*Distributing* to the necessity of Saints.

Rom. xv. 27.—The Gentiles *have been made partakers* of their spiritual things.

Gal. vi. 6.—Let him that is taught in the word *communicate* unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Phil. iv. 15.—No church *communicated* with me as concerning giving.

1 Tim. v. 22.—Neither *be partakers* of other men's sins.

Heb. ii. 14.—As the children *are partakers* of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.

1 Pet. iv. 13.—As ye *are partakers* of Christ's sufferings.

2 John ii.—*is partaker* of his evil deeds.

κοινωνία (Acts ii. 42)—in the Apostle's doctrine and *fellowship*.

Rom. xv. 26.—A certain *contribution* for the poor.

1 Cor. i. 9.—Ye were called unto the *fellowship* of His Son Jesus.

1 Cor. x. 16.—Is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break is it not the *communion* of the body of Christ?

2 Cor. vi. 14.—What *communion* hath light with darkness?

2 Cor. viii. 4.—And take upon us the *fellowship* of the ministering to the saints.

2 Cor. ix. 13.—For your liberal *distribution* unto them.

2 Cor. xiii. 14.—And the *communion* of the Holy Ghost.

Gal. ii. 9.—The right hands of *fellowship*.

Eph. iii. 9.—What is the *fellowship* of the mystery.

Phil. i. 5.—For your *fellowship* in the gospel.

Phil. ii. 1.—If any *fellowship* of the Spirit.

Phil. iii. 10.—And the *fellowship* of His sufferings.

Philem. 6.—That the *communication* of thy faith.

Heb. xiii. 16.—And to *communicate* forget not.

1 John i. 3.—That ye also may have *fellowship* with us : and truly our *fellowship* is with the Father.

1 John, i. 6.—If we say that we have *fellowship* with him.

1 John, i. 7.—We have *fellowship* one with another.

κοινωνικος (1 Tim. vi. 18)—*willing to communicate*.

κοινωνος (Matt. xxiii. 30)—*partakers* with them in the blood of the prophets.

Luke v. 10.—Which were *partners* with Simon.

1 Cor. x. 18.—Are not they which eat of the sacrifices *partakers*? &c.

1 Cor. x. 20.—I would not that ye should *have fellowship* with devils.

2 Cor. i. 7.—As ye are *partakers* of the sufferings, so shall ye be, &c.

2 Cor. viii. 23.—Titus, he is my *partner* and fellow-helper.

Philem. 17.—If thou count me therefore a *partner*.

Heb. x. 33.—Ye became *companions* of them that were so used.

1 Pet. v. 1.—Also a *partaker* of the glory that shall be revealed.

2 Pet. i. 4.—Ye might be *partakers* of the divine nature.

From these passages I gather assuredly that the meaning of *communion* is “possessing in common.” But *what* is it which is now possessed in common by the Saints? I would answer this by a few citations and passages illustrative of the use of the Greek preposition *συν*, which present to my own mind in a very pointed and forcible way, the perfection of the union of Christ and the Church, and the wonderful unsearchable glory made ours in Him.

Rom. vi. 8.—If we be dead *with* Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

Rom. viii. 32.—He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not *with* Him also freely give us all things.

2 Cor. xiii. 4.—We also are weak in Him, but we shall live *with* Him by the power of God.

Col. ii. 13.—And you . . . hath He quickened together *with* Him.

Col. ii. 20.—If ye be dead *with* Christ from the rudiments of the world.

Col. iii. 3, 4.—Ye are dead, and your life is hid *with* Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear *with* Him in glory.

1 Thess. iv. 14.—Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring *with* Him.

1 Thess. iv. 17.—And so shall we ever be *with* the Lord.

1 Thess. v. 10.—Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together *with* Him.

And more clearly still is the same pressed upon our notice, by the words compounded of this same preposition ; see for instance, *συνφυτος* (Rom. vi. 6)—If we have been “planted together” in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

συνσταυρω (Rom. vi. 6)—Knowing this, that our old man is *crucified with* Him.

Gal. ii. 20.—I am “*crucified with*” Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

συνναποθνησκω (2 Tim. ii. 11)—if we be *dead with* Him, we shall also, &c. &c.

συνθαπτομαι (Rom. vi. 4)—we are “*buried with*” Him by baptism into death.

Col. ii. 12.—“*Buried with*” Him in baptism.

συνζωω (Rom. vi. 8, 2 Tim. ii. 11)—if we be dead with Him, we shall also *live with* Him.

συνζωοποιεω (Eph. ii. 5)—Even when we were dead in sins, hath *quickened us together* with Christ.

Col. ii. 12.—And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He *quickened together* with Him.

συνεγειρω (Eph. ii. 6)—*hath raised up together*.

Col. ii. 12.—Ye *are risen with Him*.

Col. iii. 1.—If ye then *be risen with Christ*, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

συγκαθίζω (Eph. ii. 6)—and *made us sit together* in heavenly places in Christ.

συνεργος (1 Cor. iii. 9)—we are *labourers together* with God.

συμπασχω and συνδοξαζομαι (Rom. viii. 17)—we *suffer with Him*, that we may be also *glorified together*.

συμβασιλευω (2 Tim. ii. 12)—If we suffer, we shall also *reign with Him*.

Such is the chart of the blessed privileges of those who are *συνκληρονόμοι* (Rom. viii. 17), *joint-heirs* with Christ, they are predestinated to be (*συνμορφοι*) Rom. viii. 29, *conformed* to the image of the Son—even their bodies of humiliation *fashioned like* unto His glorious body (Phil. iii. 21), and therefore now likewise called (Phil. iii. 20) to be *made conformable* unto His death.

I see nothing lacking here—if a joint heir with Christ, planted in His death, crucified, dead, and buried with Him; neither the guilt of the old man, nor its deeds, can rise against me: and if alive with Him, quickened, raised up, made to sit together with Him where He sits—with the certain promise of being glorified together and reigning with Him, radiant with all the beauty of His likeness, even to the change of this vile body, like unto His own glorious body,—I can see every reason why I should be a fellow-worker, gladly suffering with Him until the hour of His glory be come—but oh! the wondrous riches of that love which gave us this and far more than this, even the person of the Lord Himself for our possession!—Debtors to grace! may we learn to walk worthy of the high calling in meekness and in love towards all who share with us these unsearchable privileges.

THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

It was on the failure of the law, that the value of the priesthood as ordained of God became known to Israel ; but in the days of Eli, the priesthood itself became corrupted,—the priest's sons, themselves priests, being the leaders in the most flagitious practices. They ground down the people by their exactions, and men “abhorred the offering of the Lord, wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord.” The feeble remonstrances of Eli himself were not the sharp rebuke which the occasion needed. And solemn warning—Eli himself as the one responsible for the maintenance of the honour of God in the priesthood, is made to hear the grievous burden that awaited all his family, and at the same time to know that although man had profaned the ordinance of God in priesthood, and that God would for this set aside His own order ; yet He said, “I will raise up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind, and I will build him a sure house ; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.” How refreshing to the weary soul thus constantly to see mercy rejoicing against judgment, and the sure establishment of all that had failed in man's responsibility in the hands of one who alone is “the faithful and true Witness.” But God raised up in Samuel a most distinct witness of the failure of the priesthood, and then it may be said that the ministry of the Prophets commenced. (Acts. iii. 24.) And from this time the heart of faith turned from the Priest to the Prophet, and it was not that which was in existence which sustained it, but that which was in prospect. The thing announced by Samuel was the execution of summary vengeance on the house of Eli, “because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not.” And now Israel was sustained by an extraordinary energy from God in the person of His prophet. He sacrifices

as well as judges, taking as it were the place of both Moses and Aaron. "And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a Prophet of the Lord."

In all this we find God teaching Israel that their alone power of standing was in that energy which was immediately from Him. Samuel raised the stone of Ebenezer, but they understood it not, and vainly thought they could stand in their own strength under another arrangement, and they desired a king: thus was God's prophet set aside as the priesthood had been corrupted, and surely too with the same end to show that there was only one perfect prophet (Deut. xviii.) as well as only one faithful priest and righteous king. But we find not only the wilfulness of the people in the rejection of God by rejecting His prophet (1 Sam. viii. 7), but their willingness also to have the ministry of the Prophets even after they had had the desire of their heart granted to them in having a king. It was too valuable a blessing to do without, and accordingly we find throughout the history of the kings of Judah and Israel, a class of men known by the name of "sons of the Prophets" or "Prophets," apart from those immediately raised up by God Himself. Among them there were many whom God owned and used, but in later times they became the great instruments in fostering rebellion against God and causing the rejection of His word. The origin of this class so conspicuous in later times, we are not able scripturally to determine. But doubtless at first it arose from piety and the fear of God. In the days of Samuel, those who feared God would have looked to him more than to Saul; and we find a company gathered round the aged seer, either placed there for instruction by their parents or led by the fear of God themselves, who are distinctly called Prophets. (1 Sam. xix. 20.) "And Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw *the company of the Prophets prophesying*, and Samuel *standing as appointed over them*, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul and they also prophesied." It is from this that the term "Schools of the Prophets" appears to have so generally obtained. That there were institutions of this character appears clear, but the question is, were they of divine or

human origin? We have no scriptural authority for believing them to be of God, but that these men of God, Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, should have gladly given themselves to the instruction of the young committed to their charge, teaching them those things which God had revealed to them, bringing them up to reverence God in all His institutions, is by no means improbable. God was now with the Prophet and not with the priest, and therefore real godliness could only be secured through the Prophet. It appears also that these young men were used by the Prophets, who were raised up by the special energy of the Spirit of God, on any service or errand they might be pleased to send them. Thus we read "Elisha the Prophet called one *of the children of the Prophets*, and said unto him, gird up thy loins and take this box of oil in thine hand and go to Ramoth-gilead: and when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehosaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber; then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not. So the young man, even the young man *the Prophet*, went to Ramoth-gilead." (2 Kings, ix. 1—4.)

There can be little doubt that young men so educated, would by degrees have a character attached to them not according to the actual energy of the Spirit of God in them, but according to the education they had received. And although God from among them might raise up instruments fitted to be employed in His service, yet that is not the thing which would have been regarded so much as their official training. And the influence which they had with the people would not have been that which flowed directly from God, but from that which men had instituted, to perpetuate a class among them, which might be useful to them as expositors of the mind of God. This has been one way of man's waywardness—to seek to secure God's blessings by His own wisdom and prudence. If God gave a Prophet, man would desire to have this blessing in his own way, and accordingly he contrives an institution for the supply of Prophets. God may bless such an insti-

tution, and doubtless did under the instruction of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, who appear in their respective times to have been looked on as the heads of these institutions. It was thus that Elijah was looked upon, "and the sons of the Prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away *thy master* from thy head to-day? And he said, yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. And the sons of the Prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. *And fifty men of the sons of the Prophets* went, and stood to view afar off; and they two stood by Jordan. And when the *sons of the Prophets* which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The Spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." (2 Kings, ii. 3, 5, 7, 15, 17.) So we have seen Samuel regarded and subsequently Elisha. (2 Kings, ix.) But the attribute of "jealous" belongs to God, and it is in this that He is especially jealous, that He will not allow any human institution to supply the place of His own prerogative grace. And it was not in the power of any of these illustrious men of God to impart to another the energy of the Spirit in which alone they could act efficiently. Doubtless these Schools of the Prophets were a means of spreading the fear and knowledge of God. The priest's lips which should have kept knowledge had become corrupted and testified against by the Prophets. But when the master-spirit of these men of God had departed with them, the institutions which had been under their superintendence survived, but instead of ensuring the end for which piety had set them up, they became the greatest means of producing corruption and aiding apostasy. These institutions had the same moral power after the death of Elijah or Elisha as when presided over by them. And those who issued from them came to the people with a claim of authority which usage had rendered venerable. And thus by the very means of perpetuating Prophets, was this ordinance of God corrupted, not that he gave it up, but raised up not in these Schools, but in the energy of His own Spirit, His Prophets to prophesy not only against the priests but against "the Prophets of

Israel." And real discernment then stood in distinguishing between the Lord's and the peoples' Prophets. It does not appear that any one of the authenticated Prophets of the Lord was raised up from out of these schools.* But from hence it came to pass that in process of time there was an accredited class of persons, consulted on special occasions and exercising an immense moral influence, the value of which must have depended on their individual piety and simple subjection to what God had revealed. But the weight of that influence was speedily turned against God. It was more popular to prophesy smooth things and deceits, and nothing is so dear to the human heart as to have God's sanction to its own lusts. And hence the popularity of the Prophets who would say, "Thus saith the Lord when the Lord had not spoken." It is not to be supposed that these Prophets were always inventing lies, but they corrupted the word of God and rendered it suitable to man's taste. (2 Cor. ii. 17.) They must imitate the real Prophets in many of their expressions, and yet after all only produce their own vain speculations. "I have heard what *the Prophets* said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of *the Prophets* that prophesy lies? yea, *they are Prophets of the deceit of their own heart*, which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. The Prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, *I am against the Prophets*, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, *I am against the Prophets*, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause them to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them

* Elisha may seem an exception, but he stood as the servant of Elijah as Gehazi subsequently to him, to pour water on his hands.

not, nor commanded them : therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord. And when this people, or the Prophet, or the priest, shall ask thee, saying, what is the burden of the Lord ? thou shalt then say unto them, what burden ? I will even forsake you, saith the Lord. And as for *the Prophet*, and *the priest*, and *the people*, that shall say, the burden of the Lord, I will even punish that man and his house." (Jer. xxiii. 25—34.) And the misery and wretchedness of the people was, that they had not the ability to discern between the real Prophet of God, and the educated Prophet of man. Man had taken God's ordinance into his own keeping—he had an institution of his own for supplying that which God could only efficiently supply. Accordingly we find the Prophets as much testified against by the special witnesses of God in the midst of apostasy, as the priests. They are both classed together. But the Prophets appear to have been more actively engaged in helping forward the apostasy, and therefore to be more frequently addressed by the real Prophets of the Lord. This testimony of the Lord against the Prophets, increased as the apostasy set in. The nearer the ruin approached, such is the way of His grace, the more testimony He raised concerning it. But in proportion as God multiplied His witnesses, we find the Prophets of the people multiplied also. We have a remarkable early instance of the influence which these Prophets exercised, recorded in 1 Kings, xxii. We find Jehoshaphat in league with Ahab, and persuaded to go against Ramoth-gilead. "And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day. Then the king of Israel gathered *the Prophets* together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear ? And they said, go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king. And Jehoshaphat said, is there not here *a Prophet of the Lord* besides, that we might enquire of him ? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord : but I hate him ; for he doth not *prophesy good concerning me* but evil. So Micaiah came to the king, and

the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go up against Ramoth-gilead to battle or shall we forbear? thus was the case of Israel according to the Prophet—"a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, see not; and to the Prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." (Isa. xxx. 9, 10.) But it is more especially in the Prophets cotemporary with the apostasy, that we find the powerful influence exercised by these Prophets: Jeremiah at Jerusalem, and Ezekiel at Chebar, each found in them the greatest hindrance to the reception of the word of the Lord. In Jeremiah we have three distinct features.—1st.—God's testimony against the Prophets. "And *the priests* shall be astonished, and *the Prophets* shall wonder." (Jer. iv. 9.) "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; *the Prophets prophesy falsely*, and *the priests bear rule by their means*; and *my people love to have it so*." (Jer. v. 30, 31.) "And *from the Prophet* even unto *the priest*, every one dealeth falsely." (Jer. vi. 13.) "Then said I, ah, Lord God! behold the Prophets say unto them, ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. Then the Lord said unto me, *the Prophets prophesy lies in my name*: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they *prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart*—therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the Prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not; yet they say, sword and famine shall not be in this land; by sword and famine shall those Prophets be consumed." (Jer. xiv. 13, 14, 15.) "I have seen also *in the Prophets of Jerusalem* an horrible thing: *for from the Prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth* into all the land." (Jer. xxiii. 14, 15.)

A second feature was the influence that these Prophets exerted among the people. "The priests ruled by their means." "Then said they, come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, *nor the word from the Prophet*."

Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." (Jer. xviii. 18.) "Hananiah the son of Azur the Prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, *thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel*, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon: and I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Then *the Prophet Jeremiah* said unto *the Prophet Hananiah* in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the Lord, even the Prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the Lord do so: the Lord perform thy words which thou hast prophesied. Nevertheless hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people; the Prophets that have been before me and before thee of old, prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. *The Prophet which prophesieth of peace*, when the word of the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall the Prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him." (Jer. xxviii. 1—9.) These Prophets prophesied of peace and present establishment, according to the word in Micah ii. 11, "If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink, he shall even *be the Prophet of this people*." It was thus that man's own institution became a snare unto him, for God taketh the wise in their own craftiness. The very means they had taken of perpetuating a blessing among them, became by their own wilfulness, the means of blinding them. As in a subsequent period, the Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors of the law, in man's estimate so many supports of religion, were the great means of hindering the people confessing Jesus as the Christ.

As a third feature, we notice the virulent opposition of the

Prophets to God's Prophet. "Then spake the priests *and the Prophets* unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; *for he hath prophesied against this city*, as ye have heard with your ears." (Jer. xxvi. 11, compare Acts vi.) "Why hast thou not reproved Jeremiah of Anathoth, which maketh himself a Prophet to you." (Jer. xxix. 27.)

The whole of Ezekiel xiii. applies to the point in question, but is too long to be quoted. It is painful but profitable to trace the progress of religious corruption: it arises not from without, but from within. No means of outward temptation could apparently have brought the people of Judah to rebel with so bold a front, as corrupt prophets and a corrupt priesthood. It was the blinding power of holding certain ordinances of God, not in the power of God, but in the form which human wisdom had substituted for them, that made the people reply, "Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil." (Jer. xlv. 15—17.)

Now these things are recorded for our admonition, and we have the most substantial authority for asserting, that the declension and apostasy of the Church would arise from those who are accredited as teachers within the Church. "But there were *false Prophets also among the people*, even as there shall be *false teachers among you*, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Pet. ii. 1.) They very early shewed themselves as in the Church of Corinth. "For such are false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 13.) And at Galatia, "I would they were even cut

off which trouble you." (Gal. v. 12.) St. John alludes to them, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." (John ii. 19.) "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not Jesus Christ come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." (2 John, 7. 3—John throughout.) This early attempt of Satan to undermine the Church from within, was that which the Apostles were constantly guarding against, and formed a considerable portion of the afflictions of the gospel. Trying indeed must it have been to the soul of the Apostle, to find all in Asia turned away from him to listen perhaps to those who would set before them doctrines more suited to their tastes. It was thus too at Corinth, where although they had ten thousand instructors, yet not many fathers. Here was the germ of the evil: why not a class of men or a profession of men to be accredited as instructors and teachers, the same as prevailed in their schools of philosophy? This was the readiest way in man's thought to provide for the instruction of the Church; *to heap to themselves teachers*; and it was thus early in the Church that we see its ruin provided for, and the dawning of that season which is not yet fully matured, when they would not endure sound doctrine. The secret is, that we can never be taught except in obedience. "He that hath an ear, let him hear." Now a recognized class of teachers, as such, relieves from the responsibility laid upon us by the Lord. "Take heed how ye hear." Men hear what they like to hear—hear after their own lusts, instead of proving what they hear, and holding fast that which is good. Instruction to the Church never assumes the ground of ignorance, but that of competent understanding. "I write not unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it—and ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things." (John ii. 20.) And the second and third Epistles throw the responsibility on christians, not of receiving teachers as teachers,—let them bear what name they might—but of testing their doctrine. In St. Paul's discourse to the elders of Ephesus, the Spirit leads him to point out the corruption of the Church as arising from within. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also

of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 29, 30.) And the solemn charge of the Apostle to Timothy, points out the result of that which he had noticed to the elders of Ephesus. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Tim. iv. 5.) Now in all these instances there was no guard against these teachers by having recourse to another authorized and accredited class—for the teachers marked as characterizing the apostasy, would be authorized and accredited in the eyes of men; but the only way to meet the difficulty and escape the snare, would be individual faithfulness. He alone in Israel who followed Jehovah fully, would have had moral ability to discern between the wheat and chaff—the Prophet of the Lord and the Prophet of his own heart. Even so at this present time, a single eye to Jesus, subjection to the word of His grace, and regard to the unction—the common possession of the Church, will enable us to discern between the teacher, the gift of the ascended Jesus, and the teacher of man's institution. The provision the Lord has made for the Church, are the abiding presence of the Comforter, and the word of His grace, and ministry. He presents Himself to the Church not only as having the seven spirits of God, the fulness of all spiritual life, but as holding in his hand the seven stars, the perfectness of all ministry. Now the error of the Church has been analogous to the sin of Israel. She has not denied to the Lord the possession of all spiritual power, but ministry as distinctly flowing from Him, (Eph. iv.) and therefore only exercised responsibly unto Him as the Lord ("there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord") was very early set aside by

human institutions ; arising doubtlessly from real piety, and from the desire originally to perpetuate teachers in the Church. As in the case of the Prophets, Jehovah had His servants among those brought up in the Schools of the Prophets—so surely the Holy Ghost as the sovereign dispenser of gifts of ministry, has raised up many from universities and academies to bear witness to Jesus ; but always with the grand characteristic of His teaching, the setting aside, and in the back ground, all advantages derived from such sources, on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, which he teaches. We may smile at the disputations and subtleties of the schoolmen of a former day, but the principle is the same. It is not whether better instruction is afforded in the schools now, but whether the schools themselves are not institutions of man, for the provision of that which the Lord Jesus most jealously keeps in His own hand. It is not to the purpose to say that many of the most faithful ministers have been raised up out of these schools, this is not denied : because the Holy Spirit will not allow human arrangements to interfere with His own sovereignty. But if these schools furnish a supply of men accredited as ministers, they must necessarily exert a powerful influence, much more powerful than perhaps we are disposed to allow. We have seen the Lord raising up Prophets, and men having Prophets of their own ; and the Prophet of the Lord brought into instant collision with the Prophets of the people—Jesus as ascended gives teachers to the Church ; men have provided for teachers in the Church—and may we not reasonably expect that the teachers the Lord has given will find the greatest hindrance from those whom man has provided for himself ?

The Prophet was not an integral part of the former dispensation, but only came in on the failure of the priesthood ; but ministry is the very power of this dispensation ; (Ephes. iv.) “pastors, teachers, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Now if God has provided this in one way, even by distinct gift of the Spirit, and man has substituted another way, we see what necessarily must be the result, even the most fearful form of apostasy. “The beast and *the false Prophet*” go together, the for-

mer could not prevail without the help of the other. Professing christians could not easily be persuaded to believe a lie, unless they had found those who would teach them after human tradition, instead of the plain word of God. And nothing could be devised more effectually to stifle enquiry and to lull the conscience, than a humanly accredited ministry, teaching those things only which the hearers expect to hear. When this is the case, the solemn responsibility of speaking and hearing are alike forgotten. And the very means provided for blessing is by Satan's craft turned into a hindrance. We hear constantly of a young man *intending to go into the ministry*. Now fully granting the honesty of the intention, the very expression shows the popular feeling in the matter. Let such a well-intentioned young man be sent to a university, or academy or institution, and after a few years he comes forth an accredited minister. Now all this appears a direct taking the ministry out of the hands of the Lord Jesus into our own hands. We should see the folly of a pious Israelite sending his son to be educated for a Prophet, as if God needed human preparation for the instrument he would use. And surely to educate for the ministry is infinitely more preposterous in a dispensation in which the Holy Spirit as sovereign divider of His own gifts is especially manifested. We read of Samuel being "established as a Prophet of the Lord," but all his education under the aged and indulgent Eli could never have furnished him with what he was commissioned to reveal. We find Paul thanking the Lord for "*putting him into the ministry*," and unto this his education under Gamaliel profited not. It is not whether one whom the Lord has put into the ministry, may use the aids within his reach to enable him more efficiently to work, for we find Paul not only exhorting Timothy to stir up the gift he had received, but likewise telling him "till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine," but whether *the most vigilant and wise training can make a minister of Christ*. If it be allowed that the various ministries in the Church are distinct gifts, then the recognition of the gift must precede the education, if indeed that be needed. And it would be no longer saying, I think of entering into the ministry,

but “woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.” The very worst evil of human institutions for supplying ministers, is the effect they have of weakening the sense of responsibility to the Lord, in the exercise of ministry. And if ministry be not exercised responsibly unto him, it is not received in responsibility to him. “Take heed how ye hear.” And the result is, that instead of ministry being regarded as that which is for the health of the Church, that ministers are regarded for their own sake. And trivial as it may be, the practical difference between regarding ministers or ministry is very great. We have seen in two former instances, the accredited organs of religious instruction—the Prophets before the captivity, and the Scribes and Lawyers during the time of our Lord’s ministry, all arrayed against the truth. We have solemn warning as to the parallel to be exhibited at the close of this dispensation. And surely it is not too much to say, that the virtual rejection of the Lordship of Jesus and sovereignty of the Spirit in the gift of ministry, has prepared the way for a most unhealthy state of mind in the great majority of christians, who are prepared to receive no more truth, than that which human institutions have thought fit to supply. And it may be safely affirmed, that ignorance of scripture does very generally prevail, and so much insubjection of mind to the word of God, that a plain declaration of scripture is set aside by its supposed contrariety to some received dogma.

The priesthood of Israel stood in order, and we find an early departure from the present order in Nadab and Abihu—awaiting the completeness of its corruption in the sons of Eli. But prophecy stood in power—holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and the corruption was the attempt to establish it in form. Now the whole character of this dispensation, is power; we have a priest constituted after the *power* of an endless life—the word of God is *powerful*—we have received not the spirit of fear but of love, and *of power*, and of a sound mind. And the preaching of the Apostle was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and *of power*. The apostasy then is characterized as having the *form*, but denying

the *power* of godliness. Formal ministry or humanly accredited ministers, must necessarily therefore be the greatest hindrances to the truth. The minds even of professing christians are not in a moment prepared to believe a lie, and a certain previous training by being taught those things which they ought not, must bring about that result so fearfully marked in the scripture:—"with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the *love of the truth*, that they might be saved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion to *believe a lie*, that they all might be damned who *believe not the truth*, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." The apostasy of natural religion was reasoning about God, and therefore He "gave them up to their own lusts." (Rom. i. 19—26.) But now it is the departure from the truth by means of human teaching. The real question is often effectually obscured in disputes about office and order—it is, where is the power of either? Can man's institution at all provide for the presence of the Holy Ghost? Does he still abide according to the Lord's promise in the Church? Let it be granted that human arrangement had secured the exact apostolic order, and that every office in the Church was arranged after the apostolic model—what then? there might be the *form* without the *power* still. Now spiritual wisdom has ever been exercised in the discernment of where God is present in the midst of man's corruptions. There were holy priests after Eli—there were true Prophets amidst Israel's Prophets. There are many most valued ministers among those who are accredited by human institutions; but the wisdom will be to acknowledge that which is of God, and to disown that which is of man. Many are not content to be acknowledged as ministers of Christ—they rest on something besides that "grace given them according to the measure of the gift of Christ," and demand to be received on credentials simply human. Now the recognizing this would be the same as to recognize Israel's Prophets. And would lead us, which is in fact the apostasy of the dispensation to recognize human credentials, where the Spirit of God was not. It is a much readier way to come authenticated by man, than to make "full proof of our ministry." And nothing is more unhealthy, than for a believer to be seeking the authentication of his ministry, and

demanding to be received as a minister, because he has been educated for the ministry. The receiving any is on infinitely higher grounds than any gift of ministry, and that is, as “holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling,”—“heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” Our highest privileges are our common privileges, and no ministry not even that of an Apostle could ever put one so high as the fact of being a child of God has already put him. It is indeed a most blessed thing to minister to the body of Christ, but a more blessed thing to be of the body. And wherever we see the tendency to exalt ministers into a privileged class or order of nearer access to God than others, instead of recognizing them as those having distinct gift of the Spirit, we are in danger of having ministers in name, and not in the “sufficiency of God” in the Church. (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

Let the solemn warning in the case of Israel’s Prophets be looked to by us, and while we seek to honour the Holy Ghost in the thankful acknowledgment of any of His gifts, may we be kept from the sin of acknowledging any office in the Church where He is not. “Having then *gifts*, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation; he that giveth let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth with diligence; he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness.” May the Spirit be manifested in the Church in all His varied gifts for its present need, and in all His manifold grace, that the name of the Lord Jesus may be magnified! Amen.

REMARKS ON MATTHEW V. 33—37.

DEAR BROTHER,

It is a subject of regret to myself, and I believe to others, that papers similar to that on “Swearing,” should occupy the pages of the “Christian Witness”; and for this reason, that while

leaving every liberty to the consciences of all, it seems undesirable that mere debateable points of conscience should fill up the place of instruction, and involve moreover with many an acquiescence in what they think wrong ; or else make the “ Christian Witness ” a place of controversy, a service incomparably inferior to that of communicating profitable and instructive truth. But as you have inserted the paper upon “ Swearing,” you will allow me of course to say why I judge differently as to the passages commented on, and to suggest one or two important points which appear to have been overlooked by the writer.

The chapter in Matthew in which the passage “ swear not at all ” occurs, is clearly bringing the light of the kingdom of heaven to bear on the directions of the law. Now there are two principles in the law upon this subject, to one only of which the Lord’s instructions apply, and He Himself acted subsequently on the other, when adjured by the High Priest. The direction of the law to which the Lord applies His instruction, is — “ thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thy vows.” Now this clearly has reference to a voluntary vow or undertaking on the part of the swearer — “ thou shalt not forswear *thyself*, but shalt perform thy vows.” “ But I say unto you, saith the Lord, swear not at all, neither by heaven, &c. — But let your communication be yea, yea, for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil.” Evidently in my opinion referring to the communication of what was passing in the mind, which if it passed a certain point, was declared, and manifested to come of evil — an expression which involves a fundamental principle of christian righteousness ; such a principle as “ cometh of evil,” was unknown to the law, but when the light of a perfectly holy nature was revealed, now by grace our own, and wrought in by the Holy Ghost, we can judge of things by their source, a source connected with the prince and power of darkness in which it walks ; but however that may be, judged of *in its source*, and not by actually broken precepts and commandments. This, and acting in grace for the expression of our Father’s character in the world, form the cardinal points of distinctive christian character. And jealously must we guard against weakening such a principle as this. Now there was another passage in the law to which the Lord makes no reference whatever, “ if a man hear the

voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen it or known it, and utter it not, he is guilty." Now to this, the principle of the Lord's instruction in no way applies. It was no question of forswearing, or performing vows, nor of coming of evil, nor of men's communications. It was imposing the authority and obligation *of God*, for the disclosure of that to which the witness was privy; therefore it had nothing to do with "coming of evil," for it came from God—used in the hands of those to whom God committed authority, who in this sense were called God. To this the Lord Himself submitted, and when adjured by God, though previously silent, answered. Now the authority of God is in the magistrate, and a christian is bound to recognise it there. The judicial oath therefore instead of vainly and unauthorisedly calling in the name of God, or our own strength dishonourably to one, and presumptuously to the other, recognises the authority of God where He has placed it; and I fully believe that *I should dishonour the authority of God*, were I not to submit to an oath imposed by any magistrate. My principles, or what flows from my heart, are not concerned in it at all save to recognize the authority of God there. And I add, I have nothing to do with the principles of the magistrate at all—the principle is mine, that is to recognise God in the magistrate, and the oath in this sense just *a holy thing*—and the recognition by the magistrate, that God is the source of his authority, and over us both, looked at in that capacity. In this light I confess it seems to me a holy principle to preserve. The Separatists and Friends, have it seems to me, put themselves on entirely wrong grounds, because they have made the magistrate and human laws cognizant of, and capable of estimating the principles and practice of christians. I as a christian own God in the ordinance of the magistrate; I call upon Him to own and know nothing in me of which He is as such incapable; and the magistrate owns God as the source of power, a principle the denial of which is the apostasy of power. As regards the character of the dispensation, the blessedness of that truth is adoringly admitted by me as an exaltation of the poor redeemed sinner—the loved and ransomed Church for the display of grace and holiness and glory—the peculiar display of God's character—the reve-

lation of the Father and the Son. But it is most important to observe, that there is a very definite principle besides this recognised by the Christian, co-ordinate in one point with the former and coming dispensation, and existing previously to the former, looking at the giving of the law as the previous dispensation—power in the hands of man, beginning with Noah. The law, and christianity having higher objects, righteousness and grace, come both within the limits of this, and the dispensation to come takes it up. Now while christianity makes the christian act on his own principles, he when well taught recognises this, and God never relinquishes His character of God in the world, when He assumes that of Father to me, and never will; the denial of it is the last form of pre-millennial apostasy, and it requires always when the highest principles of privilege are obtained, not to set them in opposition to the responsibility which lies on all. I remark this especially in Apostolic teaching, very little in modern, and I fear some statements as to privilege made at the close of the paper on “Swearing,” may have a tendency to weaken the due subjection to this paramount responsibility. “A sinner (we are told), saved by grace, may not yield his stable standing in grace, and descend by self-imprecation under the domain of the judge and just awarder.” (Compare Rom. ii. 6, &c.) And again, “Can an oath appertain to the liberty and exaltation and excellence of Sonship?” Then are the children free, said the Lord, nevertheless that we offend not—render to Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar’s; and to God, the things that are God’s. The Lord here recognises an acting not flowing from the principles of the dispensation in title, but in the patience of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It requires a holy judgment to discern this point of subjection, acknowledging the glory of the kingdom not come, and yet not to leave the grace and principles of the kingdom which is come: a false step subjects the principles of grace to the reproof of that which God will not set aside for it, and thus makes the testimony unavailable to God’s purpose in His kingdom. It is beneath my principles to eat nothing but herbs, but I may do it for another’s sake. And in the case before us, it is not merely the weakness of a brother, but a principle which God claims for Himself, as much as the grace in which He has acted towards me—His power in the

magistrate which the introduction of the name of God in an oath is the magistrate's way of making me acknowledge. It appears to me therefore, a positive sin not to take an oath when the magistrate judicially imposes it, provided the form of oath be unexceptionable, a sin against the name of God in Him. It is not the principle of Christ I look for in the magistrate, but the authority of God. Nor can I look at it as an undertaking in my own strength for the future, but my present intention as responsible to God, and in dependence for blessing upon Him to tell the truth on the magistrate's requisition. It appears to me that James v. 12, comes entirely within the grounds and reasoning of the statement I have made, the argument of the christian being of the truth has nothing to do with the matter; the magistrate as such has nothing to do with this, the question is what I recognize in him, not what he does in me, for I by my principles recognize nothing in him but God's authority and power. It is not my object here to argue the point at large and make the Witness what I should be sorry it were; I have stated what seems sufficient to show the ground on which I think it to be wrong, and have expressed my own judgment on the passages of scripture. I would only add, that I could conceive nothing more unfortunate than making the testimony of the Witness, rest on details of literal points of conscience, instead of the great abiding principles of the grace and truth of Christ against the world.

The paper on "Swearing" having been submitted to the judgment of brethren, was certainly open to comment. But it would be desirable if brethren would consider the great importance of leaving such matters to individual conscience, since the minds of almost all are so much more ready to make such points the basis of communion, than simple faith in Christ. Nothing could be more unwise or undesirable than to make this publication the place of controversy, and it is to be hoped that the insertion of the present letter will not have such an appearance. The point is now before our brethren, and must be left to individual judgment. ED.

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PAUL, A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST. Rom. i. 1.

It is important at all times to distinguish between that which is common to the whole family of God, and that which is the special relationship which any individual may hold to the family. It will be found that what we have in common, is far more extensive than what any individual saint can possibly have as peculiar to himself. And this must be the case when we know that union with Christ is the portion of all that believe on Him, and that all the blessings flowing from this are not only the *highest* but also the *common* blessings of the Church. Now we are very liable to fix our attention on that which distinguishes an individual member of the body of Christ, on account of some superadded gift from the ascended Jesus. We look on such a one as apart from the body, and on that account as removed far above our own sphere, so that we think Him unable to sympathize with us, and ourselves unable to follow Him. It is thus that we have insensibly been led to lower the value of apostolical example, and the tone of apostolical precept, little thinking that no change in the aspect of outward things could affect the essential distinction between the Church and

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the world. In the case of the Apostle Paul for example, we see so much strikingly singular, and the astonishing facts accompanying his conversion and ministry are of so extraordinary a character, that whilst we only contemplate him thus, we wonder but dare not imitate. And this is as it should be. For as an Apostle, Paul has had none to follow him. In this his special relation to the Church as the depositary by visions and revelations of the counsels of God and of the mind of Christ, and the communicator by preaching and writing of those things in which the Lord had appeared unto him, he stands singular and aloof from the body.

But there is another character in which he is presented to us, and that is as the servant of Jesus Christ, and when he mentions this in connection with his apostleship, he gives the title of servant precedence of that of Apostle. (Rom. i. 1.) Now the servant was that character which he could only sustain by virtue of being not his own but bought with a price—it was a redemption character—one which belonged to the whole redeemed family as well as himself, and therefore essential not only to salvation but to glory. Truly as an Apostle too he was redeemed, and sent forth as the Apostle of that redemption, the power of which he knew in his own soul. But neither salvation, life, nor glory, were essential to apostleship, but they were to service. Apostleship was a gift over and above that which was common to all, and placed an individual in a distinct relation to others, but not so as to make the common and essential blessings of less value, but rather to enhance them. For although Paul might have been God's accredited organ of communication of all mysteries to the Church, yet he himself would have lost his blessing and speciality of reward had he not used his apostleship as a servant. And this is the Lord's own preventive against exaltation in any Church office, if it be not used in service the person loses his reward. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." It is this which distinguishes authority exercised in the Church from that which is exercised in the world. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority

upon them, but it shall not be so among you ; but whosoever will be *great* among you, let him be your *minister* ; and whosoever will be *chief* among you, let him be your *servant*, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The world's officer has all the insignia of present power about him, and demands to be acknowledged and is to be acknowledged as having power—the source of his authority is visible and the exercise of it manifest to the eye. On the other hand the source of authority in the Church is invisible, it is from above, from the ascended Jesus, and its exercise is in real spiritual controul and guidance, and the great object is that the person who is the channel by which it is exercised, should so lose his prominence, that Jesus and not the man himself should be exalted. And thus it is exercised in service to Him.

It was so in the case of the Lord Jesus Himself—"He took on Him the form of a servant." And although His own proper and native dignity as the eternal Son was constantly shining forth, even whilst He was sustaining the character He had assumed ; yet He strictly maintained it, and sought to hide Himself, that the glory of Him who had sent Him might appear. He was "among them as one who served"—serving them for His sake who had sent Him. We have the beautiful portrait of the Lord as the servant thus given to us. "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my Spirit upon Him ; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street—a bruised reed shall He not break and the smoking flax shall He not quench : He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth : and the isles shall wait for His law." The way in which this is applied by the Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus in Matt. xii., shows us the parts of the servant's character, which are truly valuable and of great price in the sight of God. He had restored the withered hand—"then the Pharisees went and held a counsel against Him—how they might destroy Him," but when Jesus knew it, He withdrew Himself from thence—"He did not cry,

nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard against them ;” nothing escaped Him of what man would term honest indignation—no railing word against their malice—“ He did not strive”—the patient Servant was upheld by the arm of Him whose Servant He was ; and the Spirit which was upon Him, was another Spirit from that of man, and led Him whilst serving others in blessing to show forth that He served not Himself, but that as the Servant He was only His who sent Him, and reproach and malice did not make Him fail or discourage Him, because His object was only to do the work of Him that sent Him. But we follow Him a step farther in this patience of service :—“ as He withdrew great multitudes followed Him and He healed them all ; and charged them that they should not make Him known, that it might be fulfilled,” &c. &c. As the Servant He was not discouraged by opposition, neither was He elated by that which He had wrought ; He tried to hide Himself, that God might be glorified ; and when He might have turned on the Pharisees with the multitudes He had healed, He would not allow any man to hear His voice in the street, but charged them that they should not make Him known.” Here is the real Servant, the one who hides Himself, that He whom He serves may appear—the one who loses all self-interest in the interests of another.

Now it is especially in this character that Jesus the perfectly instructed and wise Servant, holds Himself up to our imitation. “ The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord : it is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household ? Fear them not therefore.” But there are two spheres of service, and although the same principles guide in both, yet the circumstances are so very different, as to give a different character to the service. The world and the Church are the two places of service. The ministry of the Lord was chiefly confined to the former—for He came as the Servant of Jehovah to Israel—“ He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” Here was active service, such as man could re-

cognize, and in which he sought to hide himself, that God might be glorified. It was attended too with present results, and had its value in measure appreciated by man. But if we look to our Lord's service in the Church, we find it characteristically presented in one beautiful incident—leading Him to take a lower place than ever He had taken in His service in and to the world. "When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God; He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself: after that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. * * * So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well: for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Master; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things happy are ye, if ye do them."

It is in following out this example, that we trace the servant in the Apostle Paul. The sphere of his service was the Church—and although the perfect servant is only to be found in the above example, yet the details of service are more shown by the Apostle than by the Lord Himself. But first let us notice the great principle of service in the Church—in the Lord it was the conscious possession of all things—had any thing been lacking to Himself, He could not have served; but nothing could be added to Him to whom the Father had given all things. Again those whom He served had no claim upon Him for service—"Lord, dost thou wash my feet"—showed the service to be perfectly free. The Apostle too knowing the fulness of Jesus as His own, stood

in the consciousness of one who possessed all things, and at the same time as one who knew himself not his own, but bought with a price, he could say—"though I be free from all men, yet *have I made myself the servant of all.*" In another place, it is true, he says, I am *debtor* both to the Greeks and Barbarians ; both to the wise and the unwise." Man could claim nothing of him, but as the Lord's servant, he felt all had a claim on him. Blessed service indeed which is based on liberty, and whereinsoever exercised is always to the Lord.

On the first calling of the Apostle Paul, as a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, he was to be shown how great things he had *to suffer* for the name-sake of Jesus. The disciple was not to be above his Master, but every one who is perfect is to be as his Master. And the more perfect the servant, so much the more would there be conformity in humiliation, in weariness, and every thing which was sorrowful to man as man, to the Master Himself. It is thus that the Master connects service with every thing contrary to that which the flesh would crave. He sat *weary* on the well—there was nothing around Him to relieve Him, but it was relief to the weariness to serve—my meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. And so He taught. "He that loveth his life shall lose it : and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man will serve me, let him follow me." Truly humbling to the Master to be denied the common refreshment which His own bounty had given to man—and so the disciple followed His steps, and if he was used of the Lord to dispense the living water, it was "in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst." It is in contrast with those who were getting into ministerial ease and honour (1 Cor. iv. 8, 9), that he brings in his own personal sufferings, as marking the character of real service. So again we find after he has described the apostasy in its features of self-love and self-indulgence, he silently contrasts his own conduct as properly exhibiting the servant of the Lord. "But thou hast fully known, my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions,

which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and *all that will live godly* in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Thus making his conduct a sample of that which would characterize faithfulness in any period throughout the dispensation. There might be many other general notices adduced as proving that service to the Lord must be in sorrowful suffering, and that the instructed servant would always be able to say, "that no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."

But I would desire to notice a peculiar class of trials which do not so much outwardly appear, but which strikingly exhibit the servant of the Lord. They are marked by the Apostle as "the afflictions of the gospel"—and while including outward trial, are by no means confined to it. It is as one having nearly arrived at the end of his course that the Apostle mentions to Timothy—like-minded indeed with the Apostle, but apparently failing in that endurance for the elect's sake which so marked Paul's service. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." It is properly "suffer evil with the gospel"—Jesus when personally present suffered evil—the gospel when preached drew out the same evil.—Paul the preacher, suffered for preaching it—and now he calls on Timothy to be a fellow-sufferer with the Lord, His gospel, and Himself. Many turned back and walked not with the Lord when they heard his hard sayings—and a grievous trial was it to the Apostle to find all in Asia turned away from him—and himself imprisoned and unable to visit them. How likely then was the heart of the comparatively young soldier to faint, and to grow dispirited, not from the attacks of open enemies, but from the desertion, suspicion, and luke-warmness even of friends.

How assiduously did the Apostle seek to give to Timothy confidence in the same power, even a resurrection-Lord, which had sustained and carried him through. The shame of supporting a cause abandoned by so many and with its prime mover in prison was

very great. Hard indeed to bear the scorn of being embarked in that which to man's eye was a tottering cause, and nothing but the consciousness in the soul of the Apostle, that God was not looking for any sufficiency in him, but supplying to him all-sufficiency in all things, could have given him such a bounding spring as to make him rise above all apparent failure and disappointment. The confusion and disorder at Corinth—the turning to another gospel at Galatia—the danger of apostasy among the Hebrews, were all sources of trial, unheeded, unknown, and incapable of being felt by man as man, but wearing the mind, so as to make it very consciously to know, what it was to hate his life in this world. One thing too which tended to lead the servant into conformity with his Master, was that he stood almost alone. Timothy was like-minded—yet he could hardly sympathize with the Apostle, who saw before his eyes, that his departure would indeed be the occasion of grievous wolves to enter in. All appeared to be sustained by the energy of the Spirit in this chosen vessel, and whilst he is exhorting Timothy to steadfastness, the repeated charge—"thou therefore endure hardness—watch thou in all things—endure afflictions—be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"—shews that he hesitated to expect that ability in Timothy to endure which had so characterized his own service in the Church. It was the full consciousness that he did not go to the warfare at his own charges—that the Master whom he served was no austere Master—that sustained the soul of the Apostle. He might summarily and authoritatively have settled every question, but this would not have been to have served others for the Lord's sake.

The relation in which the Apostle stood to the Corinthians, appears to me to be especially that of the servant in suffering, the servant being perfected according to his Master. It is not persecution or outward hardship, but the laying himself out in grace to kindle the grace which was in them. The seven first chapters of the second Epistle are, in my judgment, the experience of the Apostle as the servant of the Church. No fainting, no discouragement, no striving, no lifting up, no quenching the smoking flax, no breaking the bruised reed, but a willingness even to

suffer his own reputation for faithfulness and power to be questioned, so that he might serve them in the way they needed to be served. The first epistle to the Corinthians sufficiently informs us of the grievous disorder of that Church—a disorder I believe which would shock any of our modern communions—which have indeed by their regulations secured order, but it is order arising from outward regulations and not that which the Apostle sought as the remedy, that which arises from the power of inward life and grace. If I was asked what there was, which could induce the Apostle to act towards the Church of Corinth, as he did, instead of proceeding to extreme measures in punishing their delinquencies at once, I would say there were three things specially noticeable in his conduct, which most clearly mark that his object was not outward decency, but life in the Spirit.

First:—The Apostle was able to reckon largely on the full supply of grace in Jesus for a case so extreme. He had known that grace in his own extremity—he lived on it himself. It was this alone which prevented his sinking under the daily pressure of the Churches. Jesus was risen and over all. His own confidence was what he pointed out to Timothy, when he said, as encouraging him against many difficulties, “Remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead according to my gospel.” In utter insufficiency in himself to meet a case so desperate as that of the Corinthian Church, except it were in immediate severity of judgment, Paul was enabled to reckon largely on the sufficiency which was in Christ Jesus—he knew no limit to the resources of His grace. Secondly:—The Apostle did not judge after the seeing of his eyes or the hearing of his ears—grievous were the reports that had reached him touching their disorders—but he judged of them as they were in Christ, and not according to their actual circumstances. He reckoned that there was life in them, although it was almost smothered, and the wisdom was to strengthen the things that were ready to die. The first nine verses of the first chapter of the first epistle are most remarkable in this light. Had he gone on the ground of evidences, he might have well doubted if they were Christians at all. But the Lord

had told him that he had much people in the city. They were "the seal of his apostleship," for his word had come to them in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The name of Jesus had been confessed by them; and although the flesh and the world appeared almost to have overwhelmed them, and disputation to have taken the place of faith, yet he would not suffer Satan to make him set aside their confession, or to disown his own labour, because of present appearances. He takes them on the ground of being in Christ, and before a single word of reprehension escapes him, he so grounds them in the faith, that subsequent rebuke should not have the effect of unsettling but of establishing. But, thirdly, there was the personal bearing of the Apostle himself towards this Church. He might have come with the rod, and doubtless his immediate presence would have stopped many abuses, and silenced many a prating teacher. He was fully conscious of the power that he had "to revenge all disobedience," and "to use sharpness according to the power which the Lord had given him to edification and not to destruction." Now had his object been to establish his claim to authority, this would have been the readiest way. But he was fully conscious of his authority, and the question with him was to use it unto edification. To have produced acquiescence to his commandments by his immediate presence was not his object. His delight was to see obedience flowing from grace, as he saw in the Philippians, who not only "obeyed in his presence, but much more in his absence," and to witness order produced by inward life and not outward restrictions. This was the object of his first epistle: he took the place of the patient servant, not fainting nor being discouraged, and waited patiently to see its result. He had the rod at his command, but he did not strive, nor lift up. He said indeed, "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come unto you; but I will come to you shortly, *if the Lord will*: and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up but the power, for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"

Now in the second epistle we find that the Apostle's patience

had been turned against himself by some, as if he was afraid to come, and had boasted of an authority which he did not possess ; yea he is even held up to reproach as a vain and fickle man, whose word was not to be depended on. But this does not move him—he endures all things for the elect's sake, and preferred their restoration to the vindication of his own character, even as the perfect patient Servant, when He was reviled reviled not again, but committed His cause to Him who was near to justify Him. Nothing but the consciousness of being in the place of the servant, entirely forgetting himself, that he might serve others for the Lord's sake, could have carried him through circumstances so trying. Ingratitude from those to whom he had been a father, personal reproach heaped on him by those who were accredited as teachers in the Church, whisperings as to his honesty and integrity, all these trials, so hard to man, moved him not from his purpose of being their servant, as the servant of the Lord unto blessing. The mind which was in Christ Jesus was in him ; and it appears to me that the second epistle to the Corinthians is the exhibition of that mind in the spirit and conduct of the Apostle. It holds a very singular place among the writings of the Apostle : there were questions to be answered and error to be corrected in the first epistle, but in this all the blessed truth is brought out incidentally as exhibiting the reason of his own conduct. We have the experience of man under law given us by the Apostle, (Rom. vii.) he speaks as one in union with Christ in His death and resurrection in the Galatians, he gives us his own estimate of all fleshly advantages in the Philippians, but here we have all the painful experience of the servant of the Lord in outward hardship and inward trial. But the spring of it all, the hidden spring of his unfailing energy in service, was his knowledge of, and communion with, the mind of Christ ; which in result caused him always to triumph in Christ. With the exception of the eighth and ninth chapters, all this epistle is of a personal character : in the first seven chapters he speaks both in the person of Timothy, as well as in his own person ; in the last chapters he was compelled, although it were folly, to speak of himself. He who had taught to rejoice in tri-

bulatation—now rejoices in it. He begins this epistle as one who had triumphed—"blessed be God"—all his trials in service had only served to lead him to know God, as he could not have known Him otherwise, "as the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation." It was in this school he acquired the ability to comfort others ; so that the personal afflictions or personal comfort of the Apostle worked unto the same end, even their profit, for he was their servant.

The manner in which the Apostle met the charge of fickleness against himself, shows forth the dexterousness of divine wisdom. Be it so—I am fickle, but He whom I preach is not so ; in Him is stability—in Him is yea—in Him is amen. The servant would exalt his Master, even apparently at his own expense. For there was no stability in the servant himself, except that which he had in common with them all, even that stability which God *Himself had given them, by establishing them into Christ.* He draws them away from looking to him, by turning them to those blessings which they had in common with him as believers in Christ. He thus makes them as it were judges themselves, putting them in the place of exercising righteous judgment. Had he succeeded in most satisfactorily answering the charge, that would have done nothing to establish their souls. That was his object : as one who knew that when the soul itself is unestablished in grace, it can only judge after the seeing of the eye, or hearing of the ear. But when he had thus set them in blessed security, the common security of the Church, and had shown to them that the privileges which they had in common with the Apostle, were the highest that either he or they could have ; then he could solemnly tell them, that it was no fickleness on his part that had prevented his carrying his intention into effect. But that to spare them he had not come to Corinth. Surely the servant of the Lord must not faint or be discouraged under misconception or misrepresentation, even evil report is a means of approving ourselves as ministers of Christ ; even as deceivers—we are yet true. There is no self-seeking in the servant's place, but the using of every occasion to turn it to the Master's account.

He next gives the reason why he had written instead of personally coming to them ; it was to prove his love for them and interest in them :— he knew their value as saints—he estimated them as seeing them in Christ and not according to their actual standing, and disorderly walk : nothing but their recognition of their real standing would have been real reformation. His immediate presence might have produced that which was outward, but he sought to touch the inward spring. And here we find in the conduct of the servant that which would be judged blameworthy by those who merely looked on the outward appearance and sought not the mind of Christ. The servant knew the preciousness of the saints to the Lord, and knew also how much the glory of His name was implicated in their walk, and more than this that his own energy depended on it ; so that when he had before him the two services of preaching to the world or ministering to weak and disorderly saints, we find the servant of the Lord led into that which might even have been deemed by those who judged not in the Spirit, to be idleness. “ When I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 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.” What a lesson are we taught here, the active diligent pains-taking servant, whom no hardship could move, no danger could hinder, has no heart or ability for the preaching of the gospel, because of his anxious care for distant disorderly saints. How did the Apostle feel himself to be of the body—how little is this known in our days—who among the servants of the Lord is tracing his own dispiritedness for the work to its right cause,—the divided state of the body of Christ ? Again it must be repeated, he might have set all right by his own immediate presence at Corinth—he might have exposed all their errors and declared infallibly the truth of God, but this would not have ministered life to them, nor gladness and strength to his own soul. But how blessedly his ways in Christ resulted, he subsequently states. “ I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side ; with-

out were fightings, within were fears ; nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you." It was this coming of Titus which made him so exult, and connects his triumphant language with his apparent failure in the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the second chapter. For immediately on having mentioned his going from Troas into Macedonia, he says, " Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." He is not here speaking of any success in preaching in Macedonia, nor indeed of preaching at all, but that the way of Christ in which he had walked was the way of triumph. It was the way of self-renunciation, the way "in which the flesh had no rest." To have power and yet not to exercise power,—to be able to vindicate most satisfactorily an aspersed character, and yet to endure the contradiction of sinners against oneself, here is no rest in the flesh—here is the mind and way of Christ—here is the path of glory and virtue leading to certain triumph, conscious triumph even here. Now whilst it is most fully allowed that this is applicable to the preaching of the gospel, and that in this to the faithful servant there is constant triumph, since the testimony always prospers in that whereunto God hath sent it, whether they hear and whether they reject it, yet I do assuredly believe that the whole context shows the mind of the spirit to be the triumph which always follows walking in Christ.

There are two ways of testimony unto Christ : the one by preaching, which may be done through strife or vain glory, and this hinders not the blessing of God to souls, because Christ is to be magnified ; but the other way is that of His living power manifested in service ; and it is to this the Apostle adverts, when he says, "and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place, for *we* are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish : to the one we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other the savour of life unto life." The elect Servant of Jehovah was in the eyes of man, one in whom there was no form nor comeliness ; one in whom they saw no beauty that they should desire Him." Yet

He was ever a sweet savour unto God. If man despised Him, it only proved the justice of God's judgment as to man ; and where there was faith, there "wisdom was justified of her children." The Apostles and real servants of the Lord, were "the foolish, the weak, the base, the despised things of the world." Yet as such, they always triumphed even as their Master, to whom it was said as the despised of men, "therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong." And it is thus the Apostle looks from himself to his Master. "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him (with Him, margin), but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you." His very triumph in Christ was his own personal humiliation in the eyes of men ; he knew that just in proportion as Paul was hidden, Christ would be made to appear. And painful as the needed discipline was, he could say "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake : for when I am weak, then am I strong."

In speaking of the Corinthians themselves, as his best letter of recommendation, he is led to contrast the ministration of the New Testament with that of the Old, and their different glories. Moses as the servant of the one exhibited the glory of the old or of the letter, in its repulsiveness and obscurity ; but Paul as the servant of the other was to exhibit its attractive glory, not only in testimony but in service likewise. Each ministration had the effect of assimilating its servant to its own character. And whilst the Apostle states it as the common portion of all to have communion with that glory (iii. 18), he himself and his fellow-labourers through the knowledge of it were prevented from fainting. "Therefore seeing we have *this ministry as we have obtained mercy* we faint not." There was indeed enough to make him faint, all human energies must have given away under the pressure, but the character of the ministry "life and righteousness," and "we have obtained mercy," caused him not to faint. Official authority might

have punished, but then the servant would have been lost sight of in the Apostle ; and although it put him in so low a place, yet he could thus minister that which their case required. How gracious indeed is it to know, that low and degraded as saints may be, the ministration of the New Testament can reach to them and raise them up. But then it must be by the manifestation of the truth, setting man aside to show that the only sufficiency is in God. The exercise even of apostolical authority might have tended to obscure the lustre of the glory of that grace ; but when such a ministry was commended by the conduct of those who were themselves exhibiting the glory of it, it could only be the direct power of Satan that could cause it to be hidden. That the character of service is here intended to be brought out, is, I think, sufficiently clear, from the connection in verse 5, chap. v. "*for we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*" Now what follows is all characterizing service, in its abasement of the flesh. God's glory must be put in an earthen vessel, that it may be manifested as His and not the vessels which bears it. The chosen vessel must suffer for the name it bears. Is it the ministration of life ? How shall it be manifested ? By seeing death as to man stamped on him who ministers it. It was life in Jesus, as being only in Him, that they had to preach and minister ; therefore it was with them, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, &c. It is most clear from the words, "so then death worketh in us, but life in you," that the Apostle is here speaking of that which is death to man as man,—every thing that would tend to exalt him in the estimation of others, the power of command arising from superior intellect, the influence of birth, the advantages of education—on all them death was written. And the servant of the Lord had to know the deep trial of foregoing all these advantages, that life might work in others. What a practical comment was the experience of the Apostle in service on the word of the Lord—"a man must hate his life in this world." It was the deep entering in of the soul into the

power of the resurrection, which made him practically acquainted with death as man. He had the same spirit of faith as He had whom he served, who could say, "I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted. I said in my haste, all men are liars." Yea, truly all men are liars—are vanity; and therefore it was faith in a resurrection-God which sustained the Apostle in his daily dying. But whilst thus he was lifted above death, he could look at all his sufferings as being in service to the Church, "for all things are for your sakes;" and therefore here was another ground of not fainting. The outer man might perish, but the inner man was renewed day by day by the power of unseen things.

The same leading thought runs through the fifth chapter and into the sixth, as is plainly stated:—"giving no offence in any thing, that the *ministry* be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God." The fifth chapter is connected with the preceding by the word "for we know." The expression "we know," is idiomatic with the Apostle for that knowledge which is peculiar to a Christian, and seems generally to be applied to practical knowledge. It is the portion of the believer alone to be able to judge all things as from above. "We know that the law is spiritual"—this we could not *know* unless we were spiritual. "We know that if our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have," &c. This we could not *know* unless our soul had entered into resurrection as its portion. It was therefore not a vague, but a very distinct apprehension of the resurrection of the body, which made the Apostle patient under all hardships, groaning from without and within in earnest desire of deliverance. There was another thing also which entered into the question of service, and that was the solemn apprehension of the light in which every thing would be judged, when the veil was drawn aside and Christ should appear. His service all had respect to that day, and therefore was not to be judged of by human prudence, but by the Spirit which alone could know the terror of the Lord. He anticipated the judgment, and had been made manifest to God, and also he trusted to their consciences. This was the use in service which the Apostle made of the solemn truth that all of us have

to be manifested before the Bema of Christ. But farther, the light of the resurrection-day had such a powerful effect on the soul of the Apostle, that he would often appear to be acting extravagantly or inconsistently ; but still he could say, “ Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober it is for your cause ; for the love of Christ constraineth us.” He laboured as one who had already died, and therefore in a manner beyond the range of human thought. He knew no man after the flesh, and would not himself be estimated after the flesh. Every thing was new to him, and he laboured as it were in a new creation.

Beyond all this there was another most powerful principle at work in the soul of the Apostle, and that was the so linking himself with God in his service, that he was not discouraged amidst the greatest trials. “ And all things are of God.” It was God who first reconciled him to himself by Jesus Christ, and then gave to him the ministry of reconciliation. It was the ministry of reconciliation ; and the minister of it was not to invest himself with the repulsiveness of God in judgment, but with the attractiveness of God in grace. He would put himself in the way of the patient grace of God, even according as God was exhibited in Christ. It was the incarnation which brought out all the bright effulgence of the divine character—“full of grace and truth.” It was thus He exhibited himself in the world ; but the world knew Him not. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. But He is no longer exhibiting Himself personally *in the world* in this manner to the eyes of men. Man has rejected this manifestation of God, however he may try to hide from himself his shame (as the Jews did theirs of having killed the prophets by building their sepulchres), by celebrating the day of the incarnation. But God, though not personally thus present, is manifested in the same grace now ; and where is He to be so seen ? In the ministry of reconciliation—“and hath put *in* * us the ministry of reconciliation.” It is in this ministry we see God yet in the world ; not judging, not ordering it,

* Θεμενος εν ημιν is clearly answering to ην εν χριστω.

but ministering to its wretchedness in the only way which would meet man's extreme necessity ; that is, by the testimony to the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

Christ is now personally away ; but on His behalf " we intreat, as though God did beseech *by us*." God had stretched out His hands all the day long by His Son, to a disobedient and gainsaying people ; but after this was rejected, it was by the means of others on the ground of more marvellous grace. " We pray in Christ's stead be reconciled to God. For He hath made Him sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

But it was not only as in testimony to the grace of God that he was praying others, but as working together with it. If the testimony was to the grace of God, there was Jesus Himself in the living exhibition of it. If the testimony was to the abounding grace of God in the cross, there were the Apostles as crucified men, the offscouring of all things, giving power to the testimony by conformity to that humiliation of Jesus which they preached. This, I believe to be the meaning of chap. vi. 1, not working together with God, as is supplied in our translation, but as working together with their own testimony—in consistency with it—that whilst their mouth expressed the truth, they might themselves be found walking in it. And then well could they ask the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. There it was still in its fullest exhibition, able to meet all their wants, and to raise them up out of their sunken condition. It was still the season of acceptance : he puts them in mind of that, lest when they were awakened to a sense of their real state, they should be overwhelmed by the discovery of its evil. Their case did not go beyond the reach of the ministry of reconciliation, and there was God exhibited. He feared to hinder this most blessed ministry : his own coming to Corinth with the rod might have hindered it, and therefore his conduct was regulated not by what man might judge fit and proper, but by ascertainment of the mind of Christ. " Giving no offence in anything that the ministry (the ministry of reconciliation) be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves

as the ministers of God—in much patience, by long-suffering, by evil report and good report, as *deceivers* and yet true, as *dying* and behold we live.”

I do most assuredly believe the leading thought in these chapters to be the character of the service, corresponding to that of the grace ministered. It is not the laying before the Church the dispensations of God as in the epistle to the Romans, or unfolding to it its own rich portion as in the Ephesians and Colossians. It is not argumentative as the epistle to the Galatians, but it is the working of that grace and truth in the soul of the Apostle himself in service, of which he was the chosen witness. As he says, “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” A great deal more to the same purpose might be noticed from the tenth chapter to the end, but I forbear to go further in this interesting subject except it be to present one trait of the servant most prominently set forth in the last chapter. It was a hard taunt indeed to be asked at Corinth, for a proof of Christ speaking in him, when they themselves were the mighty proof of it. But then as it had been with the Master Himself, to be in the eyes of men a worm and no man, so was the servant content to be. “For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.” It was resurrection-power in which the Apostle was strong, and every thing that could make man appear glorious and powerful, was taken from him in order to manifest that his power was from above not from man. But outwardly weak as he was, the fact of their believing was the proof of his power, for he it was who had ministered Christ to them. If they had proof of being Christians, then had they proof of Christ speaking in him. This was the proof which satisfied the soul of the Apostle; but if they sought others he had them ready, but he wished not to be put to the test. The best proof to him would be that “they did not evil” which might call forth severity; and he

had rather by their well doing, still continue under the imputation of having put forth pretensions which were not made good, than make them good in their punishment.

Here is the servant hiding himself entirely that only He whom he served might appear. Could the flesh do this? assuredly not. It was service in the Spirit in the gospel of the Son, and therefore the pattern of all real service. And although as to outward hardship, we do not find the same trials now as in those days, yet, in all which arises from the Church itself, the case is so sorrowful, that nothing but the deepest self-renunciation and self-abasement will at all enable us to serve in it, or lift us up above the painful pressure of present circumstances.

It is now high time to awake from ministerial ease. The Lord, and the time is calling for energetic service. But it must be in endurance.—“I therefore endure all things for the elect’s sake.” With uncompromising faithfulness, no weapon must be used that is carnal—only those which are mighty through God. Well may the servant say, “Who is sufficient for these things?” But it is blessed to know that all this present state is not unforeseen and unprovided for. The Lord will still bless faithful service; and however little it may be crowned with present success, no labour in the Lord ever is in vain.

JONAH.

“The sign of Jonas the Prophet.”

ALL that I desire to do upon the book of Jonah the Prophet is, to suggest a few things which have struck my own mind with interest, leaving the subject to the further meditations of my brethren, trusting withal that to whatever measure of knowledge we may, any of us, attain, it may prove to be the nurture and strength of the kingdom of God within us.

Jonah prophesied about the time of Jeroboam II. king of

Israel. He was the witness that "mercy rejoiceth against judgment," for he foretold of gracious things to Israel, though the people were still a guilty and rebellious people. As we read in 2 Kings, xiv. 23—"in the 15th year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years; and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin; he restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel which He spake by the mouth of His servant Jonah the son of Amittai the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher."

But in the book which bears his name, there is no notice of this prophecy. It opens, however, with something that is in character with it. It opens with the Lord giving Jonah a commission to go to preach against Nineveh, and Jonah's refusal to do so, because, as he tells us himself afterwards, he knew that the Lord was "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repented Him of the evil." (Jonah iv. 1.) He had been taught to know that this was the way of the God of Israel, by his experience of His late doings in Samaria, and he thus suspected that such would be His way now in Nineveh. But his Jewish temper, so to call it, was strong in him. He could not consent to be the bearer of mercy and blessing to the Gentiles. He had, without reserve, published the good tidings in Samaria, but he could not consent to do the same now in Nineveh of the Gentiles.

All this disclosure of the hidden springs of the Prophet's disobedience is very significant. He had fled from the presence of the Lord, but enmity to the Gentiles was the real cause of it all. And thus we may say, like Prophet, like people. Jonah's sin is Israel's sin. Israel has always refused the thought, that the Gentiles could stand in the favour of God; and in delineating their sin, "forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles," is noticed by the Apostle as the last great feature in the full form of their sin. (1 Thess. ii. 16.) Then the wrath came upon them to the utter-

most, as now upon their Prophet. He refuses to go to Nineveh, believing that God would turn the curse into a blessing ; but turning his back upon the Lord, goes down to Joppa, and there takes a ship to Tarshish. The wrath, however, comes upon him to the uttermost. Vengeance suffers him not to live. A wind from the Lord lies heavily upon him, and upon those who sail with him, and the ship was like to be broken.

I need not here speak particularly of the excellent conduct of his shipmates towards him, or of his own indifference, for a time, to the fact that his back was now turned upon the Lord. Both however are remarkable. He was fast asleep, while they were crying out for fear. But he is soon made to hear not merely the roar of the wind, but the voice of God in the wind,—the sentence of death against himself. It was the voice of the Lord that was then upon the waters, and the sleeper is awakened from the sleep of a blunted conscience ; he bows his head under the righteous judgment of the Lord, and will have himself offered as a sacrifice for the safety of those who were sailing with him. He takes the sentence of death into himself. He now knows that he was the Achan in the camp, the *οκατεχων*, that which letted the mercy of God from reaching the mariners. They were suffering ; but his sin, he now sees, was “the accursed thing” that caused it all, and must be taken away. “Take me up,” says he, “and cast me forth into the sea, so shall the sea be calm unto you, for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.” It was a sin unto death and must not be prayed for. The mariners, in their kindness, may row hard, and harder still, but all will not do. The sea cries “give, give.” The fire on the altar demands the victim. A sin unto death has been committed, and all struggle or rowing for life is vain. Joshua in such a case may lie on the ground, and cry to the Lord all the day long, but it will not do. (Josh. vii.) The accursed thing must be taken away. Jonah must be cast overboard, into the belly of hell, as Achan must be stoned ; and then, and not till then, Ai, the city of the enemy, shall fall, and the haven, the desire of the mariners shall be reached.

Accordingly our Prophet is now cast into the sea. But the sea

will not be allowed to be the pit of destruction to him, but he shall find rather a city of refuge, or hiding place for a season there. The belly of a fish is prepared to receive him from the sea, and there he abides. Like every city of refuge, the whale's belly was Jonah's shelter in the midst of judgment,—the place of life to him in the region of the shadow of death. And there he talks of salvation. "Thou hast brought up my life from corruption," says he, "O Lord, my God—salvation is of the Lord." He had before, when in the ship, heard the thunder of judgment, (but now in the fish's belly, the still small voice of mercy.) He looks to God's temple, the appointed place, (2 Chron. vi.) and he knows that grace and salvation are God's way in His sanctuary. There by faith he surveys the brazen altar for the guilty sinner, and the golden altar for the accepted sinner, and the mercy-seat for the Lord to sit on. And then he knows that sacrifices of thanksgiving and the payment of his vows are before Him, and he can talk of life in the midst of death. "I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains, the earth with her bars was about me for ever, yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord, my God." With as much certainty of heart, though not with the same comfort, he knows salvation as well as though he were on dry land again. As secure he is, though not as happy, by this distant sight of the temple by faith, as though he had been in Jerusalem. "How say ye to my soul," in spirit he says, "flee as a bird to your mountain?—The Lord is in his holy temple." (Psa. xi.) This was his joy.

And this is the manslayer's joy in every city of refuge. The avenger of blood is on the foot, it is true, but the gates of the city have closed upon him, and there he tastes and knows his full salvation, with the sure prospect of his home and kindred again. And every city of refuge which we trace in scripture, has thus its peculiar joy as well as safety.

Noah in the ark was in a city of refuge, and there he was as safe as though he had been in the new world. But he had his peculiar joy there also, as well as safety. He opened the window,

and let out the raven and the dove, and the dove returned to him with an olive-leaf, the pledge that the new earth should soon be his in peace and fruitfulness. He could not, it is true, go forth till the Lord gave him leave,—he could not open the *door*, but he might the *window* of the ark, and from thence he looked out and saw the uncovered land again ; and this was his joy and the exercise of his heart, though still amid the desolations of judgment.—The blood-stained door was a city of refuge to the Israelite, while the angel of death was passing along Egypt. But there, he fed upon the Lamb, every morsel of which told him of his full security ; and he might have looked at the staff in his hand, and the shoe on his foot, as the token that the time was short.—The wilderness was another city of refuge to all Israel. For judgment was before and behind them. In the midst of death they were in life, as in every city of refuge. Egypt behind had just been judged, and the Amorites before were just about to be judged,—the waters were rising to cover the one land, as they had already covered the other. But Israel was in their refuge in the wilderness, as safe as though they had been in Canaan, and there learnt wonders of grace and glory.—Rahab's house with the scarlet line in the window, was another blood-sprinkled door, or city of refuge ; but there though Jericho were the accursed place, she knew her safety, and to the joy of her heart (for she had loved and counselled for them) she might have looked on her kindred and known them to be as safe as herself.—And so at the end. Their chambers will be a city of refuge to the remnant, while the indignation passes by. “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” (Is. xxvi. 20.) But then also they will have large exercise of heart. The Psalms give us much of this, I believe. In the 29th we see something of it. There the voice of the Lord is abroad, full of power and majesty, falling upon the waters and upon the cedars, and dividing the flames of fire. But the remnant all the while have found their sanctuary in God, and there in His temple, like Jonah, they thus in spirit sing—“the Lord sitteth upon the flood, yea the Lord sitteth king for

ever ; the Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace." (Ps. xxix. 10, 11.)

And so the believer now. He sojourns in a judged world, but he is in the Lord his refuge, and he can there talk of salvation. He dwells in the shadow of death, but he can sing of life. The Spirit of God could enter where Jonah was, and teach him the ways of the temple ; and so has the same Spirit, the Holy Ghost, come to abide in the saints, though still in the place of uncleanness and death, to tell them of a far richer blessing, and of a more glorious love than ever Adam knew in the unsoiled walks of Eden.

It is the way of our God thus to do abundantly more than merely repair the breach. He makes the eater yield meat to us, and the strong man sweetness. That is God's riddle rather than Samson's. Jonah is now made to interpret it, as it were, for he is brought home to God with a new song in his mouth, and with richer experience of God's love than ever he had, (and that too in the belly of the whale ; and then when this revelation of grace is thus made his to the joy of his soul, he is cast out again on the dry land.

Thus was it with our Prophet, and all this judgment and mercy of God with him, this process of death and resurrection lead him out, not merely to deliverance, but to the obedience of faith also. "He arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord." And this it always does, whether in Jonah or in us. We rise to newness of life. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." We were simply born of the *flesh* before, but now we are joined to the Lord, and one *Spirit* with Him.

We have thus all of us our common interest in these Jonah mercies. Jonah is a sign to us all. But I am, of course, aware that our blessed Lord has claimed His likeness to Jonah also, saying in his doctrine, "for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." He thus found His type in our Prophet, as the one who died and was buried, and

rose again the third day. But He dwells much more on Jonah being *a sign* to others, than the type of Himself. He speaks of both Jonah, and the Son of man as signs ; Jonah to the Ninevites, and both Jonah and the Son of man to that generation of Israel. (Matt. xii. 39, xvi. 4, Luke xi. 29, 30.) And this is doctrine of great value. The death and resurrection of Jonah, was a sign to the Ninevites of what the Lord required from them, and of the way in which He would deal with them ; and so the death and resurrection, whether of Jonah or the Son of man, is a sign to Israel of what the Lord expects from them, and of the manner in which He will deal with them.

For as one who had died and risen again, Jonah now goes and preaches against Nineveh ; and as such a one he was a sign to them of what that preaching should lead them to, and of what it required of them. And we find that the sign was answered in them. On going to them, the Prophet at once puts them under sentence of death. "Within forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." And at once they hear these words as the sentence of death against themselves, as Jonah had heard it in the roar of the wind before, and they bow the head under it as he did, accepting the punishment of their sins, and then, like Jonah, enter the grave, taking sack-cloth on them, from the least to the greatest of them, both man and beast—the king himself rising from his throne, and sitting in ashes, the place of death, and thus were they planted in the likeness of His death. And not only so, but they break off their sins by righteousness, and walk in newness of life, and thus were planted also in the likeness of His resurrection. This was repenting at the preaching of Jonah, or answering the sign of Jonah ; and then the Lord bids mercy to rejoice against judgment in their behalf, as He had in Jonah's : He repents of the evil which He had said that He would do unto them, and He did it not, as He had brought Jonah again on the dry land out of the whale's belly.

Thus was "the sign of Jonah" answered in and by the Ninevites, and so must it be in Israel, that generation to which Jesus preached. And part of the sign is already witnessed in them.

Sentence of death was, in principle, passed on them, when Jesus rose from the dead. But they have not yet heard it, and bowed their head under it. To this day they are buried out of sight, in the grave where there is no remembrance of them with God. (Is. xxvi. 19, Ezek. xxxvii. Hos. xiii.) They are as dry bones in the valley, or as a tree in the dead and leafless winter season (Is. vi. 13), because they have not repented. And there is no hope for them, but the repentance of the Ninevites. They must bow their heads under the punishment of their sins as the Ninevites did. The sign of Jonah, or of the Son of man, must be fully answered in them, as the sign of Jonah was in the Ninevites. It is not as yet so answered, and thus the Ninevites still judge them. But we know that it will be by and bye. As Jonah's sin has been the sign of Israel's sin, so will his repentance be of their repentance. They will mourn every family apart, and their wives apart. In their affliction they will seek the Lord, and say, "come, and let us return to the Lord, for He hath torn, and he will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up; after two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight." They will thus identify themselves, in spirit, with the death and resurrection of their Lord; and then He will open their graves, and bring them up out of their graves, and say, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise, awake, and sing ye that dwell in dust." (Is. xxvi. Ezek. xxxvii. Hos. vi.) And then will "the sign of Jonah" be answered also in Israel, as it was answered in Nineveh.

It is death and resurrection which both Jonah and the Son of man signify; and death and resurrection is God's principle in a world where the power of death has entered. The ancient penalty "in the day thou eatest thou shalt die," has never been rescinded. Every thing in some form or another has suffered it; and it has been met with infinite value for us by the Son of God. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment;" and Jesus has met this appointment. Death had its way against Him, and judgment, the judgment of sin, was upon Him. His soul was made an offering for sin; but by death He destroyed him that

had the power of death, and rose with new life for those who had been subject to his bondage.

This was glorious triumph over all the strength of the enemy; and this was also the entire vindication of God. And all now that has any rest, must rest on this death and resurrection of the Son of God; and all that has life to God, or that will have any place in His system of glory by and bye, must have both in the death and resurrection character. Death and resurrection may introduce to different orders and departments of glory, but it is the common entrance to them all. The leprous man and the leprous house in Israel were to be cleansed by the same ordinance of the slain and the living birds. Of course the man was more worthy than the house; but the Lord of Israel esteemed the house as well as the man a fit subject for the great reconciliation. Atonement was to be made for the one as well as for the other. (Lev. xiv. 53.) Both were equally liable to the taint of leprosy; but the very same provision was made for the cleansing of both, and for the restoring of both to their several places in God's system in Israel. And that was an ordinance which vividly, and without controversy, sets forth the virtues of the death and resurrection of the Son of God. This, I do judge, is very striking. God's care for the house as well as for the man. And here I may observe that the principle of the divine procedure is always the principle of the conduct of faith. As it is written, "be ye followers (imitators) of God as dear children." (Eph. v. 1.) It is, therefore, as thus being God's principle—His *necessary* principle, we may say to His praise, in a death-stained world, that death and resurrection is so often illustrated in the histories of God's servants. We find it more or less through all the line of the Old Testament worthies, as I may call them. *Abel* and *Seth* together present death and resurrection. *Noah* was carried through the region of death and judgment, into the place of life that lay beyond it. *Abraham* had the promises, and was heir of all the land; but he walked in the place as a stranger and pilgrim, not having so much as to set his foot on. *Joseph* was to stand above his brethren; but he is first cast into the pit and then into the dungeon, as under sentence of death, till at

length he rises into the glories of Egypt, which, mystically, were the heavenly and earthly glories of the kingdom. *Moses* was "drawn out" from the place of destruction, and afterwards as a dead and risen man like our *Jonah*, preaches to his brethren (Ex. ii. 13); and again after another burial as it were, in Midian, rises a second time to be the redeemer of Israel.* *David* came forth from contempt and obscurity to be the slayer of the giant and the deliverer of Israel; and again, as from death in the wilderness, to rule the land as God's king in Zion.

And among all these, and others like them, we may especially notice *Job* among the patriarchs. Death and resurrection was the lesson he had to learn in his own soul, and to illustrate before us in his history. He had to take the sentence of death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in Him that raises the dead, and gives brighter glory at the end than at the beginning.

In all these distinguished witnesses of God and His ways, we see this principle exhibited as God's principle. And so it is, from the Son of God in the highest, down to the lowest orders in creation—all stand or are to stand before God as dead and risen, that the power of the enemy may be gloriously overthrown, and the holy honour of His own name, "the living God," be vindicated for ever.—And scripture thus teaches us this.—

I.—*The Lord* Himself is to take all His glories, as the one that was dead and is alive again. He is the Head of the Church, the Heir of the sure mercies of David, and the Lord of creation as the Second Man, by this title. (Col. i. 18, Acts xiii. 34, Heb. ii. 6—9.) The thought of this His title to every thing, passed across the mind of Jesus when the Greeks, the Gentiles, came to the feast desiring to see Him. He then owned that but for His death He could take nothing. (John xii. 24.)

II.—*The Church* has her peculiar life and glory in this way

* So the generation at the time of the flood were under sentence of death (Gen. vi. 7), but the long-suffering of God waited for 120 years, and the Spirit of Christ in Noah then preached to them, and thus that preaching of Noah was, like the preaching of our Prophet to the Ninevites, as the ground of death and resurrection. And this, it seems, is what St. Peter speaks of. (1 Pet. iii. 18—22.)

also. The saints were all dead in trespasses and sins, but have also been quickened together with Christ and raised up, and seated on high in Him; and by and bye are, in body, to be fashioned after the likeness of His risen or glorious body. (Eph. ii. Phil. iii.)

III.—*Israel*, as we have already noticed, is to stand in the same character, brought from their graves, and raised up as one that had slept in dust.

IV.—*The nations* will be, after Israel's revival, as "life from the dead" (Rom. xi. 15), as the Ninevites repent and come into blessing after Jonah himself is raised up. Indeed it is as the dead and risen one, that Jerusalem will be the mother of them all. The "barren," the "widow," the "desolate," is to have many more children than she which had a husband. (Is. liv.)

V.—*The creation* itself will, in the "world to come," return to rest and beauty, as after the dead and wintry season of "this present evil world." The world to come will in principle be a *risen* world, the risen Son of man having it all in subjection under Him. Now it is all groaning and travailing in pain, but it shall be delivered into glorious liberty. (Rom. viii.)

Thus is death and resurrection the great rule of all blessing and glory; and this is the sign of Jonah and of the Son of man, and God's pervading principle through the ranks and departments of this death-tainted system of ours. And beloved, it was the Apostle's purpose, and should be ours, to know more and more of the power of this principle. (Phil. iii.) In Christ we are already apprehended for the full fruit of His death and Resurrection, but we should be as though we had not ourselves apprehended it. In Him we are complete and perfect, but we should be as though we had not attained, either were already perfect. Liberty and holiness, joy in the Lord, and life in the Spirit, would then flourish together in our souls, as well-watered gardens.

To teach this as God's great principle with every thing, is the purpose I judge of this history of Jonah the Prophet. I have hitherto followed it to the close of the 3rd chapter, seeing the death and resurrection both of the Jewish Prophet and of the Gentile

city. And that is the formal close of the book. The 4th chapter then comes as a kind of moral or appendix.

But on opening this deeply interesting chapter, let me observe, beloved, that we have, each one of us, to do with the Lord as well in the secrecy of his own presence within, as in the activities of his service abroad. We may have run the appointed course, and done the Lord's business, but this is not all. The Lord may still have many a personal question with us, and have to speak with us in the cool of the day. There may have been many a taint in the spirit of the service within, while without all may have seemed as splendid and devoted as the mission of a Prophet to the first city of the Gentiles. And these will have, at the end, to be brought before the Lord. Workings in the heart hidden from the eye of man, will then have to be brought fully under the eye and ear of God.

It is so now with our Prophet. Nineveh had been visited of Jonah, but Jonah must now be visited of the Lord. Not to destroy, we know full well, but to chasten and humble, and thus to make him more and more partaker of the divine holiness. He had done the service abroad. He had gone the way of Nineveh, and fulfilled the word of the Lord there. But there is still a question for the presence of God as yet unsettled. There were lustings within that must now be brought forth and made a show of openly. He is still as we find here, angry because of mercy to the Gentiles,* and he goes outside the city Nineveh, and sits down there a homeless exposed stranger all in sorrow and displeasure, saying, "It is better for me to die than to live." There he makes himself a booth to sit under, and the Lord then comes, in the secret of His own presence, to talk with him of his sin. He prepares a gourd to come up over his head, and be a shadow to deliver him from his grief; but He scarcely allows him to find comfort in the gourd, ere He prepares a worm to smite it and wither it, and then a vehement east wind and the sun to beat

* I need not, I assume, prove that I am warranted in treating Nineveh as the representative of the Gentiles. It was we know, the capital of that power which was in Jonah's day, the chief power in the world.

upon the head of Jonah, till again in anger and displeasure he says as before, "it is better for me to die than to live."

Then the Lord catches him in the toils which He had now woven around him in consummate and divine skill. He convicts him out of his own mouth, and makes his own words correct him. He shows him that he cannot retain both his proud and angry sorrows. He must either cease to grieve for *mercy to Nineveh*, or for *judgment on the gourd*. If he will give up his anger because of the withered gourd, let him do so. But if he still judge it well to be angry on that account, as he says, he does even unto death, then he must cease to be angry, because of preserved Nineveh; *for Nineveh was to the Lord just what the gourd had been to the Prophet, and if the Prophet would fain spare the gourd, he must allow the Lord to spare Nineveh*. "Thou hast had pity on the gourd," says the Lord to him, "for the which thou hast not laboured, neither makest it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night, and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six score thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?"

With these words the Lord ends, leaving that claim of His to Nineveh, its little ones and its cattle, upon the heart and conscience of Jonah. The echo, as it were, of those sweet words is left in our ears, as we close this beautiful little book.

But however these words may have wrought on the Prophet, as we may judge and hope they did with power, we have our blessed interest in them, and our exceeding great and precious comfort by them. For from this moral or parabolic action between the Lord and His servant, we learn that the Lord's desire is still to the works of His hands, that He would fain be refreshed and rest again in the creatures which He of old, fashioned and made. He made them at the beginning for His glory and delight. For a moment He was allowed so to speak, to rejoice in them. He looked on every thing that He had made, and beheld it to be all very good. (Gen. i. 31.) He took His sabbath in His creatures, and walked with man in a garden of delight that was in the midst of

them. But all was soon beguiled from him. The worm at the root of God's own gourd withered it. He that had the power of death did this, and left the Lord, as it were, a homeless stranger in His own creation (like Jonah outside Nineveh), a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry but for a night.

But they are still His creatures, and His desire is toward them. He seeks them all for himself, the little ones and the cattle, as well as the cities and their people. All form to him what the foliage of the gourd formed to the Prophet, a shade and refreshing, where without it all is homelessness and exposure. And He would fain take His rest, His sabbath in creation again, as He here would have Jonah and all of us know.

And He will do it. He will accomplish the desire of His heart, for who can let Him? He will reconcile all things unto Himself by Jesus Christ. Israel and the nations shall revive and dwell in peace, the earth shall yield her increase, the hills, the floods, and the trees of the wood rejoicing before the Lord, the King, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea making His name excellent in all the earth. For He has said of them, when the branch grows out of Jesse's roots, "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them, and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." (Isa. xi. 1—7.) He pronounced them all good at their creation, the living creatures which the waters brought forth, the winged fowl, the cattle and the creeping things, as well as man. As here He would have Jonah know that He valued them, and would spare them and have them, as well as Nineveh and its people.

And of this final redemption and joy of the creatures, we have had many pledges. *Noah* carried them, "two of every sort," with himself and his household through the waters into the new world; and the same covenant which settled him and his seed after him in it, provided equally for them. (Gen. ix. 10.) Joseph purchased all *the cattle* as well as *the people* of Egypt for Pharaoh.

(Gen. xxxi. 17.) *Moses* redeemed them all out of Egypt afterwards, when it had corrupted itself, and was no longer the land of Joseph's glory (Ex. x. 26, xii. 38); and he sanctified them all, under the law, to Jehovah, the fruit of the land and of the cattle, as well as the fruit of man, thus shewing us that Jehovah claimed the whole system as His own. (Ex. xxii. 28, 29, Lev. xix. 23—25.) The first-born of beast as of man was sanctified to Himself. (Numb. viii. 17.) *Jesus* claimed lordship of them all, the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea, and they owned His dominion (Matt. xvii. xxi), and in the coming kingdom, they shall still own Him, for all shall be in subjection to Him, and join in the joy of redemption, beasts and all cattle praising the Lord. (Ps. cxlviii. 10, Heb. ii. 8, Rev. v. 13.)

These are sweet pledges of the Lord's value for His creatures, and that He will still clothe Himself with them all. And of this His care for them and His desire toward them, He here speaks to Jonah. And He does more than that. He lets Jonah further learn that *He had laboured for them*; that unlike Jonah and his gourd, He would bring back His creatures to Him at the cost of His own toil. (iv. 10.) And so we know it is. For "all things," are to be a part of that great *reconciled* system, for which the blood of His dear Son has been shed, as at the beginning they were all a part of that great *created* system, for which the six days' work was entered on.

It is our joy, beloved, to know this,—to know that the blessed God still values all His creatures, and has, so to speak, "laboured" for them, and paid a price for them. The ancient scene of His delight and glory may be disturbed and defiled, as we know it is; but as He once rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, so will He again; and as He once had the image of His dominion and glory over them all, so will He again in the Son of man and in "the world to come." The Lord did indeed of old, take His joy in them, as I have noticed, and His glory was displayed by them. Every succeeding evening and morning witnessed His joy, for then He paused and lingered over His works, as they grew under His hand, that he might see them and pronounce them to be good, according

to the desire and good pleasure of His own will ; and when *all* were made, He looked at them *all* together as good, and took His full sabbath in them. And the morning stars sang their joy and His praise. Then was His gourd a sweet and refreshing gourd to Him, as Jonah's at the first. But a worm began soon to work at the root. For all this rested on Adam, and Adam was beguiled by him that had the power of death. Tares were then sown in the Lord's fair field of fruits and flowers. An enemy did that. But so it was, and the Lord had to repent that He had made man in the earth. Then did He look a second time at the work of His hands, and behold, it was corrupt ; and it repented Him that He had made it, and it grieved Him at His heart. (Gen. vi. 6.) Then the gourd of the Lord became the withered gourd indeed. But His creatures are still His. The field does not belong to the enemy, though he may waste and defile it for a season ; and the gourd must flourish and bud again to reward the toil of Him who has laboured for it. And it will then put forth a more fragrant **smell** than ever. Creation shall return to the Lord, to give Him more joy and more praise than ever. He shall joy in it as in the hand of One in whom His soul delighteth, and by it not merely the skill of His hand, but the riches of His love shall be praised. To Him as well as to us shall the eater then yield meat, and the strong man sweetness. The blood of Jesus shall efface the trail of the serpent. That will give "all things" in "the reconciliation," a sweet smelling savour with our God, and over such a sacrifice, He can say, in the deep satisfaction of His heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." (Gen. viii. 21.)

And of this we have had early notice in the history of Noah. When Adam was created, he received a command to replenish the earth and subdue it. But we do not read of the way in which he owned his Creator in the midst of all this blessing, nor did the Lord God then say, that He would not curse the ground which He had made. But when Noah came forth of the ark, as man *redeemed* (not like Adam merely *created*) for the earth, he at once takes the earth as debtor to the blood of Jesus for it. He

raises his altar and offers upon it of every clean beast and of every clean fowl; and the blood of these victims in type the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Lord smells as a savour of sweet smell, and it awakens in His heart thoughts of abiding complacency in the earth. The blood on the altar and not the evil of man governs His counsels, and they are all counsels of grace. (Gen. viii. 21.) And then He gives Noah dominion of the earth again, with the sign of this covenant of abiding complacency in the earth and its creatures, signifying that by the virtue of this blood, though not before in the hand of Adam, the creation could be established without fear of curse again. And then He gives Noah also, not only the herb of the field, but the flesh of every thing that lived to be meat for him (Gen. ix. 3), in token that his life now rested on the flesh and blood of another, that it was no longer the life of a creature merely, but of a creature redeemed, and redeemed by blood. Thus both he and his inheritance now stood only in the value of the blood of Jesus, but standing in that, they stood secure.

All this was very significant, telling us of the character of that kingdom which is to arise in the last days, when the true Noah takes the dominion. Then shall the earth and its creatures be established in the covenant of abiding rest and certainty, the rainbow encircling the throne that is then to rule over all. And then shall the Lord God rest in His full complacency in it all, for it shall all stand in the sweet savour of the sacrifice which the Son of His love has offered, or in the great reconciliation. 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 they be things in earth or things in heaven." (Col. i. 20.)

And thus will God's praise and delight spring from the same source which gives us sinners our everlasting security, and puts a richer and sweeter song into our lips than that which awakened the morning stars, when the foundations of the old creation were laid. Such is the divine skill, weaving God's glory and our security together, and His delights with our delights for ever. His own grace must account for this, for nothing else can, passing as it does, all the fondest thoughts of our hearts. And then this

redeemed creation, this gourd of our God, shall bud again, and be still in its freshness before Him. The worm, the power of death, shall not touch it to wither it ; but under its shadow will He find His sabbath again, as it is written “thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, the Lord shall rejoice in His works.” (Ps. civ. 30, 31.)

“ Lord what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him ! the Son of man that thou makest account of Him ! ”

CAMPBELLISM.

THE operations of the Spirit are, in scripture, inseparably connected with the person and work of Jesus. We cannot know Jesus but by the Holy Ghost ; neither can we know the power of the life of the Spirit, but in knowing Jesus. On the other hand, we cannot hold wrong views of the person and work of Jesus without interfering, however upright our own minds may all the while be, with the energy and operations of the Holy Spirit ; neither can we be in error as to the doctrine of the Spirit, and be right as to the doctrine of the Son. The enemy with whom we have to contend knows this ; and he knows also how the portion given by the Father to the Church, is inseparably connected with the persons and works of these two most blessed Ones. The Holy Ghost indwelling and revealing the person and things of the risen Jesus, is the Church's portion and blessing. If Satan can succeed in leading us amiss here, his triumph is great. For the Father's love in giving such a portion, the Holy Ghost's blessed grace in revealing, and the person and glory of the Son, are thus brought into open contempt in the very house of God ; sorrow and trial ensue upon the saints, and testimony to the world is put a

stop to. We have seen one fearful instance of this in England ; see "CHRISTIAN WITNESS," vol. ii. p. 111, and p. 154.

If I mistake not, there never was a more perfect instance than this, of the *connexion* between error as to the doctrine of the Spirit, and error as to the doctrine of the Son. The plague began in Scotland with a question, whether the Holy Ghost really was among the saints ? But the question—*is God among us ?* very soon led THERE to erroneous views of the nature of our Lord. Contrasted with this was its progress in London, where the first sign of delusion that appeared, was error as to the person of the Lord. It is remarkable also, that, as to the person of the Son, it was not one and the same error which was held in London and Scotland, but two distinctly different forms of error. I can remember well when those at Port Glasgow, with whom the so called "gifts" originated (having no thought of the views they would, some of them at least, take up as to the person of Jesus), sent to Mr. Irving, and he (who even then held the views, afterward so fully promulgated by him, as to the humanity of our Lord), rejected the doctrine and claims of the Spirit displayed at Port Glasgow. But to his error as to our Lord, then held, he afterward added the error as to the Spirit ; and they afterwards added error as to the Lord, to the error then held by them as to the Spirit.

It is well to remind ourselves that nothing can sanctify a lie ;—that that which is contrary to the truth, can gain no propriety from being connected in statement with blessed truth ; but contrariwise, a lie is much more hateful, and error much more fearful when dressed up and garnished with the furniture of truth, than when presented nakedly and baldly by itself. There are few that would object to have arsenic in their houses, if it were carefully packed and labelled and locked up out of the way ; and there are very few who would accredit arsenic, known to them to be in the bread placed before them, either by reason of the excellency of the flour, or the pure character of the water, or the goodness of the yeast wherewith the loaf was prepared. If He who knew what was in man, had not told us "that the children of this world

are in their generation wiser than the children of light," the folly of those who would, in the things of God, accredit falsehood by pointing out the excellency of the circumstances connected with it, might astonish us.

But so it always has been among men. And the apparent holiness of life, knowledge of scripture, and zeal and labours of the deluder, thus make way among the simple for the delusion. On the other hand, Satan knows how to use truth, neglected truth especially, against the soul. Have you rest in God? Have you the witness of the Spirit? Have you full fellowship with Jesus and the Father? were questions which a few years ago shook many a godly soul; and, in the consciousness of the lack of something which it ought to have had, laid it open to receive a something which it ought not to have had; whilst others, afraid of that which was proposed for their reception, delivered themselves by denying that such questions ought, to saints, to be through the indwelling of the Spirit, of easy answer.

These thoughts have passed before my mind in connection with Campbellism. Campbellism is making great progress in America, and has commenced its pestilential course in various parts of both England and Scotland. Though there are many points of grievous error to be noticed in the works connected with the Campbellites, I shall confine my attention to a tract entitled "An essay on the remission of sins," published in America, by A. Campbell, and reprinted by some of his friends at Nottingham. I prefer this course to one of more general observation, because the tract in question, presents THE question with which every Christian has to do; and error upon this question is *fatal* to acceptance before God. The other works present points affecting, it may be, the union of saints, or their service, or their joy and peace; but the "Essay on the remission of sins," presents THE point of the sinner's *acceptance* before God, and error here is, as I said, fatal.

I should judge after an attentive perusal of the work, that Satan must be aware that there are many, it may be of God's dear people, who do not know whether their sins are forgiven

them or not ; and, of these, many, who if the question were pressed home upon them, would be shaken by it sadly ; and some of them thus perhaps be prepared to receive any strange delusion as the medium of obtaining assurance of forgiveness ; and others who conscious of their own want of assurance, and yet able to discern the falsity of the medium suggested, would, as their only mode of escape, deny that we ought* to know that our sins are forgiven.

The tract opens with such statements as these :—

“Luther said that the doctrine of justification or forgiveness was the test of a standing, or falling Church. If right in this, she could not be very far wrong in any thing else ; but if wrong here, it was not easy to suppose her right in any thing . . . We agree with him in this, as well as in many other sentiments.”

“The doctrine of remission, is the doctrine of salvation ; for to talk of salvation without the knowledge of the remission of sins, is to talk without meaning.”

“The perfection of the conscience of the worshippers of God, under Christ, is the grand distinguishing peculiarity in them, compared with those under Moses. They have not only clearer views of God, of His love, of His character, and of His immortality, but they have consciences which the Jewish and patriarchal ages could not produce.”

—————And then we have the germ of the whole book briefly, and but for a moment presented to us.—————

“Under the government of the Lord Jesus, there is an institution for the forgiveness of sins, like which, there was no institution since the world began.

“It was owing to this institution, that Christians were so much distinguished at first from the subjects of every former institution.”

“Our political happiness in the United States, is not owing to any other cause than to our political institutions. If we are politically the happiest people in the world, it is because we have the happiest political institutions in the world. So it is in the Christian institution. If Christians were, and may be, the happiest people that ever lived, it is because they live under the most gracious institution ever bestowed on men. The meaning of this institution has been buried under the rubbish of human traditions for hundreds of years. It was lost in the dark ages, and has never been till recently, disinterred. Various efforts have been made, and considerable progress attended

* I would desire most earnestly to press upon all that labour in the word, to take less for granted as to their hearers, than they do, upon such points as these. Every day is discovering how small the number is of those who are conscious of the blessed presence of the Comforter and of their own complete acceptance in the Beloved.

“them; but since the grand apostasy was completed—till the present generation, the gospel of Jesus Christ has not been laid open to mankind in its original plainness, simplicity, and majesty. A veil in reading the new institution has been on the hearts of Christians, as Paul declares it was upon the hearts of the Jews in reading the old institution towards the close of that economy.”

“The object of this essay is to open to the consideration of the reader, the Christian institution for the remission of sins, to show by what means a person may enjoy the assurance of a personal and plenary remission of all his sins.”

I shall not at present comment upon the fallacy of supposing that the means of blessing to the inhabitants of an earthly kingdom, must necessarily correspond with the means of blessing to those under the kingdom of heaven; but I would call attention to the evil likely to result from using the word “institution” in two different senses in the above citation. Many a mind would start from the idea of baptism as the “institution for the forgiveness of sins,” and be led to expect error, whose suspicions would be lulled by finding a few lines further on the gospel called “the new institution,” the more so where the writer thus proceeds.

“This we shall attempt to do by stating, illustrating, and proving, the following *twelve* propositions:—

Prop. 1.—“The Apostles taught their disciples, or converts, that their sins were forgiven, and uniformly addressed them as pardoned or justified persons.”

Prop. 2.—“The Apostolic converts were addressed by their teachers, as justified persons.”

Prop. 3.—“The ancient Christians were addressed by the Apostles as sanctified persons.”

Prop. 4.—“The ancient Christians, the Apostolic converts, were addressed as ‘reconciled to God.’ ”

Prop. 5.—“The first disciples were considered and addressed by the Apostles, as ‘adopted into the family of God.’ ”

Prop. 6.—“My sixth proposition is, that the first Christians were taught by the inspired teachers to consider themselves as saved persons.”

Page 10.—“These six propositions being each, and every one of them, clearly sustained by the unequivocal testimony of God, now adduced; and as is well known to the intelligent disciple, by many more passages, equally plain and forcible, not adduced; we shall now engross them into one leading proposition, which we shall in this essay consider as not to be questioned—as irrefragably proved.”

“The converts made to Jesus Christ by the Apostles, were taught to consider themselves pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; and were addressed as pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved persons, by all who first preached the gospel of Christ.” (Page 11.)

The simple mind is thus led on under the banner of truth, with ample quotation from scripture, and for the most part correct application of scripture—but what is the issue? Let us for a moment pass over the pages which gradually introduce the error, and state the results broadly.

Page 26.—“To call the receiving of any spirit, or any influence, or energy, or any operation upon the heart of man, regeneration, is an abuse of all speech, as well as a departure from the diction of the Holy Spirit, *who calls nothing personal regeneration, except the act of immersion.*”

Page 31.—“Regeneration, or immersion—the former referring to the import of the act, and the latter term to the act itself—denote only the act of being born.”

Page 32.—“And the great argument, pertinent to our object, in this long examination of conversion and regeneration, is that which we conceive to be the most apparent of all other conclusions, viz. that remission of sins, or coming into a state of acceptance, being one of the present immunities of the kingdom of heaven, cannot be enjoyed by any person before immersion.”

Page 32.—“Remission of sins, cannot in this life be received or enjoyed previous to immersion; if there be any proposition, regarding any item of the Christian institution, which admits of clearer proof, or fuller illustration than this one, I have yet to learn where it may be found.”

Page 32.—“I beg leave to make a remark or two on the propriety of considering the term ‘immersion,’ as equivalent to the term ‘conversion.’”

Page 33.—“If it were not to treat this subject as one of doubtful dispute, I would say, that, had there not been some act, such as immersion, agreed on all hands, to be the medium of remission, and the act of conversion and regeneration, the Apostles could not, with any regard to truth or consistency, have addressed the disciples as pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved persons.”

Such doctrine is directly from Satan: alas! that Satan should be able to lead any one calling himself a Christian, to put the Lord's ordinance of baptism into a place in which no intelligent disciple *can* recognize it; the very placing it in which is putting of the Lord to shame. Any one that has studied the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John's gospel, and the 8th, 9th, and 10th chapters of Hebrews, will know that the basis laid for our privi-

lege is very different from any outward ordinance, howsoever important ; even 1st, the *indwelling* of the **PERSON** of the Holy Ghost, in the believer separately and in the Church collectively ;* and 2ndly, the presenting to faith the finished and accepted sacrifice of Jesus ; the way of access to God no longer presented in types and symbols or emblems, but in living substance ; the Lamb (who was the Son of God from eternity to eternity), slain for our sins and alive again for evermore. These are the constituent elements of our peculiar privilege ; the Son with unveiled face, seen amid the glory of the Father, as the **OBJECT** presented to faith ; and the Holy Ghost quickening into life known as **THE SUBJECTIVE POWER** of appropriating the blessing. It seems impossible to read such statements as those quoted above, without remembering the fearful requirement of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, “ Though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. i.)

Let us now briefly examine the links between the scriptural conclusion deduced from the six first propositions, and these so unscriptural assertions.

After engrossing the six first propositions into one leading proposition, that “ *the converts made to Jesus Christ by the Apostles, were taught to consider themselves, pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved,*” &c. the essay proceeds to prove that of these terms “ each of them represents, and all of them together represent, *a state or condition,*” p. 11. This is clearly correct, and so in the mind of the writer *may* be the contrast which follows between “ *state*” and “ *character.*” On this I would pause for a moment merely to state, that if by *character* the manifestation of grace be meant, then certainly the remark is correct ; but if as the context and many other passages in the essay seem to indicate, by *character* is meant not that which shows itself outwardly, but something inward, then the statement would be open

* Both the one and the other of these blessed privileges, seem overlooked in this tract as well as the distinct **PERSONALITY** of the Holy Ghost.

to objection. The whole essay indeed entirely overlooks the communication of a new nature to the believer, the implantation in him of the divine nature, and this is a very grievous evil ; for the soul of every saint should know that while "Christ for the Church" is alone the basis of its salvation, the knowledge of "Christ for the Church" by any of us, proves beyond a question that Christ is *in* us.

The question is then mooted "*When then is a change of state affected, and by what means ?*" p. 12.... Ere answering this we have

Page 14, Prop. 7.—"A change of views, though it necessarily precedes, is in no case equivalent to, and never to be identified with, a change of state."

Perhaps a better specimen of error from the wrong use of analogy could not be adduced than the argument which follows, the substance of which is thus expressed.

"In all the relations of this life, in all states or conditions of men, we feel the truth of this; and I would to heaven that our readers could see as plainly what is of infinitely more importance to them, that no change of heart is equivalent to, or can be substituted for, a change of state!"

Three or four examples are then adduced in the relationships of this life, in which it is shown that the thoughts of the mind, and the affections of the heart, may all be engaged in a new direction, without changing the state of relationship between two parties (two slaves, for instance, may both have their affections drawn forth toward a hard master whom they did hate ; but this does not make either *a wife*, marriage alone can effect that) ; and then it is argued that so it is in the things of God.

Page 15.—"A thousand analogies might be adduced to shew that....a change of state does not necessarily follow, and is sometimes quite different from, and cannot be identified with, a change of heart. So in religion ; a man may change his views of Jesus, and his heart may also be changed toward Him ; but, unless a change of state ensues, he is still unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost to all Christian life and enjoyment."

But it is not only the folly of comparing spiritual things with carnal which should here be noticed, there is surely a still greater and more fearful evil manifest. The writer seems to see no dif-

ference between "*faith*, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," and the mere "*notions*" of the natural mind; and entirely to overlook the communication of the *divine nature*, through the exceeding great and precious promises laid hold of by faith. As to divine things, a man's *state* and *condition* are not as often in the things of men merely *conventional*, but depend upon reality. The knowledge of the Son of God, in the Spirit, constitutes in any poor sinner an essential eternal change, as much as the sight of the brazen serpent gave health and a cure to the bitten Israelite, and health was the immediate result of sight. To state therefore as the writer immediately does, page 15, that "Some *act*, then, constitutional, by stipulation proposed, sensible and manifest, must be performed by one or both the parties, before such a change can be accomplished," I judge to be subversive of the very first principles of truth.—Surely if any man knowing himself to be pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved, can so write, he must be bewitched.—How bewildered must one be (if indeed he has known the eternal God quickening himself into life by the Spirit through faith in Jesus—translating him out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son, making him a new creature; old things passed away, and behold all things become new), to look at water baptism as the act able to effect such a change of state.

Shortly after page 16, we have this statement in confirmation of what we have just referred to.

"This brings us to '*the obedience of faith*.' a message or proclamation, which has not a command in it, cannot be obeyed. But the gospel can "be obeyed, or disobeyed; and therefore, in it, is a command."

To this argument as set forth in

Prop. 8.—"That the gospel has in it a command, and as such must be "obeyed."

I would say that the Greek words *ὑπακοή*, *ὑπακούω* &c., mean "hear," "hearing," i.e. the attentive reception of the word spoken, and not the results of this in action: and I need hardly say to any one who knows what "grace" means, that the "obedience of faith" is not of works of any kind in the creature, but "the just

shall live by faith." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness: even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*, saying "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." To admit that a single deed, thought, or desire of our own, yea or even of the blessed Spirit, wrought in us, enters into the ground of our rest and trust before God, is to deny the faith. All important as works are to *the saint*, he must rest as a sinner, naked as to all good, and laden as to all evil, upon Christ ere he can begin as a saint to bear any fruit.

The assertion p. 17, "and this act is sometimes called immersion, regeneration, conversion," is purely an assumption and contains in it grievous delusion.

At page 19, when attempting to prove

Prop. 9.—"That it is not faith, but an act resulting from faith, which changes "our state."

We have words put into the mouth of the Apostles. The portion of scripture under consideration is Acts ii. The Jews having heard Peter preaching, pricked at the heart, cried out "what shall we do?" Peter replies, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," &c. *Thus it is written*, but the tract says when then enquired "*what they ought to do* to obtain remission. They were informed, that though they now believed and repented, they were not pardoned; but must "*reform and be immersed for the remission of sins.*" Immersion for the forgiveness of sins, was *the command* addressed to these believers....as that act....by which alone they could be pardoned." I find nothing in the Bible about Peter's telling them that though they now believed and repented, they were not pardoned. It is a statement contrary to the truth and subversive of grace. I may say the same of the following, p. 19, "they who gladly received this word were that day immersed, or in other words, that same day were converted, or regenerated, or obeyed the gospel." These are statements worthy of the pen of a Romanist.

The next thing the writer does, is to confound Peter's address to the hardened, impenitent Jews in Acts iii., with his address to those who were pricked in heart as recorded in chap. ii.

Page 19, 20.—“ Peter, in substituting other terms in this proclamation, for those used on Pentecost, does not preach a *new* gospel, but the *same* gospel in terms equally strong. He uses the same word in the first part of the command, which he used on Pentecost. Instead of ‘*be immersed,*’ he has here ‘*be converted*’ or ‘*turn to God* ;’ instead of ‘*for the remission of your sins,*’ here it is, ‘*that your sins may be blotted out* ;’ and instead of ‘*you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,*’ here it is, ‘*that seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord may come.*’ On Pentecost it was, 1st, ‘*Reform* ;’ 2nd, ‘*Be immersed* ;’ 3rd, ‘*For the remission of sins* ;’ and 4th, ‘*You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*’ In Solomon’s Portico, it was, 1st, ‘*Reform* ;’ 2nd, ‘*Be converted* ;’ 3rd, ‘*That your sins may be blotted out* ;’ and 4th, ‘*That seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord may come* ;’ that ‘*you may have righteousness, peace and joy in a holy spirit.*’ So read the different clauses in those two discourses to the Jews, expressive of the “*same acts.*”

We have here a sample and a fair one, of the character of the argument throughout the book : insisting that the words of a speaker, addressed at two different times to two audiences of two opposite characters, must be convertible ; as though because he said at one time to a poor distracted soul, “*fear not, do thyself no harm* ;” and at another time to a gainsaying worldling—“*Oh, full of all subtilty....wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways.*” Any one should argue that “*fear not, do thy self no harm,*” is of the same force and meaning as “*wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways.*”

Let any one read the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Acts, and they will see at once that the first quotation was addressed to “*the pricked in heart* ;” the second, to “*the stiff-necked nation.*”

The word baptism was *never* used by an Apostle as convertible with conversion, remission, forgiveness, &c. and to affirm it, is to preach another gospel, and so this “*very important fact,*” p. 21, is no fact at all.

One of the most perfect fallacies I ever saw, is found p. 24, when endeavouring to establish the 10th proposition.

Evidence is advanced on which this conclusion is based.

“*Washing of regeneration and immersion, are, therefore, two names for the same thing*” “As regeneration is taught to be equivalent to “*being born again*,” and understood to be of the same import with a new birth, we shall “examine it under this metaphor. For, if immersion be equivalent to regeneration, and regeneration be of the same import with being born again; then “being born again, and being immersed, is the same thing; for this plain reason, “that things that are equal to the same, are equal to one another.”

Observe, he proves (rightly or wrongly) that “*WASHING of regeneration*,” is equal to “*immersion* ;”—then that “*regeneration*” [OBSERVE, *not* the “*washing of regeneration*,” but “*regeneration itself*,”] is equal to “the new birth,” and then exchanges the new birth with immersion.

Herein I see no application of the argument “that things that are equal to the same are equal to one another.”

“Immersion” is equal to “*the washing of regeneration*.”

“The new birth” is equal to “regeneration.”

I find here no middle term—for “*the washing of regeneration*” is one thing, and “regeneration” is another: to affirm they are one and the same, is simply assumption. The argument page 25, stated upon its being *taken for granted*, that the 3rd of John refers to baptism, appears to me faulty, because I do not admit what is taken for granted. Its object is to establish Christian baptism as the only mode of entering into the better things of the heavenly kingdom. But if any one will read the chapter, he will see—1st, that the scene took place three years and a half before the opening of the heavenly things. Secondly, that whatever our Lord referred to, it was something which Nicodemus *as a Jew* ought to have understood:—“Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?” Thirdly, that in the connection in which they were then discoursed of, they were *earthly*, *not heavenly*:—“If I have told you *earthly* things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of *heavenly* things?”

The assumption also that a man is *begotten* of the Spirit, and *born* of water, in the same page, is false; for the verb “is born,” verse 5, stands in one and the same connection to the two substantives “Spirit” and “water”. . . except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus,

and every student of the prophets, ought to have known the connection of both the "Spirit" and "water," with the kingdom of God still to be set up ; yet in no one passage is immersion there spoken of.

Having previously quoted from p. p. 26, 31, 32, 33, I shall not do more than refer again to the fearful errors in these statements, which in the order of the book occur here.

As to Prop. 11, I shall say nothing, being willing to leave, for the benefit of those that choose to claim it, the support of "the Apostolic Fathers".... Barnabas, Clement, and Hermas ; Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, &c. &c. &c.

Whether or not the list of ecclesiastical writers quoted, and the catalogue of confessions cited, really speak of immersion (as stated page 42), as the "regeneration" and "remission of sins," spoken of in the New Testament, I know not.—If they do, their doctrine is unsound, if they do not, then are they misquoted.

And the same may be said as to Prop. 12, in which the same thing is affirmed of "the reformed creed."

There are many arguments in the tract which would be weighty, if the question at issue was, "did the Lord give to His Church such an ordinance as baptism?"—but which seem to have no legitimate connection with the question, "is baptism identical with the remission of sins?"—And it does seem a very fearful thing, that in an essay on the remission of sins—the blood of the Lord Jesus should never be brought forward prominently at all ; and where referred to at all, then, but disparagingly. I might quote some instances of this, they are before me, but I forbear : it would grieve my own soul to do it ; and it seems to me enough, and more than enough, that in an essay on forgiveness, baptism of water should hold the prominent place, and not the blood of Jesus.

These things show an erroneous view of the doctrine of the cross, and sadly prepare the mind to find error as to the doctrine of the Spirit, as I judge.

In conclusion I would remark, that again and again does the tract speak of "immersion for the remission of sins," as though it were a phrase in *constant* use in Apostolic days, and only in

disuse now through sin: I have only to say it never once occurs in the New Testament; for the statement there, is *not* "be baptized for the remission of sins," but always "*repent* and be baptized for the remission of sins." Baptism is a commemorative sign of a past grace—the figure of grace discovered; and to administer it save on the belief of grace received, is contrary to the divine mind. By the gospel is preached unto us "Jesus and the resurrection." Well may the soul, conscious of its union by nature with the world around, which crucified the Lord of glory, cry out, on its first discovering Him to be upon the Father's throne, able to take vengeance, what shall I do? Then comes the gracious word,—

It is God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who hath shined into your hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus; that is, the gospel is its own witness; the power of seeing Jesus is the proof you are God's, marked off by Him—one with Christ. When Jesus was crucified and died and was buried, God's Church was crucified died and was buried in Him; and when He was quickened arose and ascended, she was quickened arose and ascended in Him: if you see Him you are of His Church. Oh! what joy must this word have created in the hearts of the poor trembling ones! how gladly it must have prepared them to arise and be baptized! how consistent this service and every other, to those whose minds have laid aside the terror and are joying in the grace!

May God grant that they who are vainly thinking of "reformation and immersion" as the means and seal of pardon for all previous offences, may know the joyful sound of grace, full, free, finished grace.

HEADS OF PSALMS.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 284, VOL. V.

BOOK III.

Psalm lxxiii. to lxxxix. inclusive.

THE peculiar expression of the Spirit of Christ—His character, humiliation, identification with the Jewish people—the relationship in which it placed Him with the world, the repentance of the Jews, their thoughts concerning Him, the manifestation of principles to the world by it, resulting in His exaltation as Solomon, great to the ends of the earth, have been traced to the 72nd Psalm.

LXXIII.—Israel now is brought forward more generally and fully.—Israel viewed as a nation, not the Jews and Christ merely—the circumstances in Zion, not the remnant driven out, though Antichrist may come in among the crowd of enemies and be noticed. But it is the Spirit in the remnant seeing and judging the position of, and pleading for Israel among the nations, not as in the remnant fled in the evil day. This 73rd Psalm explains the whole experience of the remnant in this respect. Israel therefore are looked at as a people, but those “of a clean heart” still alone are recognized as such by the Spirit,—“He is a Jew who is one inwardly;” for it is now recognized that “all are not Israel that are of Israel,” still *Israel’s* importance is recognized. “God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart;” but he had well nigh slipped, and his feet gone, being envious at the foolish, seeing the prosperity of the wicked. Their consequent self-sufficiency and pride are then described. The effect of this is, that God’s people, outward Israel, flock to them (those who might have begun apparently to run well), their language then is stated 11—14. But there was a generation of God’s children, the thought of this kept this tried believer (one of the remnant expressing their experience in this) from speaking thus, for he would have

condemned them. Still it was not understood, and perplexed his spirit till he went into the sanctuary of God, where the holiness of His purposes, His mind is understood; there he saw their end—they are in slippery places, till Jehovah awakes, and there is an end of them. As to His people—the faithful remnant, the end of the Lord is to be very pitiful and full of tender mercy. But 21—23, though so very foolish, this poor remnant who in darkness and trial wait for the revelation of the sanctuary, are kept and held up by God; very foolish, but with God in Spirit, and preserved. They are guided through this time of desolation and trial, and so I suppose it should be read “after the glory thou wilt receive me.” It is the same as in Zechariah ii. 8. If אֶחָד בְּכֹד may mean “according to” that may be, but simply it is after the glory of God has been manifested, thou wilt receive me. Ver. 25—28 is the great result of the true people.—Trust in God in difficulty will enable us to declare God’s works.

This Psalm serves as a general thesis to this book, i.e. up to the 89th, unfolded in many important themes, important to His glory and our learning. The enemies seem to be looked at generally, as well as Israel.

LXXIV.—In this Psalm we have the extent to which the desolations go after Israel is looked at in the land; for the remnant look at it according to God’s fulness, however feeble or wickedly they may turn out as men.

The remnant view Israel in God, looking at the heathen, verses 1 and 2 fully express this. The enemies roar now in the midst of it: their ensigns, their human and perhaps idolatrous witnesses of pride, are set up as the rallying points of power and confidence. They set fire to and break down the sanctuary; this also viewed by the remnant in its full character, the synagogues are burnt up,—“How long” (the prophetic word of faith and grace) shall the enemy without, and the oppressor within, blaspheme God’s name. Though the enemy could boast theirs, God’s people had none of their signs, no present testimony from God; yet the sense of this was at least among the remnant. They look for God’s hand to come forth in power, their only resource, and this was faith; and

they remembered His former deeds of old, their King. Jehovah's name had been blasphemed,—this was the external enemy, “the foolish people” (i.e. who in their folly knew and owned not God), had done it. Here from verses 10, 11, I judge, Israel externally comes in and takes a part, this in union with the world and therefore Antichrist; and “the turtle dove” contrasted with “the multitude,” and “the congregation of the poor,” are brought out into prominence. Then the covenant is appealed to, and the state of the earth or land brought into the remembrance of prayer before God. And God is called on to arise, and plead His own cause against the foolish man, the proud blasphemer, and the enemies around.

I suppose the foolish man, though of general import, to be definitely exhibited in Antichrist. But there is a general view of the state of Israel, both characters of enemies are noticed, those without who attack and prevail, and the oppressor. All these Psalms to the end of lxxxv. are Psalms of Asaph and Korah, i.e. not specially connected with the person of Christ, but with the remnant of Israel; and Israel, therefore not merely Judah, but Israel at large—the δωδεκαφυλον (Acts xxvi. 7) though there may be answers of grace from Him in respect of His glory in the scene. The whole of this Psalm is a beautiful putting in remembrance of God, on their remembrance of Him.

LXXV.—We have a beautiful announcement of Christ's taking the congregation as its Adon, judging uprightnesses—blessed time. The question had been to faith, between weak, oppressed Israel, and those that trusted in their own strength, despising God. Judgments had proclaimed now, and made a song to Israel of thanksgiving, that God's name (of whom the despisers had said, “Tush, God seeth not”) was near, as the wondrous works of His hand had declared. Thus the Spirit led the spared remnant—the Israel of God. But then it replies in the person of Messiah, who has not as yet received the congregation, but announces Himself in His full character. He would judge uprightly. But farther, not only was Israel brought low, but the earth and all its inhabitants were dissolved; but now sustained by His all-powerful arm,

He bore up the pillars of it. Such had been the wickedness and ruin, that otherwise all was lost; but now He reveals Himself bearing up the pillars. From ver. 4, He declares how He had warned them. He had not judged these haughty despisers without warning them, that the Lord and He only was the promoter and the Judge, and the wicked shall drink the dregs of the Lord's cup.

The Lord's dealings are always on His own principles, and He does act on them; the ungodly will drink the bitter results of God's righteousness. But Messiah will declare for ever, and lead the praises of the God of Jacob, "praising in the great congregation." Moreover (10) He executes the righteous judgment of God on the earth, retributive justice here. The Psalm is just this. God's power having been manifested, Messiah is put in the place of righteous Judge. He had given them the testimony that judgment was God's, and (verses 9, 10) give His place and service as announced in verse 2. It is entirely earthly, and in Jacob, and is a beautiful installation of Messiah the Judge on the manifestation of the power of God. This warning of the wicked ones in power, we may see in another form in Psalm ii. such a warning there will be, for God never executes these judgments without testimony. Thus we see the two witnesses stand before the *God of the earth*. I do not say that is all the testimony.

LXXVI.—This is a beautiful Psalm. The full celebration of praise on the deliverance and dealings of God. It is not merely *that they are delivered, but that God is known; but then the objects of His deliverance and delight are brought out in their place, nor is it merely Jehovah faithful, that comes in merely occasionally in this class of Psalms, but God known in contrast with all else.* Jehovah indeed is manifested as the God of Jacob; but this is their great glory, that *God* is manifested as the God of Jacob. Judah and Israel are both mentioned. His name is great *there*. Salem and Zion resume their place—blessed day—we, more blessed, are let into His counsels in Christ—but the nationalism of a Jew is divine. *There* it is he has met and broken man in his strength and pride. The mountains of prey are nothing—as a dream passed. When God arises, Zion takes her

place in beauty, owned of Him. And the men of might come simply to nothing, and all their parade passes as impotent at the rebuke of the God of Jacob. Glorious and blessed word for that people. Verse 7 is the comment of the Spirit of Messiah in the remnant on all this. “Judgment was heard from heaven”—how magnificent and true the result—the earth trembled and was still when God came to judgment, and to help all the meek upon the earth—for in all His name and glory, He forgets not in infinite and condescending grace, the poor. In all the astounding evil and indignation of Antichrist’s time, He can think upon the very convenience of the poor remnant, and have His ear open to a prayer that their flight be not in the winter; and indeed whenever this decreed judgment of God comes, it is with tabrets and harps for some. This is His name, His character, “the God that comforteth them that are cast down.” All that the wrath of man will do, (what peace!) is to praise God, the rest is restrained. Ver. 11, 12 is the summons thereon: I do not know that **יִבְצֵר** is more than absolute “He cutteth off.”—It is a noble display of what happens in Zion, and God’s manifestation of Himself in it. Compare Zech. x. 6. These Psalms being prophetic, while they declare the actual results of man’s dealings and God’s, serve as warnings while those dealings are going on. It is still entirely the earthly judgments of the latter day. Psalm lxxv. takes a wider scope than this, because Messiah’s exercise of judgment is brought in; indeed though not exactly the same thesis, the judgments of lxxvi. give occasion to lxxv. That was Messiah; this God. The whole is a triumphant song of the remnant, more peaceful and with more thoughtful exercise, but otherwise analogous to Exodus xv.

LXXVII.—This is the state of complaint in which the remnant find themselves; God seemed to have utterly forgotten to be gracious, still this was a God known: all these Psalms are the celebration of *God* as we have seen. There was grace and life in the cry, God was brought to mind in it, and they were enabled to say “this is my infirmity;” and the things which God had done to give Him this character, are referred to, and come to mind. These two results are produced—“thy way is in the sanctuary”—

“thy way is in the sea.” Still in all their troubles, He led His people like a flock, by the hands of Moses and Aaron. Note the whole people,—confidence is restored, and well grounded, though the present way of God is untraceable as a path in the sea ; but thus brought in, in thought by the cry, God could be leant upon. Note there is difference between “*crying with the voice to God,*” and “*communing with one’s own heart ;*” while the latter went on, his spirit was overwhelmed ; the former was self-renunciation and owned dependence, and God gave ear to the cry.—All that passed previously within, though genuine, produced trouble, whether his previous song, or thinking of the Lord ; but on the cry bringing in God, then His ways of old re-assured the heart ; before, the resources of our own heart were judged from ; now, the manifested favour and resources of God ; remembrance of His doings is one of the marks of faith :—“they soon forgot His works.” (Compare Hosea vii. 14.) The moment God is really appealed to, the soul feels that He is above all circumstances, blessed be His name. Their first thoughts were their own condition, and the remembrance of God brought the recollection of enjoyments under His hand, and made the sense of their condition yet worse while resting in the *communings* of his own heart, till God filling his soul, all became power for present circumstances, and then came in the remembrance, not of their state, but of God’s deliverance. The Spirit of Christ leads the remnant through all previous passages of their history, onward in exercise of soul, up to their present thoroughly desolate condition ; and then throwing them on God, His power of deliverance of old as the Most High shines in ; and it is His guidance, so that His dealings in power of grace, have their energy in their souls.

LXXVIII.—This Psalm exhibits the failure of all the dealings of God in deliverances and blessings on the people as such, and the transfer unto, or rather accomplishment of blessings in the raising up of David the Prince in whom blessing and security was established for them.—I notice the teaching of children as the order of blessing in it. Compare Genesis xviii. 19. Deut. iv. 9, 10. vi. 7. xi. 19. It is a specific character of the dispensation, and of

ordered blessing. It is not passed by even in christianity. See Eph. vi. 4. The remnant now set about doing this, according to God's institution. The language of the Psalm is remarkable. It begins with the right of Jehovah—"Give ear, oh, my people," but it is in the love of the same interests "which *we* have heard and known and our Fathers have told us." Who makes this mighty link? The Spirit of Christ, who is Jehovah, speaking in the remnant who recognize His truth, in the midst of the people—the nation. Accordingly their history is gone through, but not merely to characterize them, but to characterize Him—to afford that in grace which was their only security—yea a record of grace, and its principle a parable, save to those that understood, established to faith which is of grace; for David was a king given in grace, therefore there is no mention of Saul, but of perfect failure under all circumstances, and the favour of the Lord interfering in strength. The Lord awakes, and by His own gracious view of the desolations of His people, His pity awoke, an encouragement of grace for the latter days in their trouble. This grace, and its judgment of things as here, was properly a parable to the flesh judging after the law, and drawing God's ways thence; it was truly a parable, because "the things revealed belonged to them, &c." "that they might keep the words of the law." Deut. xxix. 29.—"The secret things belonged to the Lord their God."—And now on a retrospect of all to David, this secret is brought out, it was not of the dispensation, but sovereign.—So when our Lord began speaking of a sower going forth to sow, it was a parable, it was grace to the Jew; He came properly seeking fruit, but in truth there was none, and He knew it, and He had been sowing fresh seed. "Thou leddest thy people;" there was the great principle of favour, but there was much more that God had to reveal for their thoughts in detail. Under this leading, in the midst of all favours, they had walked in rebellion and unbelief and lust; i.e. in the wilderness with God, where He was teaching them Himself. Then as to all the judgments He had exercised in Egypt, and on the Canaanites in their favour—forgetfulness and giving themselves up to do the like. Then God gives them

up, as He had chastened them for their lust in the wilderness—He forsook Shiloh. To this Jeremiah refers also; He gave His people over—their latter day trials were not the first time—it was an old history. But their misery as ever (so in Egypt) awoke the Lord, and He smote their enemies, and raised up the Beloved for their deliverer. This was the lesson, a pregnant lesson for them. These parables and proverbs of old, prove that it was not for merely David's time, that He who taught Asaph, taught this Psalm. Their business as in Psalm xxii., was to teach their children. There are some other points in this history; first, the rejection of Ephraim, when strength and prosperity was amongst His own people, and therefore their early sin is mentioned; for though God is supreme, there is always consistency of character, if supremacy in grace, though He had endured with great long-suffering. Further, the supreme choice of Zion and Judah which *He loved*. The exaltation of His house. Shiloh was I believe in Ephraim. The rejection of Ephraim and choice of Judah, is strongly presented in the Psalm. The Psalm is a parable really.

LXXIX.—The way in which these Psalms take up Israel, is very remarkable. The remnant in the full strong exercise of faith, take it up as God's place and people, and consequently we have still to remark that the question is between God, the exaltation of His character and truth, and man and his ways. Now, as between them and the nations, Israel is Israel as a whole, with which the faith of the remnant here identifies the name and character of God. To "how long," the prophetic word of faith on the earth, "Lord" is at once introduced—Jehovah—the faithful God of continuance and promise. The subject is, the siege and taking of Jerusalem in the latter day after their return. It is not the enemy, but the heathen; a proper Jewish designation of those without—destruction consequent upon the siege, not by Antichrist, but the heathen. I am led to think from Isaiah xxii., that Persia will be the leading agent here. Then the iniquity of that kingdom of the image, which never had persecuted, but delivered the Jews, will be complete. It describes the utter desolation (as far as it goes) of the Jews, in the midst of the last

spoiling of the rivers. (See Isa. xviii.) Jerusalem is laid on heaps, but Jacob also is devoured. The expression of the remnant under it, and their faith too “Thine—*thine* inheritance,” v. 1, compare Joel ii. 17. They regard therefore the slain, as God’s saints קדושים not קדושים. It is believed by many, that there will be a special slaying of those who bear testimony in Israel, subsequent to the rapture of the Church, previous to the manifestation of the Son of man ; but it does not appear to me, even if they be actually included, that this is what the Spirit expresses as the mind of the remnant here, that is, for the Church to know, and beforehand—not the remnant’s exercise of heart preserved for the earth—these are looking to Him who can preserve them that are appointed to die.

LXXX.—This Psalm is thoroughly and properly Jewish, more accurately of Israel ; for it has no specific relation to any particular portion, save as Joseph more particularly implied and involved the land. The “Shepherd of *Israel*” is addressed—He that “leads Joseph like a flock”—He that “sits between the cherubims,” the place of His rest and power of old in Israel, of divine ordinance, attributes, and the throne. The Jews being first restored into the trials and exercises of the latter day, and concerned in all that related to Antichrist, the restoration of the others, and their presence in the land, more particularly involved the full coming of the nations. This Psalm, as all in this book, recognizes Israel as such before God—“the vine that had been brought out of Egypt.” But it is before the Son of man has taken His gathering power amongst them ; but faith looks at the whole scene before God, without the judicial details being brought in. But it is there call of God as the Shepherd of His people, to take His place amongst them—to stir up His strength and come and help them. It turns therefore to His presence among them in the wilderness—passes by all between as lost ; and note here, how judgment does the same thing by the Holy Ghost in Stephen—“Did ye serve me by the space of forty years in the wilderness ; yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.” The present desolation

of Israel is referred to their sin in the wilderness—sin which the prophetic spirit alone notices—then consequently, Solomon's house is passed by, and set aside as utterly worthless ; so Anna withal waited for redemption as much as Daniel in Babylon. Here faith consequently goes back to God's part in it. "Thou hast brought a *vine out of Egypt* and planted it, and it is laid waste." But the grace that brought them out and planted them, being thus referred to, they can set themselves even in the desolation (for grace and God's dealings are referred to), into His hand for deliverance, to be turned again and *this* vine visited. But it is as looking down from heaven, whither as it were God was retired, and they felt it. Still thence He could look down in grace, if they had driven away and forfeited His presence here. All through it is God's actings which are referred to; hence, there is a branch brought in which He had made strong for Himself, even the Son of man which He had strengthened—the man of His right hand—"So," they say, "will we not go back from thee." "Turn us again" is their cry. We have not then the judicial distinctive details, but the exercise of faith in God, to bring in the general blessing as of God to Israel; and here through the promised branch (or son) of the vine, even the Son of man—the man of God's right hand. There might have been a restoration, but all the beasts of the forest were wasting the vine, for there was no hedge. The Apostles (though Jews were distinctively known to the flesh), yet speak of "our twelve tribes" ever, for grace and faith on utter ruin and rejection know the *whole* in God's mind in grace. "Bands" indeed was broken, but then faith went up to God, viewed it there, and so passed back over all the history of failure and responsibility, and so back to God's original dealings from Himself; for man's *total* ruin is the time, the due time of God's proper grace and His own counsels. Thus it exalts our thoughts of God. The Lord God of hosts here shines forth to faith in power. The allusion of verse 2, is an exceedingly touching exercise and suggestion of faith; it was a time of love then, and if He made His poor people remember it, and the order of His beautiful flock, and their nearness to Him, He

was not like to forget it. Blessed God ! how are His ways restoring ways of grace and tenderness !

LXXXI.—The new moon trumpet soon sounds on this ; and grace and comfort restored, Jehovah goes on to explain all that had passed between. He had never departed from His love, and the yearnings of His heart over them. It is the echo of the blessed Lord's word in His last effort of love, as acting on their responsibility, "How often would I have gathered"—when He wept over her that killed the prophets and stoned those that were sent unto her. "Israel would none of me"—that was the affecting and true witness of a loving God—one who was a husband to them. Alas for Israel ! Good would have been their portion. Yet they know their God better in grace ; and it is remarkable how in the testimony that it was no want of love on God's part that occasioned the desertion, their placing in grace is referred to. The reference, even where "if thou wilt hearken to me," i.e. the ground of faithfulness is laid, is not to Sinai, but from the coming forth from Egypt up to Sinai, which was all the display of grace in contrast with law ; so that even in murmurs they were blessed with the very same things they were chastened for afterwards.—And now that the moon had been eclipsed, in brighter rays she came forth again with rejoicing to receive her light afresh from the Sun of righteousness, and all was joy in Israel. We have again here Joseph specially as taking in the people and the birthright, as Judah did the royalty : ver. 5, 6, 7, recall all these dealings. He was the God that brought them out of Egypt ; open their mouths wide, and they were filled ; true affiance of heart, so as to receive the full blessing was all that was wanting, but there was none such. How was Israel silenced, yet in what certainty of grace ; grace always shewn through their long history, so that they were infinitely humbled in what gave perfect and sure ground for them now to rest on.

This was a trumpet of gathering and of joy, on the emergence of Israel into light again. The alarm trumpets had been sounded before, as in Joel. From His love, God had never departed nor changed in it ; their heart was restored and returned to it. Joy

was a statute for Israel then and now, in delivering grace. It is a most touching and lovely Psalm. The law is clean passed over in it as nought; God is speaking in grace, as we have seen in judgment, in Stephen's speech.

LXXXII.—But there was another important question; what was to be done as to power on the earth, so that all things should be set right in Israel? God was arising to judge the earth—all might be wrong, but a great secret now broke forth on the world, joy to the longing remnant—"God standeth in the congregation of the *mighty*, He judgeth among the *gods*. The thing is not yet executed, but His presence is discovered amongst them. They might be gratifying themselves, but here was One that judged them. "Whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." "None, says the Apostle, of the princes of this world knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified, &c." Now God was standing up to take the matter into His own hands. It might be true of the rest, but it was true of Israel too. Elohim was the name of their judges. To them the *λογος τῆ θεῶ* came. They had the responsibility accordingly, but all was out of course, all the foundations of the earth. The transfer to Nebuchadnezzar, or Saul, or David, did not alter this: the responsibility might be more abstract, but even the Gentile had Daniel's testimony, and was proved there: the Lord made known to him that it was so given. Still it speaks specially to those who had received the law by the disposition of angels, and had not kept it. God had given them the character of authority, and His name, and He could not leave it in their hands any longer. They must descend from the character of Elohim to Adam; Elohim having stamped this name of Adam (all that they really were) on all that had borne His name, and arising in His own name, judges all nations. The remnant, this poor of the flock, can call for it, and be glad. This Psalm changes the whole face and government of the earth. "Like one of the princes," means I apprehend, like one of the mere Gentile princes, as of mere human consequence, not as Elohim. Though I have sometimes thought princes might be used as in Daniel x. 13, 20.

LXXXIII.—We have here another page of Israel's history as in the land : the confederacy of those nations within the limits of the land and borders, holpen by the Assyrian, who is joined with them to cut off Israel (now recognized as a nation there) from being a nation, that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance. It is not now the Jews nor Antichrist, nor does the Spirit move in that sphere of thought, the beasts are not on the scene at all, but Israel in the land, and God is appealed to for His name and honour, they are His enemies, they will have "the houses of God in possession." Messiah the Intercessor in Spirit takes the question up in verse 13, and then Jehovah's name is brought in ; and it is prayed that by the judgment, He whose name alone is Jehovah, the same yesterday, to day and for ever, the God of Israel, may be known to be the Most High, and that, over all the earth. This effort of the local enemies (only to their own displacing) gives as we have said, a very definite page of Israel's history as in the land. Assyria, as to much of its territory, may be perhaps interested in this, the bounds being Euphrates. However, in seeking to cut off Israel, Israel (holpen of Messiah) can now bring in God, and thus, He be known as the Most High over all the earth. We have nothing of the heavenly triumph here over the man of the earth associated with the Jewish many, who have rejected Christ—"this generation"—but the portion of Israel with the Most High over *all the* earth. The Spirit of Christ knew their doings and presents them before God. God had taken His place to judge among the God's, therefore He could be thus appealed to, for these Psalms are progressive. As to hidden ones, see Psalm xxxi. 20, 21.

LXXXIV.—This is a most beautiful Psalm, beautiful in spirit for all saints. The land being cleared, the heart and thoughts of the saints in Israel find a rest again in the courts and dwelling-place of the Lord of Hosts. The relation resumes its place. I do not think the Spirit speaks necessarily in those actually in Israel, but describes what their hearts found there ; the ways of Zion were restored in their hearts ; the track which led thither, long deserted and waste, was now printed with the footsteps of their

hearts; Zion as God's dwelling and the place of His altars, was the resort of these, and they knew in Spirit, and could say, "they that dwell in thine house will be still praising thee;" for the Spirit now revealed who He was, to their souls. Zion is the centre of the hopes and pleasures of the people happy in God. The Lord of Hosts being most high over all the earth, the peculiar and familiar affections of Israel, the Spirit of Christ in each one, centre around His dwelling-place, proper to them. The soul of the true Israelite longs and faints (thoroughly restored in Spirit) for the courts of the Lord. It will be indeed joy! "yea, the sparrow has found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young" (as has been suggested by a brother in a little published book on the Psalms), I am disposed to take in a parenthesis. If the sparrow has found a house, surely the soul of His longing people may find a rest in "thine altars my King and my God."

Blessing first rests on those that *dwell* there—there is the central point; next, for many were at a distance from these loved altars—on those whose strength is in Jehovah, and whose heart was in the way; long, rough, dreary perhaps, but the way to Zion, to Jehovah's courts. The valley of Baca, they thus made a well of joy; and if not rivers in the way, heaven's waters filled the pools; their blessed security therefore in this longing journey is described in the 7th verse. The heart at once therefore turns thither for itself—the Spirit of Christ in this who stands I think all through as an individual. In ver. 9, Messiah is laid as the great basis and ground of Jehovah's favour to them. Note, we in the Son, enjoy the same favour even as He. This difference it is the Lord presses. (John xvi. 26, 27.) The blessedness of God as their portion is then entered into, and identifying it with the Lord of Hosts, the man that trusts in Him is pronounced blessed.

LXXXV.—This Psalm relates to their full enjoyment of blessing, the blessing of God, they being by pardon and favour restored; and shews the frame of Spirit produced in them by mercy—humbleness, yet outgoings of returning confidence. The captivity of Jacob is brought back, the iniquity of "thy

people" forgiven, all their sins covered. This was blessing, but the full blessings of divine favour connected with this in the land, are not yet brought in; and this produces these sighs to God. The restoration has awakened their sense of what God's favour really was, and what it produced; and hence becomes the occasion and plea to ask for more—for all. Their own conversion into the Spirit of this blessing withal they seek; for conversion into the Spirit of blessing, is consequent on pardon and forgiveness; Israel is thrown fully on this now. The truth of God was counted naught by them in Jesus the minister of the circumcision, for they stood not, nor abode in the truth: unbelief barred the blessing then; now they come in on sole mercy "*να ελεηθωσι.*" and therein the truth of all the promises are fulfilled withal, not only for their blessing, but that "glory may dwell in their land." By these dealings *truth* as to the promises of old, and *mercy* towards the objects of them, who deserved none, are met—these great elements of what God is. Righteousness, which would have been against them, and peace (for He has made peace) the favour and prosperity of God, are fully united; and the effect, truth, a new thing (for guile was there, forgiveness and blessing opening the heart, have taken it away) springs out of the earth. The return to blessing, peace-making blessing, and righteousness (before either hid or punishing) can now shew the glory of its face unclouded; the full blessing of the Lord shall take its way through the land. These are the consequences, or what is desired to follow as the consummation of restoration. In verse 10 we have the truth realized in God's character; in verse 11, between heaven and earth, between men and God; in verses 12, 13, consequent blessing upon earth, Israel and the land being the special scene of this, according to promise—while founded purely on mercy, it develops the whole of God's truth. Rom. xi. is the comment on the principles of this Psalm, from verse 26 onward; translating only verse 31, thus "even so these have now not believed in your mercy, that they might be objects of mercy." Now, righteousness—the consistency of God with His own character, or the truth of that character, finds its developement in peace with His people, they

having thrown themselves on mercy. Moreover truth springs out of the earth, not only in the conduct of the saints, but the power and witness of it in facts; so that, “he that blesseth himself in the earth, blesseth himself in the God of truth”—righteousness looks with unclouded aspect from heaven—nought to hinder the flow of the consistency of God’s character, which now found its unhindered way upon earth—His righteousness could do so. It is exercised in Christ’s reign; the Lord therefore, as ever when unhindered, flows forth in blessing, “gives that which is good” (every good and perfect gift), the land yields her increase, and righteousness goes before, leads the path of Christ—it is plain goes before Him, and sets them in the way of its steps. It is not hid in God, guides them not in the revealings of the Spirit in conflict with evil, but a plain and present cloudless path. It is present righteousness; *we* have these things by faith hidden in Christ; this, is the manifestation of them on earth.

LXXXVI.—This Psalm goes farther, for it also takes in the nations, but it looks at Israel in its misery and prostration: how can these things both be true? just because it brings in Christ into the midst of the sorrow, and taking it; and therefore He having thus identified Himself with it and suffered, can at once when they are in it (“the time of Jacob’s trouble”), call to *Jehovah* Himself as to it. It is then the word of Israel in the latter day in her lowest troubles, but spoken by Christ to Jehovah for her, as one who has borne them *atoningly*, and can therefore look certainly for mercy in the disciplinarian and judicial visitation of them. This was needful (see John xii.) for the gathering of the Gentiles. He could not take them with Israel then, for there was sin. (Compare Zech. xi.) We have then Jehovah at once: the humble mindedness of Israel, the gathering of the nations, and the principle of Almighty deliverance in resurrection—verses 13, 14, the gatherings of the violent against them. The deliverance is not in the yet manifested strength of the Son of man, but sought in Jehovah towards the dependant servant.

LXXXVII.—The foundations of the earth had been out of course, and God had now judged among the gods; and now

comes the question in the earth, where is His foundation?—(This, this Psalm expresses) it is clear, Israel the lot of His inheritance in the earth; Judah, His portion in the holy land. But He now proceeds to choose Jerusalem again. There will He dwell, for He has a delight therein. Then is it compared with the world's greatness and dwellings, and we are told who belongs to it.—*His* foundation is in the holy mountains, certainly Jacob was His portion, the thoughts of those that knew Him centred there. But “the Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.” It is the city of God of which glorious things are spoken. But amidst all her glories, one predominates with her; Him, whose association with her, was her glory—the birth-place of the man of glory. This is clearly all new Jerusalem—Zion is on new ground, in a “world to come” after the foundations of the old, are all cast down; our Lord could not be said to be born at Jerusalem at His first coming, He was rejected there, that is the character of the former Jerusalem; but now He was creating Jerusalem a rejoicing—in new Jerusalem He is the first born, and alone in His place—“Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” could be said there—she, this new Jerusalem in grace, could count that He was born there; what a change! and not only she, but Jehovah could count when He wrote up the people, that this man was born, not rejected, there. Grace, surely and purely it is; but what a change in the face and position of Zion; many others might thereon be recounted, more children after she had lost the others, and the children of the desolate, more than of the married wife, and the Highest stablished *her*—it was His foundation, but He stablished her; but this was the grand point of glory and association with Him, *He was born there*. Yet withal the external testimony and ministry of grace should be there, all God's fresh springs shall be in it. Favour and delight within, as well as contrast of glory without; for with them that knew her, she would not be ashamed of talking of Egypt, or Babylon, Tyre, Ethiopia or any else, the glory of the birth of her great one, eclipsed it all. Then, and with this association, this glory of Christ's birth-place, stablished of the Lord, a centre of affections

was provided for the people here below just because divine, a link *with God*. Not so all other patriotism, but that is. The native country of God's power.

LXXXVIII.—This Psalm is the expression of the sympathy of Christ with the remnant as under the law in the latter day ; hence while it recognizes their condition under it even from Mount Sinai as in v. 15, it recognizes His subjection to death, and all its penalty, discovers the identity of Christ (wondrous truth !) with them in this position of the bondage and curse of the broken law resting on the spirit—yet by His Spirit, their plea, in their perfect desolateness in this state. Christ seems to have entered into the spirit of this Psalm, to have drawn it forth rather, when He describes the elect, God's elect, as those who cry day and night unto God Luke xviii. ; and I suppose (connect with this the close of previous chapter Luke xvii.) the Lord alludes in that passage to the circumstances to which this Psalm refers—His Spirit in the Psalm enters into the circumstances in full sympathy because in full affection, in which Israel the elect, and the elect heart-widowed Israel righteous in affection, yet feeling all the effects of wickedness, and for others (Christ's true character and state), found themselves in protracted sorrow in that long, yet through mercy, shortened day. (Compare the confession in Daniel's prayer.) He enters into the long course of righteous judgment due to the people, terrible and awful thought ! for the soul of Christ felt it the judgment of a law broken from the outset, the array of terror which it brought against the soul which understood its curse, and the weight of it in holiness—which understood the effect of the law, “the terror of God,” “wrath lying hard upon Him.” Outward mercies are nothing in such a case, but mockeries, as the light air or what passes vainly through it. Though every trouble and sin has its darkness from it ; still a call daily on the *Lord*, for the law is the law of the *Lord* ; therefore its terror—a God with whom we are in relation, who has shut us up in this terror, forgotten seemingly of God, but, only in the darkness of His anger, when we cannot find Him : the more we know what He is, the more terrible to find nothing but darkness—still the cry is maintained, yea day and night. It

is a matter of the grave and destruction—enemies there were withal, lovers and friends none—such is the estimate of the Spirit of Christ, the just estimate it forms, and forms therefore in the people in the latter day under the law—shut up into terror, and alone there with the Lord, their Lord against whom they had transgressed—so much the more joyful and blessed their deliverance. Still, being the Spirit of Christ, which alone can feel this, it cries day and night ; what a picture, and how the truth. This Psalm then gives us the condition of the righteous remnant, who know the law, understand the law is spiritual, see it broken from the outset, and the circumstances but the consequence of a vastly deeper state of things—a real return to God according to their circumstances. Death was what stared them in the face, and this under which they were was the ministration of death : (the adversary had the power of it, God was but a judge in the law.) Their history in this view did but add to their misery—but their condition in soul before the Lord blotted out their history—they could not get forth—death was before them, but they cried, what could they add to this engulfing in the terror of a righteous judgment, and a broken law, a law against a relationship and ministration of death ? They could add nothing : had there been hope they would not have been where they were, nor thrown in the knowledge of righteousness on a God of grace. It ends then in perfect misery, but in a cry, the righteous cry of right affection in God's elect. There was one who taking their sorrow and the curse of the law, being made a curse, understood their cry and heard it. When they understood it, so as to be brought with Him, He delivered—but death must be in some sort read here ; St. Paul I suppose understood this much. All must know it *in light* (for *we* begin with resurrection), not necessarily in darkness. But for experience, knowledge even often of God, and action through the region of death, that is the world, it is often, as neutralizing it and introducing us within the vail of it, very profitable and useful. For them, Christ has at any rate gone through it, but He *has* gone through it, so we are really free. It is a very deep, and when known through grace, a very blessed subject, because it introduces to God ; and

whatever introduces there, is blessed, the Spirit of Christ alone can make us know it. It is known only by the Spirit of Christ, and He has known it.

It is remarkable too to observe, that as the remnant look back here in their own thought of it, to this as the universal condition of Israel, all their history being blotted out morally (which was the trial merely, if fruit could be got, yea even to sending the Son, and there was none.) So Stephen, or the spirit in Stephen just sets them in that closing scene of Israel's conditional history, exactly on this ground, where the remnant in their own sense of it in their souls, take it up. "Did ye offer to me, O ye house of Israel slain beasts by the space of forty years in the wilderness, yea ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, images which ye made to worship them, and I will carry you away beyond Babylon;" they sinned in the wilderness, *hence* their present condition, all else was rejection of reclaiming dealings, and just filling up the measure of their sins; of Solomon's house it could be said, "where is the house ye will build me and what is the place of my rest? Has not my hand made all these things." In this Psalm then the law is discussed. Christ with them or for them, one with them now in sympathy under it.

LXXXIX.—This is a most admirable Psalm: as the former treated of the law and turned to Mount Sinai, this takes up grace and the covenant of unfailing promise in David. It expresses the miseries of Israel, Christ taking them up as His in connection with promise, as before as, the curse, under the law; but here appealing to promise, the sure mercies of David, and not looking at the miseries as bowing under the righteous curse of the law. His blessed love was just needed for both together. It was the salvation and glory of Israel. But then it goes further, for as they had despised Him, they must see Him in a brighter glory, not theirs, not only resurrection, though there the sure mercies were bound on a foundation which avoided for them (as having borne the curse of it) the law—but ascension, and thereon (though they did not and could not of course see that Church glory), therefore He said to Mary, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended—but tell my bre-

thren I ascend, &c.” Thus it comes, this being noticed, though not in revealed Church form, to be a very remarkable Psalm. Christ sings in Spirit for them, “I will sing of the *mercies* חסדֵי (chasidë) of Jehovah for ever.” This was Jewish righteousness, to own utter failure under the law, *their* failure, and Jehovah’s faithfulness, which if they had failed was mercy. See Rom. xi., before referred to. This was the divine wisdom of God about them, and so towards all, faithful, but in mercy—they being sinners in unbelief, and so on their part having forfeited all (otherwise the gospel could not have treated all, treated man as sinners “together”); here then Christ takes up this, the great Jewish point of personal faith, “mercies for ever”—their well known chorus of faith—so signally shewn in the Apostle Paul. (1 Tim. i. 16.) They were the mercies of *Jehovah*, “for I have said, mercy shall be built up for ever.” Christ here takes up as He is able, the faithfulness of Jehovah’s nature and promise for the people, faithfulness to mercy pledged and known by Him; so we say “faithful and just to forgive;” but He can say not merely on earth (it had been rejected there, for though truth it was really mercy), but in the very heavens. As to the manner of it, He recounts (Jehovah, to wit) His own covenant promise with David His elect. This lays the foundation of the whole Psalm, Jehovah’s faithfulness (to mercy), David its object and central channel. But rejected as they were, the heavens thereby came in, they would have to see His faithfulness there, and these would praise His wonders. Saints here are קדשים Kodeshim not חסידים Chasidim. Thus though the covenant was with David, this is brought out as a brighter higher and better scene behind, recognized and owned then by them in spirit, while the heavens praise His wonders, and recognize His works below. Verses 5, 6, 7. These announce the heavenlies, not the mystery of the Church known, but blessing and faithfulness in the heavens when all had failed in man on the earth, (save He of course who was therefore now in the heavens.) Then come the dealings on earth, but all this is not yet David but Jehovah. Verses 8, 9. His faithfulness and almighty power controlling the angry elements. Rahab smitten—His enemies scat-

tered with a strong arm—this will be accomplished in the destruction of Antichrist and the subsequent scattering of the earthly enemies of Jehovah ; for faith looks at them as *His*, and *His* association with Israel in glory, has not at this point taken place ; though *He* may defend them and scatter the enemies. The same distinction I find in Zechariah, and elsewhere, i.e. defence, before Christ is introduced Jewishly into the scene. Thus however the heavens and the earth become, i.e. actually, the Lord's : *He* asserts and makes good *His* title—this soon centres in Israel, and Tabor and Hermon rejoice in *His name*. Verses 13, 14, *He* breaks out into praise of *His* might and strength ; but the mercy and the power have now set up the throne, or introduced them into association with it. Verses 15, 16, 17, the exceeding blessedness of the people that know the joyful sound, i.e. the Lord's throne established in righteousness (when mercy and faithfulness to covenant promise have done it), and these heralds of *His* presence go before *Him*, for this is true and abiding blessing. Verse 18, appropriates all this in blessed triumph, not in announcement, by Messiah ; but *He* taking it all up in conscious joy as the head of the people, Jehovah our defence, the Kedesh of Israel our king ; this is all the Jehovah part of it, the Kedesh of Israel—and the saints therefore are *Kodeshim*.—But now the object and centre of it is introduced, the man chosen out of the people, Jehovah's *Chesed* (see verses 19, 20, Hebrew), the same word as mercies in the first verse, David the anointed, to *Him* promises which could not be shaken ; failure might bring chastisement, but never possibly induce failure on Jehovah's part ; *He* would have ceased to be Jehovah then. These were mercies *le olam*—yet all seemed now desolate as possible—the true David cut off in his youth, his days shortened, (see Ps. cii.) and as the mercy was to be in *Him*, and *He* the Gibbor of help ; all was laid waste, and the enemy had the upper hand. But here immediately the Spirit of Christ takes its true actual place on mercy, promise, and desolation, as the Spirit of intercessional prophecy which is certain of fidelity, and on mercy says, Lord, “how long ?” If wrath continued, all would be set aside, no flesh would be saved ; for the elect's sake the days will be

shortened—next, appeal to faithfulness, but to loving kindnesses sworn to David in truth, laying hold on the very ground of faith, and then thereby securing the blessing, identifying the servants of Jehovah (mercy had made and preserved such) with Himself; He (for *He* had made Himself one with them, afflicted in their affliction) had to bear the reproach, and His footsteps (Jehovah's delight and honour in the world) were reproached. That closed the word, the way of mercies was now made plain, and the answer of these sure mercies for ever, found their place, and “Blessed be Jehovah for evermore,” filled the house.

The next book (for this, closes this) takes up the sure blessing, Millennial blessing, and Messiah, that trusted in Israel's Jehovah while He was it, as its centre and only and sure way.—Amen. May we know the yet more secret and marvellous wonder of grace, even the heavenly glory with Him, who is over all these things, while we praise Him for His wonders in them. Glory be to His name.

MATTHEW XVI. 18.

“Thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build my Church.”

THE difference between the Church and the world is, in main, the difference of being alive to God, and being dead in trespasses and sins. There are no general questions between the Church and the world, but will resolve themselves into this difference; and none more so than that, agitated in various shapes, concerning the difference between formal Churches, and a Church regenerate by the Spirit “through faith of the operation of God that raised up Jesus from the dead.” The Church is founded on Jesus—*no one* denieth it; but it is also founded in life, and here comes in the test of every pretension to the name of the Church of Christ, of its

form and ministry. It is therefore the question between Rome and believers, at least the only true one. All previous questions are futile, or nearly so. We know that Roman Catholics, when pressed, invariably cast themselves back on this place (Matt. xvi. 18): "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church:" on this is founded all their formal constitution. Does this assert therefore, their position as not of this world, and is it a spiritual claim? They say Peter is the rock, and whatever represents Peter, comes in with the same claim. The *foundation* is not, and could not be transitory; and therefore, if Peter were so, Peter must be so still. Now to meet this, we advance in the first place, that Peter in the New Testament, is never called a rock at all. 2ndly,—That the passage is offered as a test of faith, and that the mode of expression by which it would be referred by the Lord to Himself, was usual with the Lord. 3rdly,—That it is a passage containing, specially, a declaration of Christ the foundation of the Church, and of the life of the Church by Him, in REVERSE of the pretensions of Rome as a spiritual Church, or as *the commissioned Church of the world*. 4thly,—On the other hand, we would show the fitness of the establishment of Rome to the world, and also to the present state of it. 5thly,—That the name of Peter given by the Lord in its application, is of common concern to believers; and I desire that the Lord may be pleased to apply this to the conscience of believers, as deeply concerning their confession.

In the first chapter of the gospel of John, in the forty second verse, we have in the Douay version these words: "And he brought him (Simon) to Jesus, and Jesus looking on him, said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted PETER." This translation does not say stone or rock. The English authorized version, however, without any warrant from the Greek text, has it, "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a *stone*." "Peter" however, is in the margin, and there is no various reading to warrant the translation in the text. We have then simply a name given in Hebrew, "Cephas," and it is of no consequence whether it means rock or stone, for the

Holy Spirit translates it Peter, which is a proper name. The same mode of change can be shown in a common instance, Jonathan is an Hebrew word, signifying "The gift of God." Now if we said "Jonathan," which being interpreted, signifies *δωρον τῆς θεῆς*, we should have had the same form as that which the English authorized text has translated "a stone." But if we said Jonathan, which being interpreted, signifies *θεοδωρος*, or in English "Theodore," we have it as in the true words of the original. Peter therefore, is never called a rock at all, or more properly, in being called "Cephas and Peter," he is not called a rock in the mind of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly.—That the passage is offered as a test of faith, and that the mode of expression, by which it would be referred by the Lord to Himself, is usual with the Lord. The difference between a reference to Himself, and to the confession in verse 16, is the difference between Himself as the foundation of the Church, and a confession of Him, involving the principle of life as the result of the connection of the Church with Him; and I own, I see both in it.

In Matthew xiii. 11, 12, 13, we find the Lord saying, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away, even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables, because they seeing, see not." Our Lord it is evident, followed this rule. If there was the faith that accepted HIMSELF, He would explain all things. Where there was want of it, He in measure said that which left them in the dark, or made them stumble. I would point out how our Lord followed this mode in John vi. as to the bread from heaven, just after the miracle of feeding the five thousand, passing thence in His discourse, to the eating of His flesh and blood. In the case of Nicodemus also in John iii. the Lord offers that which is proper in reply, but so as to baffle the want of faith in which Nicodemus was come. He conceals also in His answer to the Samaritan woman, His meaning, when with the water immediately before

them, He speaks of water, and leaves her in spiritual ignorance. So in John vii. 38. Ver. 39, giving the explanation afforded to the Apostle, by the Holy Spirit afterward received. There is another instance yet, more remarkable, because offered to those guilty of obstinate rejection of Him. It is in John ii. having driven the money-changers, and others out of the temple, they ask Him "what sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things." He is in the midst of the buildings of the temple, and He says to them, "Destroy **THIS TEMPLE**, and I will build it again in three days." Whereupon in simple apprehension of the place, and His supposed allusion, "This temple," say they, "was forty and six years in building, and will thou rear it up in three days?" and so completely did He leave them in ignorance, that this speech was falsely brought in accusation against Him when brought before the High Priest. (Matt. xxvi. 61.) Nor did the Apostle understand it, but by the power of the Holy Ghost reflecting light on it, and so John says, "but He spake of the temple of His body." Here is a remarkable instance of the blind thrown on want of faith in HIMSELF. The other instances pass over a visible object to an invisible truth, which the world could not see nor know: here He plainly lets them break on the rock of their unbelief, and darkness of heart in presenting Himself visible among them. We find therefore, it is usual with the Lord (so to speak), to leave the capacity of understanding to faith in Himself, or in the presented object of faith, and to leave in the same words, a stumbling-block of *visible* object to unbelief. The place here before us (Matt. xvi. 18), offers a parallel to these. The founding of the Church for ever, is the great subject of the sentence: the manifold relations of the old and new dispensations, are embraced in the assemblage of a few words. The trial of faith is held out for ever! Peter is not a rock as we have seen. But the Lord says, "Thou art Peter, and on **THIS ROCK** I will build my Church." Here is the visible object, "Thou art Peter." And we have HIMSELF offered to faith. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The use of the name of Peter is also here very emphatic, for the Lord marks the reason, and essentially the time of the change, which is

now carried out, though before assigned. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona ;" and I say unto thee thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my Church." If the Lord had said, Thou art Peter and on *thee* I will build my Church, the controversy would have at once been materially changed. But it is not said "on thee," nor is it on Peter at all ; and Peter is not *a rock* by any word in the scripture ; he is never once called so, being a deviation (acknowledged in the margin) of the commonly received version. It is no violence to the passage, to understand it of the Lord. The instance in John ii. 20, is stronger than this. It was more evident to *sense*, that it was the temple in which the Lord stood, that He alluded to, than it was to Peter in this case, even if Peter had meant simply rock (and then, it might have required explanation, which was not given in the case of Nicodemus), the passage being left to faith for ever ; but Peter does not mean it.

Thirdly.—That this is a place containing, specially, the declaration of Christ, the foundation of the Church, in REVERSE of the pretensions of Rome, either as *the* Church, or, in their sense, the commissioned Church of the world.

If the name of Peter does not mean rock, there is an end of the application of this passage to Peter as the rock ; and if it did mean so, it is not on *him*, but on the rock Christ, as shewn under the last head, by the force of faith and the Lord's word. But there is something more included in the declaration of Peter. The Lord, as the *life of the Church*, is the subject of it. And the Lord, *and Himself*, as the life of the Church are included in the Lord's answer, as inseparably united together. The Lord is the Rock, on which it is built, and against it, the gates *Aιδes** shall not prevail. There is no room left in the Church, but for the subjects of the truth by confession, and for the ministration of life ; of

* If we take *Aιδου* in its minor sense, that is, death, or the place of the dead: the gates *Aιδes* mean the *judgment of death*, gates meaning in scripture judgment, from their being the place of judgment. It will be abundantly true that hell shall not prevail against the Saints to destroy their portion. It is tantamount to the words "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," or, those who are built on Christ, the Son of the living God, are the Church of the resurrection, just as much as it is the life of the elect, which prevents the final deception prevailing against them.

which we see abundantly, in the second chapter, of the second Epistle to the Corinthians. Its characteristic being this, that the Church is the ministration of the SPIRIT.

There is something very peculiar in the confession of Peter. Nathaniel says, "thou art the Son of God." Martha says, "thou art the Christ, the Son of God;" the centurion (Matt. xxvii. 54), "truly this was the Son of God;" or in Mark xv. 39, "truly this man was the Son of God." There was in the Hebrew, a use of the word "Son," which gives often a very indefinite force to the term; as in Isaiah v. 1. (See margin.) But here, we have "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The expression of *living* God, simply taken, was to the Jew a term opposed to the dumb idol; it is here however in a connection peculiar to the revelation made. The other confessions were often indefinite, as we see from (John x. 35.) To believe on the name of the Son of God, is also the expression of a definite faith, of the presence and power of God in Jesus (see Acts iii. as to the man born lame, and 1 John v. 13), but being called the Son of the *living* God, gives us the acknowledgment of a distinct relation to God, and to the life of God, even the Father. It was very special we know, being specially the revelation from the Father, of the person of Christ, and of the relationship of Christ to the Father as very Son; and therefore the confession of Christ, as the *manifested* life. "For the LIFE was manifested, and we have seen IT, and bear witness, and shew you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us: that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Not therefore Son of God, as God having the message of God, or above all messengers—Shiloh—the sent one—but Son of God, as the palpable and visible manifestation of the life of God, by whom fellowship in life with THE FATHER, was given; "and these things we write unto you that your joy may be full."

Peter, surely the first to whom this *revelation* was given in fulness of acceptation, became the type of all that should confess

the same hereafter, by the same Spirit; "no man can say that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost;" and the cognomen, establishes the sense of relationship to the rock, in which we are become "*living stones*." Peter, therefore, having this preeminence among others, is the type of the true Church, the rightly founded Church, the living Church. Take this away from Peter here, and you have indeed Peter, but robbed utterly of his character, as every professing Church is robbed of its character, as a Church where Christ the SON as the manifested life is not its foundation and existence.

The Romish Church have made their election, they have lost Peter, as their prototype, and set him up as their chief. They have *Judaised* in the exact correctness of the order of God in Peter as THE Jewish Apostle, the Apostle of the circumcision, and not as by this confession the type of Christians—His vicarship of Christ to "His own" is that of the Jews. (Compare Rom. xv. 8, and Gal. ii. 7, and John xxi. 15—17.) They take up the Jewish position to the world as all those do, and all forms of Gentile conceit (see Rom. xi. 17 to 31, and verse 12, observing the mistranslation of verse 31), who assert the vision of universality; down to those who use this as the most urgent motive at a missionary meeting, instead of simple obedience to Mark xvi. 15. And it bears always, and *on every side*, a Babel character, when carried out in practice.

It would be impossible to go through the places, where life is declared given, consequent on righteousness, but we can refer to Rom. iv. 24. Abraham was dead in body; he believed on God who could make him alive (not staggering at the word), is reckoned righteous, and receives life, so also shall it be imputed unto us if we believe; on whom? on Him that *raised up Jesus from the dead*. Again 1 Peter, i. 20, 21. Christ was manifested; and "by Him do we believe on God who raised up Jesus from the dead, and gave Him glory." We here observe, that it is *by Jesus* we believe on God who *raised Him*. So again "If ye believe on "Him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, ye shall be saved." Again, "ye are raised, through faith of the operation

of God, that raised up Jesus from the dead ;” again, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” These places are nothing but the faith of life, expressed in accordance with Peter’s confession, which was a truth (that had been revealed to Him by the Father), that is, Christ, and Christ essentially life, as very Son of God. The resurrection is the pledge of the overabounding sufficiency of the Spirit in Christ. He offered Himself up by the eternal Spirit, and was quickened in it. We rise, because He was raised. In the resurrection of Christ, we receive the principle of life through faith, and I must believe on His life, to receive life, as I must believe on His death to receive the atonement in my soul. If I establish, therefore, Peter, as anything, otherwise than because of the confession of Christ, and of life by Christ, or whatever I establish in its place, I establish DEATH. It is thus the Peter of Rome is at once the REVERSE of the true Peter, and subversive of the truth of a living Church altogether ; because Peter, and not Christ, by the faith of Him, is their practical foundation.

Neither can Rome, by their claim of Peter, be the commissioned Church of the world. The foundation of the life of the Church, is put an end to in their use of the confession of Peter, being applied to him and not to faith ; and what shall minister concerning life but life, or among the living, but life ?” “ This is the word which by the Holy Ghost is preached unto you.” “ The Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” Christ receives the promise of the Father and sheds it forth.

Grant that the wicked may profess to have it. (Matt. vii. 23.) The commissioned Church generally, can alone be properly predicated, as men founded on the manifested life revealed by the Father, and so on the true Peter ; as all ministry and service save now by the living Spirit, is the true Korah, or the true Dathan and Abiram.*

It has been said† that the apostolate of Paul was but transi-

* Nadab and Abihu are *true* priests offering up *unhallowed* fire, sacrifices not spiritual because of the condition of the offerers.

† By the Irvingites.

tory—that born out of due time, he established Churches but to vanish, and to be absorbed in the apostolate of Peter, till a future day. If so, the epistles of Paul, the gospel of Paul (than which it was declared accursed by the Holy Ghost to preach other), are nought—"Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." It follows also that the Spirit which sent him is effete, that the *ενεργεια* of the Spirit which is neither of man, nor *by* man—that same Spirit which wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, and in Paul to that of the uncircumcision (Gal. ii. 8), is no longer vouchsafed, though Christ be gone and still away: and however man may be capacitated, it is not in demonstration of the Spirit and of power from on high, in the truth of the word, that the gospel, and the teaching of the Church is to be carried on. The question must immediately occur:—what Peter is this that is set up to swallow up this manifestation of the power of God unto salvation, and the calling out from among the Gentiles a people unto God? It is not the Peter of the sixteenth of Matthew. It can only be *he* of Rome, being adjusted in the wiles of Satan, to fix on an elongation of Judaism, and successional priesthood, beggarly elements in the face of a better, a living ministration:—ready to vanish away then (Heb. viii. 13), declared to be abolished (2 Cor. iii. 13) together with enmity and death. (Eph. ii. 15, and 2 Tim. i. 10.)

It is to be noted, how very far this extends itself downwards where it would be the least suspected. The sects of England have in this (striving for the prestige of authority), been drawing the claim of succession to themselves also, and are thus partaking of the guilt of this invasion of the province of God. Men "who *have* the Spirit," are drawn aside, as Barnabas and certain others that came from James, by *the dissimulation of Peter*, drawn away from the confession of the Spirit as the life, and the bond. We are forgiven, and so put in a capacity to receive life. We may say we are forgiven that we may receive it. The same question is bound up in every step of doctrine. It was by faith of the specialty of the power (1 Cor. xiii. 2) that miracles were worked—it is by faith that any gift is stirred up in prayer and

exercise, but all the superinduction of deadness, be it in what gift it may, is the very wile of Satan to work corruption, and return into the country from which faith brings us out, all in the natural train of deadness. False pretence in many, is no valid excuse to put aside truth and the basis of its power.—“There must be heresies among you,” “and the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie, unto His glory”—“Pluck not up.” The Spirit does, or does not guide into all truth, and secures against the vain tradition of our fathers; and it is by the increasing current of dependence that He fails us not. If I find a truth stated in the *letter*, and hold it so, it is an immediate occasion of error—it is in life alone truth can be truly held. The dispensation of the Spirit through faith, is the order now introduced as “the work worked in our days.”

I introduced these few last observations by allusion to the successional appointment of dissenters in England; the Church of England goes bolder to the work, and it has become latterly the fashion with it to point boldly to Rome, as the ground of all her spiritual claim, as well as for the succession of her anticipatory ordinance and worldly (Heb. ix. 1) and carnal order.

All the machinery moreover of supply of ministers from universities and theological seminaries (and those wholly dedicated to the purpose are essentially the worst), present at once to us, the breach of the truth of the Spirit (as the author of truth by the word) in those that require, or rely on them for peculiar preparation, and as capacitating for reception into the ministry. In the working of this system, in its moral and civil respect, we see a false assumption of ministry, as assuredly as in Roman succession, and her seminaries (which when carried out take in the future priests at ten years old), and which equally cast out the true *Πετρος* and his proper alliance with the ANOINTED the Son of the LIVING God.*

Fourthly.—Of the fitness of the system of Rome to the world, and to the present aspect of the work of Satan.

* I know it was proposed to the Moravians to send black men as Missionaries to Africa, from the West Indies. I heard their written answer read which would only allow it through a long educational training.

Judaism is the only proper worldly religion ; “a worldly sanctuary” was its characteristic of God. But it “is abolished,” and man sets it up again in various shapes and degrees of admixture in the world he claims as his own, thrusting Christ out of it, as not His proper possession, changing at the same time the character of Christ, as Peter would almost in the same breath as his confession, and for which he earns the name of *Satan* from the Lord’s lips. Christ the foundation is lost however, or when kept, strange matter is built on Him. We see Jeroboam setting up two feasts, answering to those of the first-fruits and tabernacles, they may in some sort be Cain’s offerings, but the atonement in the passover, its truth, its unity, and fruit of its confession is left out, and the world does so. It is the proper infidelity of the world to deny it ; and a religion as that of Rome, of wholly outward profession of Christianity (whose proper character is internal life), is capable of embracing the world, being united with it, and blessing it with its blessing. This is the peculiar measure of its fitness.

I saw lately, the expression “that the Church of Rome was the mistress of worldliness, and worldliness the mistress of the Church of England.” The words are just ; and the drawing together of what is evil, in two apparently distant and opposed things is nowhere more evident. The unvarying increase of the relations of the Protestant Churches with the world, in the assumption of power by the rule of the state over them, is daily to be witnessed. It is evident now in all the arrangements of reform not made *by* but *for* the Church of England. The Church of England in her spiritual pretensions, has been drawing herself closer to Rome during the same time ; either are evidence of the decline of the spirit of faith. It matters not, whether I bring back polytheism, or bring in civil power. They are both infidelity to life in Christ, rooted in and growing on deadness in the Spirit.

If the Judaism of Roman Catholicism were carried out as perfectly as possible, it would still be worldly. The peculiar truth of Christ is in “the free gift of eternal life.” This is by the Roman Catholic, laid by as a preliminary truth, in which the unbeliever has as much interest as the believer.

They take up the question merely in *transgression*, and that not against grace. Hence auricular confession, repeated sacrifice, and so on. The Church of England, looking less to the divine part, took for its standard a particular order of civil morals. The dissenting systems have theirs too, but these are chiefly a set off and judgment, and are now chiefly exercised against the false position of the Church of England; as the dispersion of Babel was judgment against a unity not subject to God. The growth of claim and false unity in religion, will invariably incur the like judgment in abounding division. Rome, however, has just this fitness to the world above the rest—its uniformity,—a pretension the world is able to judge of, and saving its trouble of judging those things, concerning which it is ignorant that it shall come into judgment. The peculiar capacity of *one* Head as the sum of religion and obedience, to hold superstition and infidelity in bond together, is unquestionable from the example of ancient Rome. Ancient Rome adopted any gods. Papal Rome has adopted any superstition, converting it to her use by a nominal alliance with the name of Christ, whenever the day and her dominion required it. It suffers any sort of infidelity *on the same terms*, that is a nominal subjection to herself as Christianity. Rome therefore answering perfectly the purpose of Antichrist, answers not the purpose of God in Christ. It is fitted to the world, and the worse state of it, perfected through a course of ages in its iniquity. Having the credit of former virtue, it deceives into the last gulph of apostasy from God. More modern forms of religion have less form of sanctity, and may offer therefore less lure to the devotional, and keep more on the surface of affairs; but Rome is a deception founded under the name of God on the worst and most hardened state of human nature, and applicable to every form of its evil. Now what is to answer this but life in the individual soul and a *unity* that can be acknowledged by God?

Fifthly.—It will be necessary but to collect our minds a moment on the truth of the name of Peter. It is of common concern and common application. It is connected with every believer, and alone with a believer by grace, by the revelation of the Father.

The mystery of the Church carries the truth further in development, and into execution by declaring that which is made manifest in the saints, "Christ in you the hope of glory." But here is the foundation stone of the whole—"Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God" revealed by the Father, confessed, and then revealed *in us*. The emphatical mode of the change of the name of Peter, is to be marked with much interest. "Blessed art thou *Simon Barjona*," and I say unto thee, "Thou art *Peter*:" a sort of christening. It is evidently the occasion of the change of name, whatever previous notice was taken of it. Every one that has believed, has received the relationship to the true ROCK, and *his name has been changed*, and it is apostasy to lessen this confession. If he is *alone*, he is still a Peter, and is to confirm his brethren, if the sophistry of the enemy draws a cloud over *their* sight. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." If he is the Lord's, it never was of more moment, that it be *evident*, that he is of none other.

SPECIFIC MEANINGS OF SOME OF THE WORDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 70.

διδασκαλος—*κυριος*—*δεσποτης*—*επισατης*, master.

διδασκαλος master to teach, *κυριος* master or Lord by appointment or authority, *δεσποτης* master or proprietor by creation or purchase.

επισατης the term of recognition as leader, principal, or chief.

δεσποτης and *κυριος* are both found as correlatives to *δουλος*, but silent reference to the principle of the mastership must cause this.

Passages where the specific meaning of each is attended to, and which could not be interchanged.

ουκ εσι ο μαθητης υπερ τον διδασκαλον, ουδε δουλος υπερ τον κυριον αυτου.

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant (lit. slave) above his lord. (Matt. x. 24.)

The expression in Luke ii. 29, is *δεσποτης*. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, which more strongly depicts the release from service by his master of a faithful servant.

Sarah called Abraham *κυριον*, but not *δεσποτην* (1 Pet. iii. 6): but *δεσποτης* is appropriately selected in 2 Pet. ii. 1, denying the *Lord* that bought them, their denial in contrast with such a claim being the more inexcusable.

In Matt. xxi. 3, we see the difference of *κυριος* and *δεσποτης*. The Lord (*κυριος*) hath need of them. If it were *δεσποτης*, it might be rendered the owner.

επισατης is in the New Testament, only used as a term whereby Jesus was addressed.

δουλος — *υπηρετης* — *θεραπων* — *διακονος* — *οικετης* — *παις* servant, all of which are translated servant, they may however be distinguished after the following characteristics.

δουλος, bondslave (and fem. *δουλη* handmaiden.)

υπηρετης, official or court-servant, delegated officer.

θεραπων, one that ministers, an attendant servant.

διακονος, ministrant, serving man, and in the Church those charged with ministering relief to the indigent.

οικετης, domestic, of the household.

παις (and *παιδισκη*), besides its signification as a son, is a general name for servant, man servant, maid servant; in Matt. xiv. 2, it is however used for the attendants of a court, the attendants of a despotic court being in those ages mostly of servile spirit as well as literally enfranchised slaves. (liberti.)

By attention to which specification some passages may be more accurately understood: thus while the devotedness of service is taught by the strength of the word *δουλος*, the high privilege of believers is forcibly put forth in such passages as John xv. 15, "I call you not servants (*δουλους*), but I have called you friends." And Gal. iv. 7, "wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a Son."

In Luke iv. 20, *υπηρετης* is used. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, i.e. to the official servant of

the synagogue, not to any person officially so designated as the English reader might imagine from the word "minister."

Again we thus learn, that Peter sat with the servants of the court, court officials (Matt. xxvi. 58), and we understand better who it was that smote Jesus. (Mark xiv. 65.)

θεραπων. By attention to the specific force of *θεραπων*, we read more intelligently *θεραπευεται*. (Acts xvii. 25.) Neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed any thing; rather, neither is served or supplied by men's hands, &c. and seeing that he himself supplieth to all life and breath of all things.

διακονος. How greatly this term of simple humble ministration has been perverted, needs no comment: would that all God's children would cease from exalting themselves and the service they are privileged to perform, and simply return to the precept, "whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister." (*διακονος*.) "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." (*δουλος*.) Alas how little of ministry and ministration has been conducted in this spirit.

There is another great error has grown out of this, that ministry has been limited to ministry of the word, whereas it extends itself to all ministrations that any one can perform in the spirit of "ourselves your servants for Christ's sake"—be it to ministering a cup of cold water, or any service of love, for the comfort or assistance of the weakest saint.

οικετης. Under this word, I would notice that the introduction of the word "man," in Rom. xiv. 4, rather spoils the sense. The full force of it is, "who art thou that judgeth another's servant (i.e. God's servant, not another *man's*), whom he has received into his household."

ζων—θηριον, beast.

These words are both translated "beast," but a distinction might be made between them. *ζων*, is a "living creature," and this might be introduced as the rendering of this word, with much propriety, in the 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters of Revelation, as a more seemly term for the cherubims, the symbols of God's agency on the earth. *θηριον* is properly a wild beast, and is a fit

term to designate an evil agency, and it is so used in the latter chapters of the Revelation. (xiii.—xvii. chapters.) It is remarkable in reference to Acts xxviii. 4, where it is translated “venomous beast,” that *θηριον* is said to be *apud medicos bestia venenata*, i.e. it is used by medical men to signify an envenomed beast, which circumstance coincides with the received opinion that the book of Acts was written by Luke the beloved physician.

αφεσις—*παρεσις*, *remission* of sins.

The former occurs frequently, the latter only once, viz. Rom. iii. 25, “for the remission of sins that are past;” but as this passage is frequently misunderstood, it will be well to notice the specific meaning of *παρεσις* in contradistinction to *αφεσις*. The remission (*παρεσις*) of sins that are past, does not mean the forgiveness of those sins we committed when in unbelief; but the prætermision or passing over by God of sins committed in the ages before Christ came. Christ thus manifesting in a two-fold way the righteousness of God; 1st,—His being able righteously to pass over sins committed under the law, *while He forbore*, looking as it were onward to Christ’s atonement. 2ndly,—His righteousness at the present, or as the Apostle words it “*in the now time*,” in the forgiveness (*αφεσις*) of our sins, for through Christ’s work God’s righteousness is not impaired though He justifies the ungodly. The *παρεσις* applies to previous dispensations—the *αφεσις* to the present, and in both of them is God’s righteousness demonstrated.

MOSES AND THE GENTILE FAMILY.

THE Old Testament in its record of the past, very frequently presents us merely with a statement of fact. It records perhaps an action, but it merely puts it on record.—It makes no comment nor reveals any motive. The fact is stated, and all besides is left to the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. In the New Testament however, where we are regarded as brought

into the adoption of children and into fellowship with God, we find much additional light thrown upon the circumstances recorded in the Old. Thus, for example, the first mention that is suddenly made of Elijah in the Old Testament is this : “and Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word.” We should little have judged that the tone of confidence and authority which marks these words, was connected with such exercise of Spirit and earnest intercession as the New Testament reveals. He either had prayed earnestly, or was about to pray, that it might not rain, and hence his confident assurance. How deeply exercised his spirit must have been, how entirely it must have entered into the condition of Israel, and into the thoughts of God respecting Israel, to have drawn forth such prayer, and that for judgment. But if we pray according to His will, He heareth us.

Again in the case of Moses. In Exodus it is simply said, “And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.” It was nothing very wonderful for a mother to love her child. The desire for its preservation might have flowed from the impulse of mere natural affection. But no! by *faith* Moses when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper (or goodly) child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. The promise of God respecting the seed of the woman—revealed now as Abraham’s seed, the hope of Israel, had been from the beginning the one blessed object of expectation to the family of faith; and Moses’ parents were of faith. The commandment of Pharaoh if obeyed, was a sure blighting of the hopes of Israel, and it was the conviction of this, which led them as we may surely believe, into their holy confidence, so that they were not afraid of the king’s commandment; for happy and steadfast is the confidence of those who feel that the promise of a faithful God is that which has led them into the path which they are seeking to tread.

Moses then from the beginning, was remarkably the child of

faith, and therefore he was peculiarly thrown upon the protection of God. Accordingly he was protected and carried to Pharaoh's house. Its luxury, its refinements, its learning, were all his : but he was of faith ; and therefore when he was come of years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. The circumstances by which he was surrounded, were indeed *providential* circumstances, supplied by the special providence of God ; but providences are not the guide for the child of faith. He might truly have said, "has not God Himself brought me into all this greatness?" but no! he was of faith, and therefore he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. He might have had thoughts about retaining his greatness and using its influence for good, but how then could he have suffered affliction *with* the people of God? There were two things deemed necessary by this child of faith ; not merely to separate from those who were not of God, but the yet more distinct and trying act of identifying himself with these who were of God. It was this that entailed the full measure of suffering and reproach.

Moses therefore openly identified himself with the people of God ; and in a way which showed the full apprehension that was in his soul of their being indeed God's people ; for he avenged him who was suffering wrong, and slew the Egyptian. Here was not merely faith respecting himself as an individual. We may have a large measure of individual faith, when we fail in recognizing the blessing which attaches to the family of God unitedly : but this last was the spring of Moses' service. His act asserted the privileges of Israel—weak suffering Israel—against all the mightiness and strength of Egypt. It threw Israel altogether upon the promises and faithfulness of their God, and he thought his people would have understood this, but they understood not. Here was a new trial for the child of faith. It had doubtless been a trial to quit the daughter of Pharaoh. The tie of gratitude and of natural affection as well as the allurements of life, might have detained him by her side. It had been a trial to share reproach ; but it was the greatest trial of all to find that they, for whose sake he was suffering, refused to know their own privileges,

and would not follow him in the path of faith and blessing. He had before been deprived of Egypt, but now he had lost Israel; and thus doubly outcast he had to seek in the wilderness a refuge from the sword of Pharaoh.

Yet it was in this very act, his act of deepest sorrow, that he becomes peculiarly the type of Him whose reproach he had esteemed; for it is the sojourn of Moses in the wilderness which so distinctly typifies the rejection of the Great Deliverer of Israel in His present relation both to Israel and to the world. He came to Israel, and Israel received Him not; and therefore they are left to groan in their bondage, and will know the sevenfold power of Satan at the close. The world too, like one great Egypt, is left unpunished, and therefore at leisure to pursue in proud security its own selfish schemes of aggrandizement and glory. Its harvest of glory thrives and will ripen; but it ripens unto the day of the redemption of Israel—the great day of the Lord God Almighty—for Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God.

In the meanwhile however, the future deliverer of Israel is in the wilderness; he is cut off from Egypt and from Israel, but he finds in the wilderness the well of water,—the bride,—the family mansion and the flock. His employment is that he opens the well of water for his bride—and feeds the flock—his joy and rest was in the bosom of the family. Here then is the present picture of Jesus and the Church of the first-born. It shows us the blessedness of all who have known a little what it is to leave Egypt, and to know the wilderness for Jesus' sake. In the wilderness they find the well spring of water, and above all a father's house. No part of the ordered history of Israel unfolds such blessings as these. The triumphs of Israel at the Red Sea, or the glories of the reign of Solomon, may shew to us power and glory; but it is when the rightful order of Israel's blessing is broken, and when God unlocks the reserves of His grace, that we find unfolded the secrets of His deepest sympathies and love. It was when all Israel was under judgment, and all its ordered blessing gone, that we find food miraculously continued, and life miraculously restored, under the unknown roof of a poor Gentile widow. To none else was Elijah sent. So likewise in the case of Moses: whilst Israel's

hopes are in abeyance, and he an outcast, it is in a Gentile family and in a Gentile bride that he finds his joy, and it is a Gentile flock that he feeds in the wilderness.

The circumstances of Moses are the present circumstances of a child of faith, and his employments may instruct us as to ours. He employed himself not in seeking to alter or assail the things of Egypt—neither was he concerned with the ordered glories of Israel—but he tended the flock, and his joy was his father's house. The joy of the family—the care of the sheep—the wilderness, are *our* peculiar portion now. If we seek other things than these, we wander from the home of our sojourning, and shall find sorrow and disappointment to follow all our mispent labour.

I say the home of our sojourning, for the wilderness cannot be the abiding dwelling-place of the children of faith. We read this feeling in Moses' heart, when he named his two sons Gershom and Eliezer. Here was the combined feeling, of thankfulness for that help which had delivered him from the sword of Pharaoh and hidden him in the wilderness, and of sorrow because he was a sojourner in a strange place. But the latter feeling was the most prominent, for it was first expressed. Yet it was not altogether an expression of sorrow, but rather one of faith and joy. For Gershom means "a stranger *there*." That little word "*there*," shows that he had in faith put himself beyond the wilderness and its circumstances, and that he was looking back upon it as a thing that had passed, and therefore he is able to say, a stranger **THERE**. Such was Christ, and such now is the Church in Him. How blessed to see that this character is necessarily stamped upon the Church, with all the abidingness and certainty of Him whose they are. He has united them to Himself, and has given them of His Spirit, and therefore as looking down from above where Christ sitteth, they are able in faith to say, "strangers *there*." He has not merely called them to be strangers—He has made them such: and He has given them too to feel as strangers, for He has given them of His Spirit, which, while it cries Abba Father, does likewise intercede with groaning, because it is in a strange place. There is nothing in the world—nothing natural in which it can rest—and therefore none so unhappy as

believers who, having the Spirit, grieve it, and seek to make it rest where it cannot ; for its word ever is, the world has been crucified to me, and I unto the world. There may be and there are joys in the wilderness. We have seen the joys that Moses had ; and he had happy opportunity of service too, for he tended the flock : but still his heart did not lose itself in these things, nor forget that it was a wilderness, and that he was a stranger in it.

The name of Gershom however, does not in itself teach us the power whereby the Church is separated into its stranger character. The mind of the parent—the mind of him who said, Behold I and the children whom God hath given me is beautifully taught us in the name Gershom being given. And surely the instruction is very precious. Moses knew that his own circumstances must be the circumstances of the child, for they were bound together by a bond not to be broken, and therefore he named him with a name expressive of the feelings and knowledge of his heart : a knowledge which alike concerned himself the parent, and the child. But the *power* whereby our stranger character is secured, is not taught us here, but by another type which does not occur until the close of Moses' sojourn in the wilderness, when it was needful for himself and the child to meet God together. The mere circumstance of having been separated from Egypt, and having sojourned in the wilderness was not sufficient. Seclusion or separation from surrounding evil, is not necessarily separation unto God : neither do our spirits find it so. They may be so exclusively conversant with the trials of the wilderness as to pine through sorrow ; and many souls likewise have withered whilst seeking in rules and precepts and examples, the *power of separation* unto God. Attention to such things is not unnecessary, it is very necessary in its place ; but yet these things are earthly and in themselves sorrowful, for it is sin that has made them so necessary ; nor when regarded, as frequently they are, apart from the resurrection of Christ, are they found to have the power of quickening life in them. The death and resurrection of Christ is the power whereby God has effectually separated the Church unto Himself. It is thus the Church has been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, i.e. by no human agency, but

by the power of God when He raised Jesus from the dead. God has fully shown that that separateness which circumcision (separateness *from* and not *in* the flesh) typifies, could only be reached through the death and resurrection of One who was able to bring others with Him into His own separateness and joy. He is now no longer known after the flesh, but as of a new creation, the first-begotten from the dead. And therefore the real joy of the Church in its knowledge of redemption and life, is only found where He has entered by His own blood. Sin, death, the flesh, with all its circumstances, are met and cancelled by that one thing, the blood, and there is life beyond—redeemed untainted life. It is only this circumcision which fits for God, and accordingly the child of Moses, the child of the stranger in the wilderness, must be circumcised before it could meet God. The separation of the wilderness and all the circumstances of discipline there would not suffice—it would not bring into a meetness for God, it was earthly separateness, and not separation from earth unto Him. But when Zipporah had taken the sharp stone and circumcised her son, then God's controversy against the flesh was ended, for the child was presented as being now no longer in the flesh, but as in new circumstances altogether, and the power of God was now no longer to be terrible against him. It is the feeling of the flesh apparently which is expressed in the words of Zipporah, "A bloody husband art thou unto me," for naturally we ever feel this when constrained to follow because of Christ in the path into which the Spirit leads.

Here the history of the stranger in the wilderness ends ; henceforth he appears as the mighty deliverer of Israel. The Gentile family with whom he had sojourned in the wilderness, disappear during the season of Egypt's plagues, and we do not read of them again until they come to unite with Moses and the elders of Israel, in the joy of Israel after all the dangers of Egypt had past away. They sit down together to eat bread before God, and it is a Gentile who first takes the burnt-offering and sacrifices for God, and who says, "Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians. Here then was the fruit of Moses' sojourn in the wilderness—here was a joy superadded to the joy of Israel : unthought of, unheard of strangers, gathered from the wilderness

were brought to stand as priests before the God of Israel, and to hear and rejoice in Israel's blessing.

Gershom and Eliezer are here again mentioned, and the reason for these names is distinctly given. "The name of the one was Gershom : for he said I have been an alien in a strange land : and the name of the other was Eliezer, for the God of my father, said he, was mine help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh." Eliezer indeed is here mentioned for the first time, for although born and doubtless named in the wilderness, yet Moses had not *then* fully proved the power and faithfulness of his God in delivering him from the sword of Pharaoh. He had proved it in measure, and he could in faith say "Eliezer : " but how little did he then know all his coming dangers, and with how much deeper knowledge of its meaning could he repeat it now ; for the enemy had said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil ; my lust shall be satisfied upon them ; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them :—but, thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them : they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Eve could have little known the meaning of the word she uttered, when she pronounced over her second child the name of Abel ; but she had bitterly to verify its truth in his future history. And so may it often be with us in our measure, in our experiences both of sorrow and blessing. Grace leads us into the knowledge of truth : but when a soul has really received truth from God, it will most likely be caused experimentally to prove its value.

We must not however forget that it was at the time of rest and joy, when all the sorrows of the sojourning were past, that we find these names repeated ; for it is only when in the rest that we shall look back and fully feel all the reality of the strangership, and all the reality of the deliverance, and yet all the sorrow gone. For we cannot learn the nature of strangership here, except in the light of the joy that is above ; but there we learn it in joy and not in sorrow. And since Jesus has entered in, faith (if we only had it more) might reach forward, and bring the thoughts and feelings of the Father's house into the circumstances of our sojourning ; and then even, though there still would be sorrow, yet there would be prevailing joy and strength to overcome.

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THE GOSPEL BY ST. MARK.

It is only by tracing the distinct character of each of the four Gospels, that we can get a view of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His ways. But then we do, to our profit and delight ; and find Him, surely, in each of them in equal perfectness ; whether it be one relationship to us or another that He is seen to fill, whether it be this path or that which He takes before us, still all is perfection. We may see Him in Jewish connection more especially in St. Matthew, or more abroad among men in St. Luke, as the solitary Son of God in St. John, or as the social Son of man, the servant of poor sinners, in St. Mark, but still all is perfection.

And all this is only variety and not incongruity. For even in drawing the history of the same individual this may be done. One biographer may present Him in His *domestic*, another in His *public* life, and to suit their different designs, they will not only at times take different facts, but different circumstances in the same facts ; and both these things we see in the Gospels. We see different facts taken by each of the Evangelists at times, and at times different circumstances in the same facts, as suiting themselves to the Lord in different aspects and relations. And how

much more easily (if our minds needed any further help to the apprehending of this), may we discern and admit this, when He who was such an one as the Lord Jesus, God and man in one person, and not a mere individual of the human family, is the theme and object of the history.

And the Holy Ghost had done this before the time of the Evangelists. In the Chronicles, for instance, we get David and Solomon in a different light from that in which we see them in Samuel and Kings. The Chronicles present them in a *typical* and not in an *historical* way. Many circumstances are omitted which an historian must have noticed, and which therefore we get in the books of Samuel and the Kings, but which it was not needful to notice as far as David and Solomon were types of Messiah.

And the wisdom of God in all this is perfect. The same things are made to yield the Lord to us in various lights ; and one instance of this has struck me very particularly. It is the prospect which the Lord takes of Jerusalem when going up there for the last time.

In St. Luke He is presented as looking at the city as the place of His *glory*,—"and it came to pass when the time was come that He should be received up (*αναληψεως*), He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." (Luke ix. 51.) He sees glory before Him there. He is to be "received up," and He acts in this mind. He sends forth messengers before His face to make His way ready, to challenge the everlasting gates to give entrance to the King of glory. And all this we know belonged to Him, and all this shall be His ; and the occasion might warrant this thought of glory, for it as surely waited Him then, as the cross, and His soul could have entered into the prospect of the one as well as the other. The Spirit, therefore, in St. Luke, gives expression to that condition of His soul on that occasion.

But our Evangelist presents another thing. He shows the Lord's eye, in the distant sight of Jerusalem, resting on the *cross*. Equally true and real this was, for the cross as well as the glory was then before Him. And it might well have filled the vision of this chief of the prophets, as He looked toward that city out of which

a prophet could not perish. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem ; and Jesus went before them : and they *were amazed* ; and as they followed, they *were afraid*." (x. 32.) Here the mind of the Lord expresses itself as conscious of the cross—as conscious that the altar was waiting for the sacrifice. But all this was as true an expression of the mind of Jesus, in the distant sight of the city, as the other, for the cross as well as the glory waited Him there.

But again : He looks at Jerusalem as the scene of His *royalty* ; and acts still in full character with that view of it, as all the Evangelists shew us (Matt. xxi. Mark xi. Luke xix. John xii.), sending for the ass and riding into the city in all the style of the rightful Son of David.

Thus do we see these different expressions of His mind, as He looked toward the city for the last time. And indeed we had not had the whole truth, if all these expressions had not been given us. For Jesus entered into the full power of every thing He had to do with. His Spirit knew the elevation which glory, though in the distance, could give Him ; and it knew in equal power the chastened tone of self-devotement which the nearer sight of the cross could give Him ; and He could act in the full power of the consciousness that He was Son of God, or Heir of David, as that He was the Lamb for the altar.

And indeed I might go into the further stages of this journey of the Lord, and get other illustrations of the same principle. For after He had reached the city, He passed through His sorrows there with different affections, fulfilling different conditions in which He stood, and displaying different glories that equally belonged to Him. In St. John's Gospel, the glory that was His as Son of God is made to shine out, as the Evangelist conducts Him from one stage to another of His last sufferings. (See vol. v. p. 362.) But in the others, it is rather the glory of the Son of man,—the spotless moral glory of Him who was obedient even unto death that we then see. For all was in Him. He was both the Son of God and the *servant* of God in the very same scene. The scene is one, because the history is true ; but the Spirit who

describes it to us, lets one feature of Him, who was passing through it, come forth after another, that we might know the richness and perfections of the ways of Him, who was at once "God over all blessed for ever," and yet "found in fashion as a man," and in "the form of a servant" for us sinners.

Previous papers in the Christian Witness have given us a general view of the order and character of St. Matthew and St. John. I would now suggest the same on St. Mark. But this labour has been in some measure anticipated, because the general contents of this Gospel are much the same, and preserve much the same order, as we get in St. Matthew. But still there will be found in it some features which shew us that the Holy Ghost is designing to give a peculiar character to this Gospel, as well as to the others; and I judge that it will be found to be the special purpose of our Gospel, to *present our Lord Jesus Christ to us in ministry or service*—not in the elevation and loneliness of the Son of God, as in St. John, but on the contrary, in the diligent paths of the servant of man's necessities, of Him who having come not to be ministered unto, but to minister, went about doing good.

And yet it is the same One who fills this wondrous interval. As in the 50th chapter of Isaiah, the One who once covered the Egyptian heaven with sackcloth, and divided a way through the sea, afterwards came to receive direction as the servant, morning after morning, and to give His face to shame and spitting. The Jehovah God of Hosts who led Israel out of Egypt, was the Jesus of Nazareth who hung on the cursed tree. For all of glory in the highest He fills, and all of service and grace in the lowest He discharges. As almost at one glance we see Him the *labourer in the harvest*, and yet the *Lord of the harvest*. (Matt. ix. 35. x. 1.)

His personal ministry as Jesus was just in spirit, what as Jehovah He had been to Israel for centuries before. With what patience had He borne with their manners? How would He have gathered them as a hen her chickens, and borne them as an eagle her young? How had He taught Ephraim to go, leading Him by the hand? Had He not risen up betimes and sent His

prophets, and that for centuries, till there was no remedy? And was not the ministry of Jesus through the cities and villages of Judea, all this again? Were not the days of the Son of man there, all this patient and diligent love of the Jehovah of Israel in the days of old? And was not His yearning over them the same? Of old He had said, "O that my people had hearkened to my word;" and now He says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." And was not His judgment about them also the same? Of old He had judged treacherous Judah more than backsliding Israel (Jer. iii.), and so does He now judge between the harlots and the Pharisees.

But all the while he lies hid. Jesus of Nazareth conceals the God of Israel. "There was the hiding of His power," as in the cloud in the wilderness. But still Jehovah dwelt there; and at times He comes forth from behind this veil, from within this cloud, at the bidding of faith. The faith of the leper draws forth the Jehovah of Israel, and that of the centurion the Creator of the world—the Lord of all. (Matt. viii.)

But this was only occasional, when faith rent the veil for a passing moment. His way was that of a servant, a rejected and disowned Nazarene, a poor and unlettered man. And as such servant, our Gospel especially presents Him to us.

And here let me observe, that the place which the penman of it holds in the history of the New Testament, is according to this. It is Mark, or Mark-John, whom Paul and Barnabas had "to their minister," and of whom Paul again says, "he is profitable unto me for *the ministry*." And as it has been elsewhere observed (see vol. v. p. 50), that John was a fit instrument to tell us of Him who lay in the Father's bosom, because he himself lay in the Lord's bosom, so we may observe the same fitness in the *penman* to the *subject* of this Gospel.

I would now shortly follow the chapters in their order; distinguishing the several parts into which they appear to arrange themselves, and noticing what is characteristic of our Gospel in each. May that blessed One, whose ways they trace, be still before us!

I—X.—These chapters give us the first part of our Gospel.

They are similar to a great extent, with Matt. i—xx., and therefore I would, for the ends of interpretation generally, refer to the previous paper on that Gospel. (See vol. iv. p. 13.) But I must now notice what I judge to be peculiar in the tone and bearing of our Evangelist in these chapters, so as to know what it is into which the Holy Ghost would especially lead our minds by him. And I believe the opening of our Gospel at once gives us its character. But this need not surprise us, for it is so in each of the Gospels. St. Matthew begins with the Jewish genealogy of the Lord, for the Spirit by Him was about to bring Him forth in Jewish connection. St. Luke begins with His genealogy from Adam, for the Spirit by Him was about to show the Lord more in connection with man generally. St. John begins with the Word who was with God and was God, for the Spirit by Him was to shew the Lord as Son of God, Son of the Father. But here in our Gospel we get no notice of divine glory as in John; no genealogy, no birth in Bethlehem, no flight to Egypt, or childhood at Nazareth, as in Matthew or Luke, but Jesus is at once set before us in ministry; for in that character, as I have suggested already, it is the Spirit's purpose by Mark to exhibit Him. The words which open our Gospel are these: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." His whole person is thus of course, verified, for it is the same Lord in whatever aspect we may see Him. But it is not so much His *person* as His Gospel or *ministry*, that is here at the beginning introduced to us. And according to this our Evangelist dwells for a little upon John the Baptist announcing the Lord as the One who was coming to baptize with the Holy Ghost, that is, coming forth in ministry; not however adding (as he does in Matthew and Luke), "whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor," for that belonged to Him rather in His *judicial* than in His *ministerial* place, and thus was not according to the design of our Gospel.

We then get a passing notice of the baptism and temptation of the Lord, because those things also helped to usher Him forth in His ministry; for at His baptism He was owned and qualified for *the service* to which He had come, as we read "God anointed

Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts x. 38.)

But though we get these things here, we get them but briefly, and pass on quickly to John's imprisonment, for that was the moment for the Lord beginning to run His course, for entering on actual service Himself, for saying to the people, as He does here, "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand ; repent ye and believe the Gospel."

And from this onward through these chapters, it is ministry or service that we find Him occupied with. To be passing from action to action, and still doing good is His one purpose here, though it is true He was Lord of all. He was the One whom all creation owned. The elements bowed at His word and were still. The brute animals brought Him tribute and bore Him to His city as King of Israel and Lord of all. The devils trembled, and men felt the power of His word in their consciences, and at times the majesty of His presence. But it pleased Him withal to be a Servant. He put His ear to the lintel of the door that He might serve for ever. And so we find Him. It is the Son of man in diligent waiting on the sorrows and necessities of others that we still have before us. And the service that He takes upon Him here is rather that of *doing* than of *teaching*. Of course we see Him in both ; but rather in the one than in the other, for *doing* is the humbler and more self-denying character of service. Thus we have but few parables here and no lengthened discourses, as we have in the corresponding chapters of either Matthew or Luke ; while many of His doings are more detailed here than there, such as the case of legion, of the woman with the issue of blood, of the deaf man at Decapolis, and of the blind man at Bethsaida. For He is here the One that in patient diligent love waited on the varied and trying need of men, that He might heal both their hearts and their sicknesses. His walk, however, is always in the house of the strong man, in some scene or other of the enemy's power, travelling there too in the strength of One that was stronger than He. It is the diligence of the servant of men,

but exercised in the power of the Jehovah of Israel. It was the constant spoiling of Satan's goods, and rifling of his house. Disease, and sorrow, and death, with which the strong man had filled his house, are turned out, and health and salvation brought in.

In all these records of his doings by our Evangelist, there are many touches and strokes that still shew us the design of the divine hand. The human tones of the mind of Christ are more expressed here, and His course more marked with human graces, if I may so speak, than in the other Gospels. As in the healing of Peter's wife for instance, St. Mark is the only one who tells us that the Lord "took her by the hand," when raising her up from fever. So He alone tells us that Jesus took the children in His arms. And it is only here that we learn that the people called Him "the carpenter." Nor is there the same tone of severity in the rebukes of the Lord here, nor the same authority in His way of vindicating His glory against the unbelief and scorn of men. And He is at times called only "Master," where He is styled "Lord" in Matthew. In St. John He travels on as "the Light of the world," but here rather as "the Physician."

Nor do we see Him in the same elevation of spirit here, as for instance in the xi. of Matthew, or in Luke x. 19. And though we read here of His looking round in anger (iii. 5), yet we soon learn that this was not the anger of one who had taken the seat of judgment, but of Him who was grieved at heart for the hardness and unbelief of men. It was rather the sensitiveness of the spirit of holiness, one feature of His moral perfectness as man, who is to "be angry and sin not."

So the ordination of the twelve is not given us here so fully as in St. Matthew; and our Evangelist tells us that Jesus ordained them not merely that He might send them forth, as Matthew does, but also "that they might be with Him," His *companions*, as it were, as well as His *Apostles*, as though He were (which surely He was) their fellow-labourer in the Gospel.

These and such little strokes may be faint and pass notice at times, but they give character to the holy picture. They shew the blessed Jesus in the valley, treading still in perfect grace the

ways of service and humiliation. He is ever the *girded* Servant. And these strokes and touches shew us the girdle. For it is not merely that the Servant is ready when the exigency comes, but his girded loins keep Him always in waiting ; His heart if not His hand being in attendance. And these little ways of Jesus shew Him thus always girded, His eye and His ear attentive, and His heart in waiting, though the hand or the foot may for awhile be unoccupied. And they are what the art of one who is well practised in shewing kindness, alone can supply, and which in this Gospel thus fill up the picture of this gracious and perfect Servant.

“He is beside Himself,” was the language of some here. (iii. 21.) And it was true. He was wanting to Himself in that prudence that man has learnt to value, for men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself. For truly could he have said in reply to this, “if we be beside ourselves it is to God, or whether we be sober it is for your sakes.” He would know no respite Himself while there was need or sorrow in others.

Thus was it with Him. He would be doing good as a servant for the sake of those who needed Him. Blessed Saviour! He looks here simply at man and his necessities. His miracles, it is true, verified Him as the Son of David, and that is asserted in its proper place. (Matt. xii. 23.) But they are not used here to that end. I do not find in this Gospel the same care in the Spirit to identify Jesus of Nazareth with the promised Messiah of the Jews. There is not the same constant application of the voices of the prophets to Him and His doings as in Matthew. *For it is not so much His claims on the world that the Spirit is here vindicating, as man's claims on His power and grace that He is ever waiting to answer.*

And according to all this, we find the Lord's sympathies with our infirmities very much noticed here. His sensibilities seem to be all awake here ; and while his hand gives relief His heart enters into the need. He does not stand apart from us, but comes fully into the midst of us. As He says in the book of Psalms, “when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth—I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother.” Like the

prophets of old, he stretches himself, as it were upon us, or puts his mouth on our mouth, his eyes on our eyes, his hands on our hands (1 Kings, xvii. 21, 2 Kings, iv. 34.) With the life that was in Himself, He touches the dead parts which He was ever finding in our poor ruined nature.

Thus at the sight of *sorrow*, "He sighed;" and soon afterwards at the sight of *sin*, "He sighed deeply in His spirit." (vii. 34. viii. 12.)* In the account of the rich young ruler we here read, that "Jesus beholding him loved him:" neither Matthew or Luke noticing this little exercise of the Lord's heart on this occasion. And in two striking instances of healing where the action is somewhat similar, one of which is recorded by St. John, and the other by our Evangelist, we still find the sympathy of Jesus marked only in our Gospel. In the 9th of John, the Lord employs the spittle and applies his hand; but then, as in the simple sense of His power and authority, He says, "go to the pool of Siloam and wash." But in our 7th chapter, He enters into personal concern with the whole case. He again employs the spittle and applies His hand, but He then looks up to heaven (as seeking the Father and owning the joy and rest that were in heaven), and afterwards sighs (as at the thought of the sorrow that was on earth), and then, but not till then, not till He had thus entered personally into the sorrow, does He say the word, and the healing comes.

These are some of His sympathies with us, and our infirmities noticed by St. Mark. And these sympathies were among His ways as the Servant of His saints, for by them He was learning to become "a faithful and merciful High Priest," to enter into and exercise that gracious *ministry* of His heavenly priesthood, which He now ever liveth to render to us. (Heb. iv. 15.)

And the Lord's sorrow in this Gospel, comes very much from this sympathy; for he is here the *social* man, and this gives us the character of his sorrow. John Baptist had been a man of sorrows

* This gives us an instance of the Lord's sympathy with sin—"He sighed deeply in spirit" at the sight of it. And we may all well assure ourselves that though the Spirit may be *grieved*, it cannot be *defiled*. It was *in spirit* only, He had sympathy with sin, and that must have been a *sorrowing* and *undefiled* sympathy.

before Him, but (as a brother once observed to me), his were the sorrows of the lonely witness of righteousness who refused to mingle with the darkness and evil of the world. And thus he knew this world as a *houseless wilderness*. (Matt. iii. 1.) But Jesus was the minister of grace who sought to spend Himself on the sorrows and need and sin of others. And thus with wearied foot and disappointed love, He trod men's paths, and knew the world as a house of *friends wherein He was wounded*. And this was a deeper and more touching sorrow than ever John knew.

And being thus the Servant, the social Son of man, who was always at the disposal of others, when Jesus is here seen retiring, it is only to recruit Himself for fresh toil, always allowing His retirement to be interfered with, as one that did not claim His time for Himself.

Thus in the 1st chapter, after labouring in various toils from morning till evening in Capernaum, we see Him on the next morning rising before day for prayer (as though the day itself was to be given to work); but His retirement being interrupted, He at once allows it, and comes forth at the bidding of Peter, saying, "let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth."

So again in the 4th chapter. He teaches by the sea-side, being such an one as looked about for objects, and in so needy a world as this, could find them every where. And here in a ship, on the sea of Tiberias, close by the shore where the people were gathered, He began His day. But in the evening of it (for it had been a toilsome one to Him), He would fain retire, and His disciples accordingly put off from the shore, and doubtless perceiving His weariness, provide Him a pillow. And then His head is no sooner upon it than He falls asleep. Was it ever said with such an emphasis as now, "for so He giveth His beloved sleep." Blessed Servant of our necessities, blessed object of the Father's careful love! They take Him (as we read ver. 36), "just as He was," as a tired labouring man who had gone forth to his labour in the morning until the evening. But again the interruption comes, and again it is at once attended to. For what sleep would He take

but that which was to refresh Him for further service for man ; and therefore man and his necessities must determine how long or how short that sleep shall be. He knew no other rule by which to measure it but that ; and thus when His disciples' fears arise, He rises to calm them.

So also in the 6th chapter. His Apostles had returned from a mission on which He had sent them, and caring for their comfort, though not for his own, He takes them into a desert place that they might there rest and eat. And the words of the Lord to them on this occasion (so expressive of His tenderness and consideration), "come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile," are peculiar to our Evangelist. But the multitude who had watched them, surprise them in their retreat. It would have been a valued moment to the Lord, thus to have been alone with the dear companions of His toil, hearing from them what they had done and what they had taught, while they refreshed themselves. But at this intrusion of the multitude, He at once turns Himself, and begins to teach them. But this was only one service giving place to another. The deeper necessity of the people calls Him off for awhile from that of His Apostles ; but the scene does not close till He has provided for both, teaching the people and feeding all. He acts as the common servant of both, so full were His hands, and so continually girded were His loins, that He might still wait upon us.

Thus was He at every one's call, and that at all times. But though thus open to the intrusions of others, I perceive a certain unobtrusiveness in His own ways in this Gospel. At Decapolis He draws the poor deaf man aside, and when He has got him alone, He opens his ear, charging him to say nothing about it. (Chap. vii.) So, in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, though the necessities of sinners there, as every where, might discover Him, yet "He would have no man know it."—And again at Bethsaida, He takes a blind man by the hand and leads him out of the town, and then in secret gives him sight, charging him not to go into the town, neither to tell it to any in the town. (Chap. viii.) For though as the *witness* of God in the world, He had to be con-

tinually aggressive, and thus to meet the hatred of the world as the Light that was ever rebuking its darkness (John vii. 7) ; yet as the *servant* of God, He might ever hide Himself. Indeed service is never perfect without that. A servant is not to know himself but to know only his master, and to be willing that others in like manner should know and see only his master. And so is it with Jesus in this Gospel. He goes on with His work. His work, it is true, may gather notice, but His way is still to go on, and under fresh services, still to hide Himself. Thus when Simon and others followed Him saying, "all men seek thee," desiring that He should come forth and show Himself, He only hides Himself under other labours, saying, "let us go into the next town and preach there also, for therefore came I forth." (i. 38.)

And according to this, He more carefully veils His glory in this Gospel than in the others. Thus in reasoning with the Pharisees about the sabbath, He speaks of Himself in St. Matthew as "One greater than the temple," which was the assertion of His divine glory. But here that is passed by. And on the same occasion both in Matthew and Luke, His "Lordship of the sabbath" is pleaded in a style of conscious authority ; but here it is grounded simply upon this, "that the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath," the Lord thus taking His place simply as man on the very level on which Adam stood at the beginning. (ii. 27.)

So though in this Gospel we have the vision on the Holy Mount, yet still even in such a scene as that, there is something of the same way of veiling His glory. The Spirit, let Him trace the Lord in what character He may, could not well pass that scene by. For it was the one ray of heavenly glory that cheered the dreariness of His path along this earth, and without it all would have been an unbroken waste. But this light crossed His way for a moment, and it came to Jesus full of heaven.* But our

* Jeremiah, who was the Lord's companion in the ministry and patience of a Jewish prophet, had his dreary path crossed for a moment by something of the same light. It is recorded in the 31st chapter. In his sleep he gets a vision of the good days of Israel that are still to come ; and he tells us that his "sleep was sweet unto him." It was not so heavenly and glorious a light as

Evangelist has one thing connected with it which the others do not notice. He tells us that on the Lord's coming down from the Mount, "all the people were amazed, and running to Him, saluted Him." (ix. 15.) This might have brought the Lord into the place of notice and honour, but we here see Him using it only to pass it by, and again to veil Himself under fresh services, for He at once turns from the salutations of the people toward the sorrow of the poor dumb child ; thus waiting so perfectly in the spirit of a servant, that neither the glory on the top of the Mount, nor the salutations at the foot of it, were able to weaken or interrupt it.

Such was our Lord in these chapters. These few notices serve to give the character of His ways in this Gospel. He is here before us as the servant who veils His glory and girds His loins, and still goes on the emptied and diligent minister of our blessings. And though He is more the doer than the teacher in this Gospel, as I have already observed, and we therefore get but few parables, and no lengthened discourses, yet there is one parable that is peculiar to it. But even there this character of the servant is strikingly preserved. I mean the parable of "the seed that grew secretly," in the 4th chapter. It occupies the same place in our Gospel, which the parable of the wheat and the tares does in Matthew, each following in each Gospel that of the sower. But the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew, gives us the Lord in the place of *authority*, having both His servants and the angels at command. But the parable of "the seed which grows secretly," given to us by our Evangelist, exhibits Him still in the place of *service*. It is He Himself who at the first is the Sower, and at the end the Harvestman. And thus this which might seem at first an exception from the general bearing of our Gospel, which does not give us our Lord so fully as a teacher in parables, is exquisitely and perfectly in full keeping with the whole of it. Such was the skill of that divine hand that was moving the pen of our Evangelist.*

this, but it cheered the prophet's soul for a moment, as this light on the Mount cheered the Lord. And their path otherwise was much the same, the path of sorrowing love and suffering testimony.

* It appears to me that the parable of "the seed which grows secretly,"

XI. XII.—These chapters form the 2nd part of our Gospel.

The Lord is here seen coming forth to His own as their own, offering them the kingdom in His own person. But His own receive Him not. We have this scene in Matt. xxi.—xxiii.; and therefore as to the general interpretation of it, I would again refer to the previous paper on that Gospel, confining myself, as before, to what may be peculiar in St. Mark's account of it, and which is thus characteristic of his Gospel.

We get, of course, the same display of royalty here as in the others,—the king riding into the city amid the attending salutations of the people; for that was the material itself, that was the circumstance which the Evangelist had now to do with. But there is still a chastened tone preserved by him even in such a scene as this.

Thus we find that on the Lord's entrance into the city, and on going up to the temple, though He was there in the full attitude of King of Israel, yet ere He acted as such, by casting out those who sold therein and by overthrowing the money tables, we read, "He looked round about upon all things—and went out to Bethany with the twelve." And this is still a little notice of the manner of His ways in this Gospel. In St. Matthew He is seen acting at once upon the defiled scene around Him, in the full sense of His holiness and dignity as Son of God and King of Israel. But here it is rather the calmness and even sorrow of one who would give time to the scene to affect his eye and his heart, ere his hand laid hold on judgment. Indeed this is another instance of the sympathy of Jesus. He was entering with *personal* feeling into the scene, ere He acted in it. And yet at the same time it was an action of a deeper expression than even that in Matthew. There

and the parable of "the grain of mustard seed," in chap. iv. gives us two very distinct views of "the kingdom of God." The first shows us the kingdom under the care of Christ; for there the seed grows till it becomes a harvest such as the Lord Himself can gather and delight in. The second shows us the kingdom as it appears in the world; for the grain rises into such a tree as "the fowl of the air" can use and enjoy—it is not meet for Him who planted it, like the other seed, but for "the fowl of the air," or the enemy. (See ver. 4.)

So that these two parables give us two distinct views of the dispensation; for there is a portion in Christendom which "the Lord of the harvest" will gather for Himself, and another which will be left for the unclean.

was something of the divine patience in it, of the divine slowness to believe evil; as God had said, in old time, "I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it." (Gen. xviii. 21.) It gives a subdued and hallowed expression to the mind of the Lord in the action, and thus distinguishes it from the tone of prompt authority and decision given by St. Matthew. But both are equally according to the truth, and without both we could not have had the full truth. For He was in this scene both as the conscious Son of God, the King of Israel, who had title to vindicate the honour of God's house at Jerusalem, and yet was He also the patient and interested witness of all that revolted Israel was presenting to Him there.

And again I observe a peculiar feature in the account which we get here of the Scribe who challenges the Lord about the first commandment, for we see the exercise of this man's soul, which we do not elsewhere. Matthew tells us that he came to "tempt" the Lord, as one of the representatives of the revolted and unbelieving nation; but Mark shews him to us more personally or individually, shews us what was going on *within* him, till he is led, as the Lord here allows, within a short way of the kingdom of God. No doubt both were equally the case. He came to tempt, but he went away repentant. Just like the thief afterwards, who began to revile the Lord, but ended in trusting Him and calling on Him. But this is still characteristic of our Gospel. For this strange unlooked for softening of heart, which we here see in this poor sinner, must be accounted for by the grace and wisdom and power of the words of Him who was now talking with him, and whose goodness was thus leading him to repentance. And all this tells us that the Lord was still *in ministry*, still keeping his eye on this poor sinner for his good, though he had come to Him for evil. The Lord looks at him, as it were, personally, apart from the connection with his nation in which he then stood, and ministers to his soul.

And so again in closing this scene, the Lord does not here occupy the seat of judgment as He does in Matthew. The conviction of the nation fully entitled Him to take that place, but

here He goes through all that exercise of judgment very rapidly, not reading out as a swift witness against them the crimes of which the nation was guilty, and then as a judge passing sentence upon them. He rather refuses to take that elevation which He does in Matthew, and closes all the judgment in a verse or two, looking beyond it to see a poor widow casting her two mites, which was her whole fortune, into the treasury of God. Towards her He turns away from all that was surrounding Him beside. He has not an eye for the evil so much as for the good, though He might see a temple full of the one and only two mites of the other.

Thus in these things which distinguish this Gospel, we have still the traces of the same Spirit, and of the distinctive way of the Lord Jesus.*

XIII.—This chapter gives us the third part of our Gospel.

Here the Lord, as the Prophet, instructs His people about the purposes of God concerning Israel. And still pursuing the order of St. Matthew, it is as chapters xxiv. xxv. of that Gospel, and, therefore, I again refer to the previous paper for general interpretation. But as to what is here peculiar to our Evangelist, I observe that there is one strong mark of the Lord's emptied and humiliated condition which we do not get elsewhere. I allude to the expression in ver. 32 (speaking of knowledge of the times), "neither the Son." And this is quite according to this Gospel, for it savours of Him who had emptied Himself, becoming thoroughly a *servant*, as to a servant the confidence and knowledge of our secrets does not belong. (John xv. 15.)

And yet, as I need not say, this is altogether true, for He did thus take on Him the form of a servant, and would take with it all its attributes. And thus as a servant He was not entitled to know this secret. But even beside that, the kingdom to which He was here referring, He receives as a servant, and not as the right of

* The Lord contrasts this poor widow dedicating her little all with the rich ones who cast in something out of their abundance; and in this, I judge, He was contrasting Jerusalem as she was then, with what she will be by and bye. The Lord at that time saw in her nothing but the vain glory of a religious age; but by and bye He will find in her a poor and widowed remnant, the spirit of faith and sacred devotedness. And for this He waits, passing by all the glory of man, though found even in His own sanctuary. He has an eye for the one, but not for the other.

Him who in another respect was "God over all blessed for ever." The kingdom is to be the reward of the toil of Him who was obedient to death; and therefore, all the circumstances of it wait not on His, but on the Father's good pleasure. The right hand and left hand glories of it thus wait, as the Lord speaking of them says "it is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." The time of its appearing thus waits, as the Lord here says—"of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels, neither the Son, but my Father only." All this shews that the kingdom is the reward of service, the fruit of obedience unto death. Christ takes it as the kinsman of man; not by divine, but by human title. And thus He could most duly say, "neither the Son,"—words which thus apprehended do not qualify *the person of the Son*, but *the character of the kingdom*—as indeed we might easily know, for it was not *His own person*, but the *introduction of His kingdom* that the Lord was discoursing on. The kingdom is to be His as Son of man; it is to *man* that "the world to come" is to be subject. But it is God who is to make it thus subject to Him. God holds the supreme place. Every tongue in it is to confess Jesus "Lord," but this is to be, "to the glory of God the Father."

Thus these words "neither the Son," gives us a great truth, as well as holds the distinctness of our Gospel still within our view. And so what the Lord again calls Himself in this passage—"the master of the house"—does the same. (Ver. 35.) This is a sweet title, it is true, as all that belongs to Him is precious and right in its season. But still it is a title not of so high a bearing, as "your Lord," by which the Saviour calls Himself in the corresponding place in Matthew. And in connection with this, I may again observe, what I have hinted at before, that the Lord is called "Master" more generally in this Gospel than in the others; and occasionally when it is "Lord" there, it is but "Master" here. And this still preserves the design of the Spirit while inditing this Gospel.

So at the close He addresses His Apostles more in the place of service here, than in either Matthew or Luke. For here to each

of them is given *work*, the porter being commanded to watch, which is not noticed there. But He had not, on the other hand, in this Gospel spoken of Peter's dignity in the Church, as He had in Matthew (xvi. 18), nor of the glory of the twelve Apostles *seated* on their thrones for the judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel. For while the place of service is specially noticed here, glory, whether theirs or His, is passed without the same notice by our Evangelist, as is given to it by the others.

These things are all of the Lord's ways in this Gospel. Humble these ways are, and gracious and serving,—the ways of Him who had laid aside His robes of state, and became the girded Servant, and would have His saints track the same ways after Him. And the end of such ways is found to be peace. They may be rough to the flesh as we tread them, but they lead assuredly to repose of heart, and the blessed consciousness of this, beloved, is that they were the very paths of Jesus Himself, when He trod this same earth over which we are now passing.

And I may just add that the judicial acts of Christ are not exhibited to us here as they are in St. Matthew. We have not the bridegroom's discerning between the wise and foolish virgins, nor the Lord judging the faithful and unprofitable servants, nor the King from His throne of glory separating the nations, the sheep and the goats. For these things savoured of the honour and authority of Christ, and have their memorial in their due place; but that place is not our Gospel. Just as in the preceding section, the arraignment of the nation, and the sentence of the law passed upon them, which are so largely given in St. Matthew, we saw were rapidly passed over by St. Mark. All these things telling us of the same design of the divine hand in this Gospel.

XIV. XV.—These chapters form the fourth part of our Gospel.

Here we see the patient, spotless Lamb of God in His sufferings, while passing onward to the deep sorrows of the three hours of darkness, after He had entered on the night of the last passover. The path of the Lord here is generally what it is in Matt. xxvi. xxvii. with some few peculiar marks as usual, of characteristic difference, which I will now as before notice. He appears to me to

be left more alone in this Gospel through these last scenes, than in either Matthew or Luke. The Spirit in St. Mark keeps our view of Jesus here, less distracted by the occasional acts and feelings of others. Thus we have neither the repentance of Judas, nor the purchase of the potter's field, nor the dream of Pilate's wife, nor the intercourse between Herod and Pilate, nor the lamentation of the daughters of Jerusalem. But it is still *Himself* that we see. There is however, one exception to this. There is one object which is allowed by our Evangelist for a moment to divide our attention, and which we do not see elsewhere. I mean the young man who followed the Lord with a linen cloth tied round his naked body, and who afterwards fled away leaving his garment behind him, as the officers were laying hold on Jesus. But such an object as this only heightens the scene of wateness and dreariness that was all around, so forlorn and forsaken as to man and the world, so exposed and left naked to His shame, was that emptied and humiliated Servant of our sin, who is seen here to be passing onward to death. In St. John, He is the lonely one it is true, but it is the lonely one in the elevation and distance of the Son of God. But here He is the lonely one in the depths of the willing and self-emptying Servant of man, who had taken the lowest place for Himself.

And according to all this we have left unnoticed by our Evangelist, some touches of conscious dignity, some passing expressions of power which we get in the others. Thus before the cross there is here no healing of the servant's ear, nor vindication of His right, had He pleased to use it, to call for twelve legions of angels. Nor have we on the cross the Lord's owning of His Father, nor His pledging His own joy to His dying companion. Nor when the cross is over, have we here the same full and glorious testimony to the value of it from the earth, and the rocks, and the graves of the saints, as we have in St. Matthew. The progress here is that of a lonely one through the valley ; and this is quite according to the general tone of this whole Gospel, being thus the Gospel of the servant of man's *sin* now, as it had been the Gospel of the servant of man's *necessities* and *sorrows* before.

But what perfection, dear brethren, in all His ways! And what a thought it is, that there was once in this world of ours, a Son of man who through His whole course from the beginning to the end, whether in labour or in suffering, before God or man, had never a word to recall, a step to retrace, or a single movement of His heart to regret! Such was the moral glory of the man Jesus, whose course we here finish,—a glory as perfect in its kind, as the glory which He had before the world was perfect in its kind, and the glory that He now has, or will have for ever, are perfect in their kind! He was “the holy thing” at His birth; He was tried by the fire and found the spotless one fitted for God’s altar, and then He was accepted upon it for us, and at last glorified in God, where now He is.

XVI.—This chapter gives us the fifth and closing part of our Gospel.

It shews us the same Jesus, but in resurrection, and is as Matt. xxviii. but still with some strikingly characteristic features.

Thus the descent of the angel to roll away the stone in the *power* of the resurrection (the witness of which He was), putting the sentence of death in the keepers, is omitted here. For there was an expression of authority and judgment in that action, which would not so well have suited the more even and lowly tone of our Gospel. But we do get here the words of the same angel to the women, for that was an expression of the *grace* of the resurrection, and was the comforting of those who sought and loved Jesus. And they receive from Him the same message to the disciples which He gives them in Matthew, with however this additional note of grace, that Peter is here expressed *by name*. And this was quite after the manner of the Lord’s tenderness all through; for Peter might well have needed all that thoughtful and considerate kindness just at this time.

Our Evangelist passes by the counsel given by the chief priests and elders to the keepers of the sepulchre, for that led to what is “commonly reported among *the Jews* until this day,” and therefore lay more within the scope of the Spirit in St. Matthew. But generally He notices the visits which the risen Lord paid to His dis-

ciples, and particularly the same slowness of heart in them to credit the resurrection. In the mouth of two sets of witnesses, it is here established. But they believed not ; and then the Lord has to come Himself and rebuke them for their hardness of heart. And indeed it is only hardness of heart then can account for such unbelief. We do not think happily of God. We are indisposed to believe any good news of Him, or of His ways towards us. The resurrection of Jesus, the full fruit of divine grace, is published but not believed, just because our hearts are hard. The flesh may be unclean, as indeed it is, vicious and violent also. But the worst feature of it is, that it refuses to believe any message of love from God. And thus one of the sweetest marks of a repentant or renewed mind, is the faculty to think well and happily of the blessed God. Then does the sinner yield the fruit of a mind that has turned from the erring ways of nature. And our life depends on this, on thus receiving and believing these good tidings from God. And therefore, surely the Lord must here rebuke them for their unbelief.

But though He rebukes, He more than pardons ; for at once after the rebuke, as we here find, He commits the honour and power of His name to them, putting them into the ministry, with great endowments. For now we get in this Gospel, as we do in Matthew and Luke, the Lord's commission to His Apostles to go forth and preach. But this affords one of the most striking instances that we have, of the way in which each of the Gospels distinguishes itself from the others, and which has been already noticed in the paper on St. John. (See vol. v. p. 375.) And this commission, as recorded by St. Mark, is there thus spoken of. " The terms of the commission in Mark 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 all 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."

I believe this is a just view of the *character* of the commission as recorded by St. Mark, and is thus according to the tenor of his Gospel. And I would only add, that the Lord is not here reported to have asserted His title to "all power in heaven and in earth," as He does in Matthew, but simply without such assertion, He gives His Apostles their work to do in all the world, this omission being still in full keeping with the whole current of this Gospel. And so after delivering this commission, it is said by our Evangelist (but by him only) that though the Lord was now received up to the right hand of God, yet still was he "working with them." (Ver. 20.) He takes His seat, it is true, in heaven, and on the right hand, and His Apostles go forth and serve in a defiled world. But here we read, He was still "working with them," this being still in full character with the whole Gospel, which, as we have again and again seen, is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus in ministry or service. And in like manner the very promise which He here gives to them who should believe, that in His name they should speak with tongues, cast out devils, take up serpents, recover the sick, and which promise is recorded only by St. Mark, is still *an undertaking on His part to serve*. For these signs were to follow, simply because *He was still working with them*—as we read, "the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following."

So that our Gospel closes strictly in the character with which it had opened, and which it had preserved throughout. It opened by introducing Him in service, "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God ;" and it now closes by declaring that "He was still working with the Apostles and confirming the word with signs following," every intermediate scene having been entered upon and travelled through in the same Spirit. And thus is He indeed in this Gospel the one who ever went about doing good, approving Himself to have come among us, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for

many." As such an one the Spirit in St. Mark first looked at Jesus, and as such does He keep Him in view unto the end.

Such I judge to be the character and order of this Gospel. And as it thus presents the Lord to us in service or ministry, I would here, in closing, just observe, that the view which we get in scripture of ministry down from God in the highest, to the saint who may be the very weakest in the ranks of the redeemed, is truly blessed and wonderful.

God is the great minister. He serves all his creatures in their place and according to their order. He serves out the rain and sunshine and fruitful seasons, filling the heart with food and gladness. And when the need came, He spared not the Son of His love.

The Lord, the Son, is the personal or manifested minister. In every passage of His life He was the servant of man's sorrows and necessity; and though now in heaven He is still the Servant of His people's interests, and will be the Servant of their joy in the coming glory. (Rev. vii. 17.)

The Holy Ghost is the hidden effectual minister. He is ever tending the Church, serving out to each saint the things of the Father and of Christ, and sustaining and comforting and teaching according to God and our infirmities. And thus we get a blessed display of ministry in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The angels are in ministry. "Are they not all ministering spirits." And those of them who stand nearest the throne are perhaps the most abounding in ministry; as well they may be from their nearness to that source of goodness. For Gabriel again and again appears *in ministry*; and he could say of himself as being thus very near the throne, "I am Gabriel that stand *in the presence of God*."

The Church is in ministry, divine ministry, ministry in the grace and presence of the Spirit. And the nearer we stand to Christ, the brighter and more abundant that ministry is, as we have seen in the angels. Thus in Paul, who stood so near to Jesus, what do we see but one unbroken course of self-sacrifice and service?

He is in sympathy with every infirmity of the saints. Who was offended without his burning? The care of the Churches came upon Him daily. If He were afflicted or comforted, it was *for others*. Death worked in Him, but life in them. But every saint has some office to fill. We are all to be found in the great divine ministry of reconciliation which the Lord is now conducting in this world of sinners. If we are not ambassadors, yet we are appointed to fill some place in the great ambassador's train, if it be but in washing a saint's foot, or being in any wise a fellow-helper of the truth. (2 Cor. v. 17—21.)

And thus we have ministry down from God in the highest to the weakest and most distant companion in the ranks of the redeemed. And when the glory comes, where the kingdom is established, there will be ministry still. The Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; the Lord of the kingdom will gird Himself and wait on His people; the water of life shall flow forth, and the leaves of the tree for healing; and the heavens will hear the earth, and the earth will hear the corn and the wine and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel. The less shall be blessed of the better even all through the kingdom.

It is thus, beloved, that we are called by our God and Father, into a blessed system of rich and enlarging and glorious beneficence, at the head of which He Himself stands, and which is to endure for ever. The very contrast of the system of "this present evil world," which Satan has formed, where man is proud and selfish, hateful and hating. And it is the Gospel which I have now been faintly tracing, this Gospel by St. Mark, which gives us the loveliest and most touching picture of our Lord in ministry while He dwelt here on earth among us.

We should desire that this His lovely mantle might fall on each of us, that this oil might descend from the head to the skirts of the clothing—"the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ."—Nature soon feels this mantle a burden. Let us watch that we give not nature her way, but wear it still, dear brethren! And our present joy in service is this—that it all flows from our being redeemed. God does not ask service from us, till He would have us know that

He has fully ransomed us. The law did not properly ask for service. It exacted conformity with itself in righteousness, but service to God was not properly its claim. That claim the Gospel makes on the ground that God has redeemed us, and made us heirs of everlasting liberty and joy. The Levites served in the temple, and they represented the first-born or redeemed also. (Numb. iii.) They represented Israel as *redeemed* and Israel as *serving*. And may we have more of this Levite character in both its joy and its power ;—its joy as knowing our everlasting security and freedom in Christ,—its power as exhibiting constant service in the sanctuary where He has set us ! Amen.

REMARKS ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

It is impossible, I think, to understand the addresses to the seven Churches, as presented to us in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of the Apocalypse, without a previous study of the first chapter. For the Apostle was told to send to the Churches, not only the letters or addresses given to him by the Lord for them, but also “ what thou seest ;” and this comprises the vision of the Lord as given in chap. i. As to the interpretation of the book in detail, I shall at present make no remark, save that there is a blessing peculiarly attached to all who study it, whether they understand it or understand it not ; “ Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.” (Chap. i. 3.)

Ere remarking upon the addresses to the Churches, which is all I at present propose, I shall therefore just glance at the substance of chap. i. and consider its contents, so far as they seem to me to be needful to be considered, in order to understand the said addresses.

The three first verses are a sort of heading. The force of the first verse would have been more immediately evident, if the close of it had been thus rendered :—" which God gave unto him to shew unto his own servants, things which must shortly come to pass ; and signified, having sent by his own messenger, to his own servant John."

The five next verses, from 4 to 8 inclusive, are " the introduction" which contains I doubt not, the substance of the whole book. For this I observe, is the way of the Spirit in the writing of scripture, to set at the commencement of each essay, a short, brief outline of that which he was about to unfold. Such an introduction, I think I can see in each book of the bible ; and it is generally the impression on the spiritual understanding, resulting from the revelation in detail to the party who had to write. The revelation was made in detail ; a general result produced on the spiritual mind of him to whom it was made, and this result then, briefly expressed at the commencement of the narrative, as a preparation to the mind of the reader, of what is about to occupy his attention. So graciously toward our weakness, does the Spirit seek to lend his help.

If any of us have to plead as to ourselves, in reference to this book, " if any man be ignorant let him be ignorant" (feeling our own inability to pass through the details of it with understanding), still, I think the purport of the book looked at, not in detail, but in *its unity* must be evident. It tells of darkness, increasing darkness till judgment sets in, and then the Lord appearing in glory to introduce a new dispensation : this is too plainly stamped upon it to be unobserved. Now, if we bear this in mind, and the Jewish character of that dispensation which is coming, and peruse the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th verses, we shall find instruction. Seven Churches chosen out of Asia, probably from its connection with the scene of the coming glory, and then God introduced not in the character of " Our Father" as in Rom i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 3. Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. Col. i. 2. &c. &c., but as He who is, and was and is to come. Surely all the children of God know this *of* their Father ; but yet it is not, blessed be His name, the distinctive

mark by which they know Him,—that is rather as “the Father of Jesus and of us,” and thus with us, the character of the relationship determines the name by which *we* know Him, and that name brings with it all the blessed associations in thought of the Father’s house and home and bosom. But this name is not mentioned here, nor while we read are these thoughts appealed to, but “God as in Himself and ever existing” is presented, and the mind thus thrown as it were, upon the wide expanse of Deity for its benediction of grace and peace. Surely there is deep meaning in this. So also when the Spirit is mentioned, it is as in the place and revelation of his perfectness and full unhindered exhibition,—“the seven spirits which are before the throne of God ;” not as in His temple the Church, or in those operations and gifts in which He is there partially displayed. And again Jesus is shewn simply as “the faithful Witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth :” for the burst of praise which then follows is not part of the character under which Jesus was here presented, but part of the Spirit’s joy in the Apostle’s own soul, telling the riches of Jesus’ glory and beauty in the relationship ; first, in which He still stood to John (unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to God even His Father, to Him be glory and strength for ever and ever, Amen.) And then, secondly, in which He was about to be displayed (Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him ; and they also who pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.) The shifting or changing of the dispensations then, is what is presented to us ; and consistently with the wisdom of Him who was inditing, the Apostle John is presented and the Spirit of God in Him, as drawing grace and peace for the seven Churches from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, not as in their Church names and places, but as in their own essential, abstract being, spheres and characteristics. And then this closes with “I am Alpha and Omega,* saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Al-

* “The beginning and the ending” found in the English verse, in the 8th verse, is generally, and I judge correctly omitted in the Greek.

mighty." By the Alpha and Omega, i.e. the first and the last letters of the Alphabet, I understand, the beginning and ending, the sum and substance of communication or manifestation from God. As it is stated Heb. xi. 3 (see Greek), "By faith we understand that the ages or dispensations were put together* by the word of God, so that the things which are seen, were not (as it were, the natural result) of things which are seen. This close of the introduction to the change of the dispensations, if such be its meaning, is quite consistent; "In me is the substance of all dispensation, saith the Lord, who ever exists as that which He is, the Almighty."

Then (ver. 9) comes the account of the revelation itself.

John our brother and partner in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the island called Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Cut off thus, through faithfulness to the master, from service and from what man counts usefulness, as well as from communion with his brethren—he was not, he could not be debarred from Him in whom we live and move and have our being. But here as ever, the God of grace and Father of mercy takes occasion, in this proof of the world's wickedness and his servant's experience of sorrow, through faithfulness, to pour forth the greater and the richer treasures of His own love.—Egypt little understood that in thrusting out Israel, it was laying its captive in the bosom of God: and the oppressive power which here exiled John, knew not how this fresh wound inflicted by its hostile hand on the body of Jesus would, through the riches of His grace, pour forth refreshment for the whole Church through the residue of its course on earth. But thus it has ever been with our God and Father.—This John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, what thou seest, write in a book and send to the seven Churches, &c. Turning to see from whom the voice proceeded, the first thing that caught his eye was seven golden lights; then, in the centre of them, one like a Son of man

* This of course must be understood to include the material creation, or otherwise it would be defective.—ED.

clothed to the feet, girt around the breasts with a golden girdle ; His head even His hair white as wool or snow ; His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass, fired in the furnace ; and and His voice as the sound of many waters : In His right hand He held seven stars, and from His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword. And His aspect was as the sun shining in its own strength.

We shall not understand the effect of this revelation upon John, perhaps, unless we consider the three commissions given in person by our Lord. To three different followers he gave, at different times after His resurrection, three commissions differing in some respects in substance. The three followers I refer to are Peter, Paul, and John. To Peter, the first commission was given near the sea of Tiberias,—to Peter a Jew, to witness of the resurrection to the Jews. To Paul, near Damascus, the second commission was opened, and he a persecutor, to witness of the heavenly calling to Jew and Gentile ; and here, in the Revelation we have the third to John, a servant of God, in Patmos, to witness to servants of the immutable portion of them that serve God.* All three were from *Jews in person* : the first as noticed at the sea of Tiberias, the second near Damascus, the third in Patmos. In each of them, there is a special congruity between the place in which the person of the Lord is shown and the message ; His person under various circumstances, as I take it, giving various utterances ; this I believe to be especially important in the study of *this* book, which I would not call the book of Revelations but “the book of the revelation ;” for it seems to me we have nothing in it in its details, but what is the necessary and natural result and deduction of the germ presented at first, in this unveiling of the person of the Lord. I shall not however now attempt to trace out “this wisdom.” In addressing Peter, our Lord was in risen life, but on earth ; in the call to Paul, He was in risen life and in the glory of ascension, not on earth ; in this commission to John, the Lord was as God’s own angel having come down from heaven.

* There were also three exhibitions to Israel : goodness without law being formally given, law formally given, and law renewed, which had characteristic differences.

Care to prove that these three commissions were connected as three links in a chain, seems to me to have been taken in Peter's having been first called to know the heavenly calling and to go to the Gentiles ;—two things, in dispensation reserved as the substance of the ministry of Paul, and perhaps (for such is my impression though I speak it not confidently) in Paul's catching up into the third heavens, the foreshade at least of much, peculiar to John's ministry as now commenced. Now observe, when John saw Him **HE FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD.** What was there in the unveiled person of the Lord to produce this fear ? It was not I think from the sight of the person that his fear arose, for that person he had known in all the glory here presented by virtue of the heavenly calling ; but there were circumstances here connected with that person which were truly appalling. All the glory here shown is traceable, in principle at least, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The long robe of the priest girt with the golden girdle, not about the loins as in service (Eph. vi.), but round the breast, for beauty not for strength. His characteristics as ancient of days ; as searching all things connected with him as with eyes of fire, yet bearing still the trace of the furnace in which those whom He loves still are, are all found there. Paul saw them however *within* the Father's house, *within* the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens of his God, and thus connected with the thoughts of sonship and heirship. Here they are presented as in Jesus on earth—and abstractedly and apart from the Father's house and the temple of God. The insignia of Jesus in both cases, but to Paul as of Jesus as the forerunner into glory, the High Priest before God, the anchor, intercessor, victorious head, &c. ; to John as in Jesus about to take up the nation Israel. And surely it is an awful thought that we are living in days, when the Lord is coming to be the subject of sorrow to all on earth, for so must mean *πασαι φυλαι της γης* whether rendered all kindreds of the earth or all tribes of the land. There being seen on earth, and even Jesus being seen there, would seem to say " the heavenly calling is closed ;" and so though God in His grace and long-suffering continue to act upon it in principle it is ; just as in the case of the law where though the dispensation was

frustrate on Israel's side ere ever they received it ; for they were dancing before the calf while Moses was in the Mount, yet the long-suffering of God waited to be gracious many an hundred years after. The effect of the revelation on John is very remarkable,—*He fell at His feet as dead.* All Paul's tracing out of these truths in the Hebrews, issue immediately in songs of praise and in gladness of heart ; but John fell at His feet as one that was dead. The incident gathers force from its being John, and is a sweet introduction to the new riches of grace (as nothing could alter the Father's purpose or Jesus' love), that in Him were secrets of blessed and potent avail to His weak servants, even when standing there where the very things which had so largely ministered to Paul's joy should become sorrow and a burden. The terror of John then seems to me to have been just that which a Jew would have known if the tabernacle had suddenly disappeared from the camp. Jesus not in heaven ! where was John's fellowship then ? where his foundation ? what his hopes ? Had Jesus left the heavens then and he on earth not caught up to meet Him ? How could these things be ? The necessity of the case seems to me deeper than any proper to the apostleship of Paul, and to have had its own remedy in the Lord's reply, for "Fear not, I am the first and the last, *He* that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive again for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death," seems to me to hold to this apostleship the same place as "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me," did to that of Paul. The mystery of the fellowship of the Church and elders in heaven, was the substance of that word. The essential glory of the Lord, the indefeasible basis of the servant's hopes, the substance of this. The Alpha and Omega refer I think, to manifestation in dispensation—the beginning and the ending would involve the idea of visible works ; but "the first and the last" bring us to what was before works or dispensation either—something altogether divine, existing first in the solitude of deity, and if not eventually lost there again in the end, simply so because having created spheres for its own display and blessed communication to others of its joy. The first and the last must be God. Thomas, with the Lord standing before him,

enjoining him to reach out his finger and thrust his hand into the side, could not doubt of Jesus' love ; neither surely could John feel the powerful right hand of Him who was pierced for him, thus laid upon him while his Master gave him for his portion His own essential glory, as one come out of death with all its spoils upon him, and not find rest. From the apostleship of Paul I learn, blessed truth, the union of the Church with Jesus, but under this apostleship is opened *what* He is with whom we are one ;—the servant taken up in his individual character in the power of what his Lord His, in is own essential glory, as come out of death and from judgment, with the spoils of victory upon Him.

As to the seven Churches. I suppose the number seven is used as the common expression of perfection or fulness, as showing that in these seven was filled up all that the Lord had to say to him that hath an ear to hear. In which case these particular seven may have been selected, among other reasons, from their state at the time, presenting the various exhibitions of good and evil which it was in the Lord's mind to notice. It should be remembered, that the whole of what was seen was to be sent to each Church ; chap. i. 11—20, embraces the description of the person of Jesus as what was seen. All the insignia under which He introduces Himself to each severally, are found among "the things seen," except 1st, in the address to Smyrna "the first and the last, who was dead and lived." 2ndly, in that to Thyatira "the Son of God." 3rdly, in that to Sardis, "He that hath the seven spirits of God." 4thly, to Philadelphia "the holy and the true who hath the key of David, who opens and no man shuts, who shuts and no man opens ;" and 5thly, "the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God," to Laodicea. Smyrna and Philadelphia are without censure, though exception is made against some at Philadelphia ; Sardis and Laodicea, are without praise, though exception is made in favour of some at Sardis.

To Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, praise and censure are mingled, but praise comes first, blessedly telling what the superabundance of that heart is with which we have to do.

In each there seems a remarkable consistency and correspondence

between the insignia under which Jesus introduces Himself to it—its state—necessities and the promises given:—all tuned, as it were, to the same note. There is evidently, I think, great moral order in the arrangement of the series; such diversity in their several aspects, and yet such internal consistency and characteristic unity in each, that it would be found impossible to interchange any of the parts without spoiling the whole. I notice this, not as at all novel, but desiring by it to draw and fix attention upon the tracing out of the connection of the whole, and the meaning of its various parts. Under all the circumstances there seems congruity in his beginning with a Church needing praise and censure, and surely grace as well as self-vindication, and to us encouragement in proceeding with one admitting only praise.

TO EPHESUS, He introduces Himself as He that upholds the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lights. The force of this name I conceive is, the one known to have *strength* according to the nature of that which he addressed. But not only is *strength* the order under which he presents himself to Ephesus, but *strength* in the variety of its developments was the praise of Ephesus;—"I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience, and that thou canst not bear the evil, and hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast patience and hast endured for my name sake and hast not fainted." So the censure was for failure in *strength*. "Thou hast left thy first love." Herein was to be its restoration: "repent and do thy first works." The threat also was to discover His *strength* and its weakness,—moving the light out of its place,* and the promise the proof of his strength and the mean of its association with himself herein. For what more than the promise to give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God, can mark strength before God and with men. Wonderful must be the power of Him who has ability thus to undo the consequences of the fall, and opening the way to the tree of life, give the power of association in permanent fellowship of manifested eternal life with God himself.

* So as not to be that through which He was seen, and through which He saw that which was outside, and not in manifested nearness to Himself.

Surely, considering the substance of chap. i., the presenting of Himself first in this character of strength was very gracious. I would only remark farther the praise in this Church, for its intolerance of evil in the case of both the false Apostles and the Nicolaitanes.

*Life seems the key note of the Church of SMYRNA, in the title under which the Lord presents Himself to it, its state, His promises, &c. "The Head of resurrection life" is the interpretation I think of "the first and the last who was dead and lived." How blessed the works mentioned here, in God's sight at least, for they are the distinctive features of the man of sorrows, the sure result of the power of divine life amid death, "tribulation and poverty." And here there seemed no need for any effort to try the character of things around: life divine has of itself an effulgence of light which of itself makes manifest all things. The change from Satan to the devil (the latter the name under which the enemy persecutes), is remarkable. The promise of the crown of life is more than the promise of the first Church; and with the closing promise, not to be hurt by the second death, presents the blessing of life not simply as possessed, but in its manifested results,—the honour of the victors' crown and freedom in *the* great and fearful judgment of the adversary's people.*

Just as in the Psalms we find them running oft in couplets; so here, these two have a peculiar response the one to the other, even as we shall see to be the case in the two next also. Between the states of, and addresses to Pergamos and Thyatira, there is evidently antithesis; and the principle on which it seems to turn, is on the double glory of the Lord Jesus in all the characters in which He stands between God and man. The mediatorship, the priesthood, &c. all have a double glory, according as they are regarded in more immediate connection with God or man.

In the address to PERGAMOS, all the details lead the mind to God; in that to Thyatira, to man. The sharp two-edged sword is God's,—the irresistible power of the word of God. As the one thus accoutred then we have him as God's warrior. But God's war is redemption which is for man. The scene at Pergamos is

where Satan's throne is, and the praise for holding fast the name of the Lord, and not denying His faith, even in the days of martyrdom. This brings the mind naturally to that word, they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony as the praise of this Church. The sin also was connected with the word,—it was the denial of the irresistible power of the word of God. The more so as it is not said, as in the case of Thyatira, thou sufferest to teach, but “thou hast there them that hold,” &c. which is another thing altogether, as laying to their charge guilt, in not having put the minds of persons straight by the power of the word. The threat also corresponds,—“to fight against them with the sword of His mouth.” All these things mark his office before God manward; and so does the promise to give of the hidden manna, or the liberty of individual appropriation of the most secret treasures of the ark,—of that treasure which was in its preservation an abiding miracle, and memorial of the unwearied patience of Jehovah's love.—So likewise the white stone of acquittal, and the new name of favouritism written upon it, the badge and token of the rulers' intimacy. All these things mark His office before God, for God manward, and as it were leave the mind at home with God, while the great sin was correspondent; the misapplication in use of what is of God, for Balaam was God's prophet, but of this more hereafter.

In contrast with all this is THYATIRA. The badges here—“eyes as a flame of fire, and feet like fine brass,” lead the mind immediately down to that on which these things are exercised; and the closing promises, “power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron, to break them to pieces as the vessels of a potter,” &c. leave the mind, not at home with God, but roaming through the expanse of man's glory, in the day of the inheritance being enjoyed; while the sin is not as above, the misapplication, but man's usurpation of what is God's alone. Jezebel was a stranger and an abomination, and had no right in any way to interfere in the things of the God of Israel's worship. The contrast gathers force from the circumstances of each: Balaam, God's prophet, though apart from Israel; Jezebel, an intruding alien, though a queen,

she was no prophetess, though she might call herself one. It is a just remark also, that in the case of Pergamos the insignia and the promises lead the mind to authority in *circumstances*; here (in the case of Thyatira), it is authority from personal glory, “the Son of God who hath His eyes as a flame of fire and His feet like fine brass,” not the possession of the two-edged sword; and again, not the proffer of endowment of this, or that detail of glory, but the enlarged presentation to hope of that glory which is proper to Himself as heir. The introduction of the title here of “Son of God,” is important, as showing what the character is under which the discerning sight of Hebrews (chap. iv.), and the fellowship of suffering (Heb. xii.) is exercised.—And it was this surely which gave force to the searching demand to Peter, “lovest thou me more than these,” as well as to the command based thereupon to service and trial, “feed my sheep,” &c. It was this gave meaning to that word, presenting at once the discernment of mind, and the fellowship of the sufferings of the Saviour, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” and which was the sustaining power of His “fear not,” &c. to John—in all which cases it seems to me, that Jesus exercised as Son of God, the eyes of fire and displayed the feet of brass. I do not wish to limit the meaning of the eyes of fire to discernment—I surely believe that it means also “the flash of authority,” and so the feet of brass, thorough preparedness for all service—with no instinctive difficulty for any work—to which the thorn, and the briar and the furnace, and the press, are all alike. Yet I believe these are here presented rather as connecting Him with those for whom He is in office, and therefore bear more of the former, than of the latter force.—As to this, and the three addresses which follow, I might show the internal harmony of each; how the insignia under which Jesus introduces Himself—the state of good and evil—the promises and threatenings all partake of one thought in each address; but having done so in the first two somewhat in detail I shall forbear.

SARDIS.

There seems to me to be a connection observeable in the subject matter of the three last addresses. In introducing Himself to

SARDIS, it is as “He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.” By the possession of the seven Spirits of God, I understand the headship of all power and qualification before God; and by the possession of the seven stars, manifested headship in office before men. Thus we have the fulness and completeness of His authority asserted: its being asserted in this way, first as having all the springs of power in Himself—“the seven spirits of God,” and secondly, as having the proofs of this among men—“the seven stars,” is a very impressive way of presenting the truth, and is besides in strict correspondence and keeping with the state of the Church addressed. On it was needed to press, and through it on all that had ears to hear, the necessity of the connection between testimony, or what was shown before man, and life or what was seen to God, it had “a name to live but was dead.” He comes to it therefore, as the one whose right to investigate before man was fully sustained by His position and glory before God. And through the whole of His address to this Church, it seems to be His desire to keep up the thought of this necessary connection between testimony and life. Thus in the exhortation we have first that which is seen referred to, “Be watchful and strengthen the remaining works;” and then that which is unseen concerning them, “their being found wanting before God,” &c. So in the promise we have first that which has especially to do with manifestation “covered with white clothing,” then that which is unseen “the name not blotted out of the book of life,” &c. But as I have at some length, in the first and second addresses, stated my view in detail as to the unity of each address, and the internal harmony of each, I shall not carry this out at length. I would however remark that the title, and the whole furniture of this address, seem to me appositely introductory to what follows in the two closing addresses. Complete fulness of authority, based and built upon complete fulness of power, is the glory under which Jesus speaks to this Church; and well precedes His appearing to the Church of Philadelphia, as the possessor of that moral character which justified His being the introducer of another dispensation, and till then the sustainer and regulator of this.

The title first presented in the address to PHILADELPHIA is quite new,—“the holy and the true.” The Lord had previously stood successively as having power in Church order, as having life, as the warrior of God, the physician of man, the head of power before God and office before man; here His moral character is presented “the holy and the true” [not witness, that comes in the address to the next Church, but] the inward character of His soul and being before God. Once He presented Himself before man as holy and true, in weakness, and Israel rejected Him, though the heir; now He shows Himself thus in power having the key of David,—an intimation I take it, as we find in the first chapter, of the coming dispensation, and therefore certain passing away of the present. In the clauses which follow, “who opens,” &c. &c., there seems to me a change from this more narrowed glory of the key of David. He is the general opener and shutter, even to those who have nothing to do with the kingdom of David.

The general ideas then which I gather of the Lord as here presented are these instinct with moral character—possessed of the power of a dispensation to come—yet the regulator of things present also; and in beautiful harmony with this are the various parts of the address, and most blessedly illustrative of the fulness of His grace and mercy. The broaching this first to a Church which was without blame—the certifying how fixedly open the path of their way was—the nice and ready discernment of the little strength and the selection of promises, expressive in a peculiar way of stability of blessing, and complete possession of that which lay at the end of all dispensation, under their circumstances, are peculiarly illustrative of his heart. And what more expressive of stability of blessing than the “making a pillar in the temple of my God and He shall go no more out;” or what more complete possession of blessing than having “the name of God written upon us, and the name of the city of God the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from our God and Jesus our new name?”

Blessed the enjoyment of that city, for the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him:

and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.—But blessed as these things are, and much as Jesus and the saints love to hang in thought upon them, they cannot be reached without passing through a deep black tide of man's unfaithfulness to God in this dispensation as in every other; and this with the judgment upon it is in detail presented to us in the address to LAODICEA which follows.

Here He introduces Himself as “the Verily, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” And who that knows the way of the Lord, His gracious and loving heart, but in knowing what follows would recognize the suitability of these names. The burden of the address to Laodicea is rejection speedy, and, of the Church *as a whole*, certain rejection. But the Lord hates putting away; and it seems to me as though recognizing how little those who knew His ways would be prepared to receive the fearful word, He thus introduces Himself as “the Verily”—an expression used by Himself when in humiliation, as a fit introduction to remarks of peculiarly solemn import. This title is to me, as if he had said uncongenial as that which I have now to say is to my soul, I yet speak it as the one whose every word is truth.—And the addition of “the faithful and true witness” is as the explanation of the cause of his so doing—a position and a service were His, which made it both imperative and needful; He was “the faithful and true witness”—and more than this, repugnant to His own gracious desires as the service which the wretched state of things at Laodicea and the Church generally made imperative; there was in the service no inconsistency. “He was the beginning of the creation of God.” If any said or thought, that having been laid as the foundation stone, He could not reverse the order of all things present, great was the mistake. The foundation was a living stone,—the superstructure which could not be shaken, was composed of living stones.—Himself was not only such as that Satan had nothing in him but was also to be known only as a risen man; thus in resurrection was He the life-giving spiritual Adam, and “if any man is in Him he is a new creature, old things passed away, behold all things are become new.”

OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

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There is much deeply instructive matter to us in this address, but I shall not go into it now ; though I would not close without observing the grace which reserves for this worst case of all, the largest and the fullest promise ; one which brings before us the highest pinnacle of the faithful saint's present privilege and the fullest point of coming glory—Jesus now upon the Father's throne, the elder brother of the children who with Him are waiting till His own throne is made ready, and all the blessedness of entering upon the inheritance—together with the honour of the day of coronation and the nuptial bliss, is theirs and His.

Brief and defective as these remarks are, if under the grace of God, they lead any to notice the distinctive peculiarity and harmonious unity of each address and the consecutive character of the order of the seven, looked at together, they will not be in vain : and blessed, yea most blessed is the thought that the eternal fulness of every part of scripture is to us inexhaustible.

OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

PART III.

(Continued from vol. iv. page 220.)

HITHERTO we have seen the blessed Spirit generally in its characteristic living operations, and not so much ecclesiastically if I may so speak. The third, fourth, and seventh chapters of St. John's Gospel, have given us clear instruction in this. First as quickening or giving life. Secondly as given, and thus as a well of water in us springing up into everlasting life. Thus too as manifesting, or connected with, the riches of grace—making us know the Father as seeking such to worship : the God of love—and enabling us to worship Him in Spirit and in truth, as thus known in the grace which has sought us, brought in by faith to

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His fellowship; fellowship with the Father and the Son out of every nation—in a word, the dispensation of the manifested Son—manifested to faith as one with whom we are in union through the Spirit.—This by the gift of grace. Thirdly as flowing forth from us a river of refreshings—and this in connection with the glory of the Son of man, and therefore not so much the power of worship, as the earnest of glory, and the power of refreshing and glorious testimony; that man in Him prevails and has the glory, though yet we must wait for it till He be manifested to the world, set right indeed by His presence, in that great feast of tabernacles. The first of these chapters closed proper Jewish intercourse, showing that they must be born again to enter into the kingdom of God; and so was *every one* that was born of the Spirit, the cross or lifting up the Son of man closing all present earthly associations, and introducing heavenly things as yet unknown. In the second, the Lord having left thereon Judea and going into Galilee passes through Samaria, and with one of the most worthless of that reprobate race, shows the gift of God, and the consequence of the humiliation of the Son of God, and Son of man—thereon introducing the Father's name and spiritual worship by grace. Thus the gospel dispensation is introduced by it, and its worship, Sonship, and joy. In the third we find it flowing forth from filled affections to the world, the witness, though not the accomplishment of that day when Jesus shall appear in the glory witnessed of, and it shall be as life from the dead:—and that, indeed, through His then unbelieving brethren here below. The fourth chapter—that is the second of those alluded to—is more large and general as the power of all living communion with God, and thus is specially the Church's place. It identifies itself more specially with the prayer of the third of Ephesians, founded on the title “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The seventh chapter—or the third here alluded to—identifies itself more especially with the prayer of the first of the Ephesians; the portion of the Church also it is true, but more its hope than its communion, and founded on the title “God of our Lord Jesus Christ,” looking thus at the Lord as the head of the body—the first-born among

many brethren. The first-born from the dead, the head of the body the Church, as is plainly seen in the testimony of the Apostle which follows, not in the nearness of the divine nature as Son, but in appointed—though righteous, headship as man, the appointed heir of all things.—Both indeed hanging on His being the Son, but one His nearness to God even the Father, which is indeed *oneness*; the other His manifestation in glory, according to divine counsel, when He takes His place with the Church toward the world :—though of course—and necessarily—the head of it, she the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

That I may not omit the intervening chapters of John, but that we may see what a summary of divine theology it is as a testimony to the person of the Lord Jesus in its height above all dispensation. The 5th contrasts the entire incompetency of any restorative power connected with the law, because it required strength in the patient, which was just what the disease of sin had destroyed, as well as his righteousness, which would not have needed it—in a word, the entire futility of *all remedial* processes, with the absolute life-giving power of the Son of God in union with the Father :—and on His rejection, the rejection of His word (for so that power wrought), the judicial power put entirely into His hands as Son of man, to execute it on all that rejected Him, that all men might honour the Son even as they honoured the Father.

The 6th chapter shews what was proper to Him—His place and His disciples, as rejected. First it showed Him (who fulfilled that word—the Jehovah of Israel's blessing in the latter day ; “ He shall satisfy the poor with bread, when Zion shall be His rest for ever”) as Prophet, refusing to be king, and thereon going up to exercise His priesthood of intercession apart on high. In the meanwhile the disciples were toiling alone on the sea and the wind contrary, aiming but not attaining. Immediately on Jesus, who could walk on all the difficulties, rejoining them, they were at the land whither they went. This blessed little picture of the order and circumstances of the dispensation having been given, the humiliation of Jesus as the blessing and portion of the Church

during His priesthood is then given, as affording its food and strength of life. First, His coming down and incarnation—the manna, the true bread that came down from heaven ; next as sacrificed and giving the life He had thus taken as man—believers therein eating His flesh and drinking His blood, thus living by Him ; then closing by the question, “ what and if ye shall see the Son *of man* ascend up where He was before.” This as we have seen is followed by the instruction of the 7th chapter, where the time for the manifestation of the Son of man to the world *as not yet come*, and the gift of the Holy Ghost *as the intermediate witness of His glory as Son of man* is spoken of. This point has been spoken of in the 2nd part of these remarks ; I revert to it now merely as showing the beautiful order of the instruction of the Spirit in the Gospel of St John.

There is another point connected with the operations of the Spirit of our God, which remains to be treated upon—His corporate operations, or, His operations as acting in connection with the body of Christ, both as maintaining, and the very centre of, its unity ; and also, as ministering in the diversity of its gifts : and also, the distinction between this and the individual presence in the believer.

This difference will be found to be important, and to flow from and be connected with the whole order of the economy of grace, of which the Spirit of God is the great agent in us ; and though not received there, still, in a certain sense in testimony, in the world.

This difference depends on the relative character which Christ stands in : first, with the Father as Son, and us by adoption made sons with Him ; and secondly, with God as the Head of the body which is His fulness—the Church. We shall find the scripture speak definitely of both and distinctly. In one the Lord Jesus holds a more properly divine relationship with the Father, and introduces us by adoption into something of the enjoyment of that nearness. In the other, a relationship (though all be divine, yet) more connected with His human nature and His offices in that, and therefore God is spoken of as *His God*. The distinction and reality of these two things is expressed by the blessed Lord

Himself in His going away. Having accomplished the redemption, which enabled Him to present His brethren along with Himself as sons to the Father, in His, the Father's house, spotless and sons by adoption, and to assume His place as the Head of the body the Church; He did not yet allow Himself to be touched and worshipped as in bodily presence in His earthly kingdom, for He was not yet ascended to His Father, so that He could bring forth the fulness of His glory, and that that kingdom should be manifestly of HIM, and have its root and source in that higher glory; but putting His friends, and that for the first time, into the place of sons and brethren. He says to them (thus setting the Church, and Himself for it, in its place), "Go tell my brethren I ascend unto my Father and your Father, my God and your God." Thus establishing these two relationships, and His disciples along with Himself in them.

Then the Lord ascended up on high for the accomplishment in power, of what He now spoke of in the truth and efficacy of the work which He had accomplished, and the value of His presented person before the Father, as well as the blood by which sin was put away.

On this statement in John, hangs in fact the distinction to which I have alluded, followed up in scripture by many other passages. It is the definite revelation of the characters in which Jesus Christ was going away, and which He was to sustain in our behalf on high, placing us in fellowship with God and the Father in them. There was another point, however, connected with this, involved in the position which Christ assumed. *He is the displayer of the divine glory*—His Father's glory. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." *He shall appear in the Father's glory.* He was on earth "God manifest in the flesh," seen too of angels. Again, "the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person." His glory too was Sonship, as of the only-begotten of the Father *ὡς μονογενὲς παρὰ πατρός.* As again, "the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him." In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell. And as afterwards stated in fact, as before in good pleasure, "in Him

dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead *bodily*.” Thus we see the person of the Lord Jesus, the place in which divine glory is in every sense manifested. But He is now hid in God. That is the position which He has now taken. And thereon the Holy Ghost is sent down into the world to maintain the witness and manifestation of His glory, not brought out yet on earth, but personally accomplished on high.—“Crowned with glory and honour,” and to be the earnest and testimony of His title to the earth. The Church on earth is the place and depository of this. “He shall take of mine and show it unto you,” “all things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, He shall take of mine and shall shew it unto you.”

Now the Holy Ghost as thus sent down from heaven, is the witness of what Christ is there for the Church towards the Father, and what His title is as of God towards the world, and specially therein what the power of the hope of the calling and inheritance of God in the Church is. These things may be much blended in the testimony of the operations of the present Spirit. As for example—the display of any portion in Christ as the Son before the Father, may fill my heart and make me a witness and a testimony of it, to the blessing and comfort of the Church, if the Lord accompany it with the suitable gift of communication, and the power of it in my soul in joy is intimately blended with the thing to be expressed; because *so* the Holy Ghost acts in this work. It is therefore said, “out of *His belly* shall flow rivers of living water.” Still they are quite distinct; for a man may have these things shewn to his soul, and yet not have the gift to communicate them to others; though they be the deep—possibly, I suppose, the deeper joy of His own. So that, though connected when both are there, they are distinct things. I suppose that those who have gift of testimony, have often found as much or more joy in hearing the blessed things of Christ, than in uttering them; though the sense of the blessed things and joy may have ministered to their capacity of utterance. I would speak then distinctively of these two points, though their blending, if the Lord will, may be noticed.

In the earlier passages in John, and the remarks which were made upon them, the Holy Ghost who is sent, was spoken of as the power of life ; the power of communion ; the power of communication. In the latter part of John and other places *His sending* is specially spoken of, because the absence and going away of Christ was brought before their minds as a present fact ; and hence, as the sustainer of the relationships induced by the mystery of His being thus hid in God, and another Comforter sent. Life-communication with God the Father and the Son in life ; communications concerning the glory of the Son of man were all distinct and blessed things ; but they were not the revelation of the dispensations in which they were ordered, nor, the display of the relationships which those dispensations brought to light, though to an instructed mind they might imply them. This is taken up first in the close of John's gospel. We shall also find it brought out on other ground later in the close of Luke.

It is introduced in John by the statement made to His disciples, "as I said unto the Jews, so now I say unto you, whither I go, ye cannot come." In the earlier part of the subsequent chapter, the Lord introduces their comfort, that He was to be the object of faith as God was, that He was not going to be alone in blessedness, and leave them here to themselves in misery, but going to prepare a place for them, and that He would come again and receive them to Himself, that where He was they might be ; a far better thing than His being with them in the condition they were in. But meanwhile they knew where He was going and the way. This resulted as He explained to them from their knowing the Father, to whom He was going, in knowing Him. For He was in the Father and the Father in Him. Thus the great scene into which they were brought in the knowledge of the person of the Lord Jesus, and His oneness with the Father—He in the Father and the Father in Him—was introduced. The scene of associated blessedness into which the disciples were brought by the living knowledge, which they had of Jesus was declared. But *the power* in which it was *known* and *enjoyed* was not yet. But the knowledge of the Father, through the Son the object of faith,

was now declared. And the consequent display in the world by reason of the exaltation of the Lord Jesus spoken of. The Lord then, urging obedience to Him as the way of receiving blessing, takes the place of Mediator to obtain the Comforter for them ;—another Comforter, who should not leave them as He was doing, but was to abide with them *for ever*. This it was that was the *power* of their association with that of which they had heard before—the fellowship of the Father and the Son. First, of the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father, and then of them with both, in that it was by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them—the Comforter now sent. Thus though they could not come there, they saw Jesus, and He came to them, and with the Father made His mansion with them, till He came and took them into the mansions of His Father's house.

This 14th chapter then, gives us the blessedness—the knowledge of the Father and the Son, by the Son ; the order of it, obedience to the Son ; the power of it, the presence of the Comforter obtained through the mediation of Christ—but thereon, consequent on this presence—their *knowledge* that He was in the Father, they in Him and He in them—a blessing far beyond mere mediation, but consequent on the presence of the Spirit obtained by mediation. This also is added as a consequence, that the Father and the Son would come and make their abode with them. Still, in this chapter, whatever the effect of the mediation in their knowledge, was, Christ does not go beyond the place of Mediator, and therefore tells them that the Father will send the Spirit in His name, and He would recall all the Lord's words and instruction to them.

This chapter* settles the dispensation on its basis, as to the

* In fact in the 14th chap. Christ speaks much more as on earth, see v. 25 (though on the ground of His going away), and shews them they should have known His person† there, and thus known where He was going and the way. After the 16th verse He speaks more of their position in His going away and its consequences still as being yet there. Hence the word is, they being looked at in this character and the Father on high, "I will pray the Father and He shall give." In the 16th chap. where union has been treated of and they as it were placed in Him before the Father, it is "I say not that I will pray the Father for you," and the Father sends in His name, and *they* ask in His name, for they were so placed before the Father. "Arise let us go hence," closes the mere individual earthy place ; then without reference exactly to place but

† In the power of which He speaks, as "I will do it."

place of the great objects of it—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is quite distinct from the subsequent chapters. The person of the Lord as the object of faith and His mediation, are spoken of in it. But in the 15th chapter, the union of the Church with Christ as a Head, is introduced. This involved His rejection as a man, in which He was the pattern of those of whom He was the Head. So that while it presents Him as the Head and source of vital influence, now to be exalted on high, it also gives us His path in the world as obedient to the Father; yet even there choosing His disciples, appointing them and sending them forth. In a word, His headship and title in ordinance, is set forth, yet as one known as a pattern to them in the fruit-bearing life into which He sent them. Of this life, *they* were to be the personal witnesses for they had seen it: of His exaltation as Head on high, the Holy Ghost sent down thereon by Him.*

Hence in this passage, it is not the Father who is spoken of as sending the Holy Ghost in the Mediator's name, but the Head, the Lord Jesus *who sends* the Comforter from the Father, in connection with His glory, to testify of His glory, proceeding from the Father. It is to be remarked here, that while much of this latter part connects itself very closely in details with the operations of the Holy Ghost, given in connection with the Lord Jesus, as calling God His God as well as ours; as the man who through grace, places

in language, and a union which we are accustomed to call mystical, but which is a very real thing, the Lord says, "I am the true vine," &c.

The 15th chapter does not itself declare the exaltation of Christ as the Head on high, but the rejection of Christ by the nominal vine, when He came to seek fruit on it, and His being the true vine Himself, and fruit-bearing to be the test of abiding in it. We know that it is in exalted headship in heaven at God's right hand, that He is thus the living source of fruit-bearing; but this is no part of the statement, chap. 15: but the testimony of the Holy Ghost is direct evidence that He was gone up there, accepted and glorified of the Father. Remarking this much, elucidates John xv. It is union with Him and fruit, but not necessarily divine exaltation.

* Herein is a distinctive difference of the Apostle Paul's ministry. He could not know the second part of the witness mentioned in the chapter. He had not been with Jesus from the beginning. When He saw Jesus, He saw Him only in the glory of His heavenly Lordship of which the Holy Ghost testified too. This made His testimony a more purely heavenly testimony; as He says "Yea, though I had known Christ Jesus after the flesh, yet henceforth know I Him no more." St. Peter in testimony would hardly have said this, though preaching the same truths. He says "a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed."

Himself in association with us *in need* as in glory, yet that He never in this part of scripture puts Himself *out* of the place of Son, paramount to all dispensation. Though He may take the lowest place in service and obedience, still it is on a principle paramount to all dispensation ; or, though the acts alluded to may have their place in connection with dispensed power (as the testimony of the Spirit will be found to have), yet still, Christ holds the place here, in which He sends it for that purpose, as paramount to the associations revealed by the Spirit, so sent in those acts. He testifies that all that the Father has are His, as Son ; though the acts by which He may do so, may be the witness and consequence of a union with Christ, putting by grace, ourselves and Him, not merely as SONS before THE FATHER *individually*, but as a *body* with its *head* before GOD.

This distinction will be found to be important, because the exercise of the dispensed power may depend on the condition of the body through which it is dispensed—the testimony of the sent Spirit to the glory of the Head who sent it, *never can*.

And this is what is peculiar in the state of the Church. Its standing in Christ is above all dispensation, it is as sons along with Him with the Father. Its manifestation in time may be by dispensed service, and here it partakes of all the responsibility of a dispensation on earth, as of deeds done *in the body*. Thus this gospel begins anterior to Genesis, which recounts the creation of the scene on which dispensations have been displayed. There, “in the beginning God created.” Here, “in the beginning was the Word” by whom all things were created. And the Church derives its existence and heavenly fulness from this sovereign source. The purpose of it effectuated consequent on the rejection of the Son of man, who would have been the righteous crown of all natural dispensation ; but who as risen, associates the redeemed Church with Himself, in a position paramount to it all—even His own association of Sonship with the Father, in the privilege of the same love : and the Holy Ghost is here sent down of Him, the witness and power of this, and therefore in its own action paramount to all dispensation, but this only in the fact of its testimony to Him as so exalted. And this is the point St. John here takes

up. Now the manifestation of His (Christ's) corporate Headship to the Church, in which He says in our behalf "my God," as He had said so in blessed title of righteousness when the pattern of our place below, depends (and hence the *present manifestation* of the Church's glory as united to Him) on the obedience of the Church and its suitableness to be made an instrument of display here; quite a distinct thing from the certainty of its union to, and the known and infallible glory of its Head on high. This is a permanent revelation, not a responsible manifestation which partakes of the nature of a dispensation on earth, though the glory testified to in it, may be above all mere dispensation, for its head and for itself. The joy moreover, and sense of the glory, may also depend on obedience and consistency, not the permanent fact that the Spirit testifies of His glory in the Church. Thus in John xv. it is written, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." There could be no doubt clearly of the Son's continuing in the Father's love, but the dispensation of this on earth hung on the obedience on earth, in Him infallibly perfect, and therefore so its consequences; in us continual failure and its consequences also.

We have seen that the testimony of the Spirit is to the glory of Jesus Christ. Sent by the Father in the Son's name, He is the power of union and communion with both; associating the disciples in the fulness of blessing with both, and the presence of both manifested thereby to the believer. Sent by the Son—the exalted man—from the Father, He is the witness of His glory, and that all that the Father has, is that Holy, but rejected, one's also.

From the remarks I have already made, it will be seen that in the 16th chapter of John, the Spirit and its testimony as there presented to us is the indefeasible portion of the Church, the necessary testimony of the glory of Christ. It makes the Church, instead of depending on its obedience, though the extent of the Church's enjoyment of the blessing may hang upon that obedience. He is the witness of the acceptance by the Father of the obedience of Christ, the perfect Son of God, and of the glory of His person: thus establishing the Church, owning this by His operation through

grace, in contrast with the world, who rejected Jesus as the Son of God. Hence, although the obedient disciples of the Lord Jesus were the instruments of the testimony, yet these are dropped as regards the testimony in the first instance; and the subject spoken of is, the Comforter's testimony in the conviction of the world. He is present as the witness of the glory of Christ; that is, as the abiding power of the dispensation, the *necessary* character of the testimony of *His very presence in the world* was this—that He was come in condemnation of the whole world before God, for it had rejected the Son whom the Father had sent in love to it. He had said “I have yet one Son” and they had cast Him out—not merely Jews were in question, the world had done it—man had done it, “He was despised and rejected of men.” Every grace of God, every righteousness of man, had been shown in the Son of God, they had seen no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Nay more, as the Lord had distinctly shown up the world, they had both seen and hated both Him and the Father—hated Him, blessed and perfect in His ways, without a cause!

It is on this solemn ground the Lord appeals to His Father, in the 17th chapter. For the children, He had called for the Holy Father's care. As to the world, He appeals to His righteous Father's judgment. He and the world now were entirely contrary the one to the other. “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.” The presence of the Holy Ghost, sent down on the departure of the blessed Son of God, proved the world to be in irreparable sin in not having believed on Him. Nothing else was seen in the world. It lay in wickedness. Righteousness there was none. The only righteous One had been rejected, and cast out and slain. God had not interfered to prevent it nor Jesus resisted it, for deeper purposes were in accomplishment. But the evidence of sin was complete, irresistible, and in itself in the world irreparable, in the accomplishment of its highest act—an act showing hatred to the gracious presence of the Lord, as well as contradictory of the righteousness of man before Him. Righteousness thereon was not looked for on earth in man,

for sin had been proved. It was found only in the reception of the righteous man—the Son of God, on the throne of God on high, and the condemnation of the world in seeing Him no more. This also, was testified by the presence of the Holy Ghost, sent down as a consequence of Jesus being there. The *judgment* not now executed, was proved as against the world, because he, who had been now demonstrated by the world to be its prince, in leading them against Christ, was judged: the rest would follow in its day. Thus the presence of the Holy Ghost convicting the world in these things, formed the testimony to Christ's glory here—His witness against the rejecting world.

To the disciples He was in blessing: in leading them into all truth, truth which they were unable to bear till He came, truth connected with Christ's glory, and the consequent breaking down of all they then knew and clung to; and not only lead them into all *actual* truth, but show them things to come; the portion of the Church, their portion. In this He would glorify Christ, taking of His and showing them to them; and all that the Father had was His.

This then the Holy Ghost did, as against the world and with the disciples, in the testimony of Christ's glory. If by grace a man received the testimony as against the world, and was subdued by it, and gave up the world and followed Christ with His disciples, he became the happy subject of that further service of the Holy Ghost; guiding, showing, glorifying Christ as the possessor of all the Father's. This was the office and service of the ever-abiding Comforter (in whatever degree *enjoyed*), for the need of Christ's glory, till the Church be caught up to enjoy it there, and the world be actually judged; so that there shall be no need of testimony to either on these points, though the Holy Ghost may be to the Church the perpetual power of enjoyment in them.

The presence of the Holy Ghost implied and involved this—the need, before God, of Christ's glory. In this He acted as a Servant, as it were, not speaking of Himself, but what He heard, that speaking. Whatever the means instrumentally used, this was the subject and the power. The Holy Ghost was faithful in this

service. He must be so, for Christ was to be glorified. And this secures the witness of Christ's glory, in whatever measure according to its faithfulness, this is the Church's delight.

In all this the Holy Ghost is spoken of as being on earth, and being sent in lieu of Christ who was gone on high, in distinctness of person ; and the glory of the person of Christ, the great subject of the gospel, is still treated of in its aspect to the world who rejected Him, and the disciples who by grace received Him.

It appears to me, that the communication of the Holy Ghost as noticed in the 20th chapter of this gospel, is of the character already spoken of. The whole of that chapter is a sort of picture of the dispensation in brief. It is not the Head and the body, but Christ in His personal title to send, as the Father sent Him ; and giving them in His risen power, capacity to execute the mission, the abiding essential service of the Church, whatever measure of power it might be executed in. But Christ has not only gone to the Father, and been seated in the glory which He had with Him before the world was, and sent the Comforter, the witness of that glory and the assurance to the Church of their sonship and fellowship with Him in it—His Father and their Father—but He takes a place as head of the body, as its Lord indeed and source of supply, but still as its head ; so as to speak of His God and their God ; and to receive for it that which He sends forth and ministers to it. Christ has a double character in this, Lord, and head of His body united to Himself. But the Holy Ghost is in all operations from creation downwards, the proper and immediate agent.

As Head of the body the Lord Jesus displays the Church with Himself in a common glory ; but in all this He is spoken of as the subject of God's power. And even where spoken of as Lord, still as a recipient and as made so : though while this is true, because He humbled Himself and became a man, so that God also hath highly exalted Him, that He should have a name which is above every name, every believer finds the very basis of his faith in that He is the true God and eternal life.

The 2nd chapter of the Philippians is the full statement of this great truth. This blessed truth, having all its value from His

being truly and essentially God, that He humbled Himself that as a man for our sakes, and as obedient to death, He might as man be exalted to the place of Lord—due to Him in glory. As my subject is the presence of the Holy Ghost I do not remark further on this passage, than that it seems to me a special contrast with the first Adam, who being man, sought to exalt himself and became disobedient unto death, or under death by disobedience—whereas the history of the Second Adam is, that He humbled Himself to become man, and death to Him was the highest—fullest act of obedience, and confidence then, as man, in His Father: and therefore God highly exalted Him, as sinful man was by his disobedience cast down, who sought to exalt himself and to be as Elohim. In this then we have the exaltation of Jesus as the new man, the Second Adam, the head of a new race: the depository of power, in whom man was according to the 8th Psalm, “Set over all things.”

The divine power in which He could sustain it, and the title of Sonship in which He held it—for indeed He was the Creator—is not now my immediate subject. This point may be seen in Colossians 1st and the double headship resting on it, of creation and of the Church. At present it is the connection of this with the gift of the Holy Ghost that we have to speak of. It is not, perhaps I need hardly say, as if there were two Holy Ghosts, or the Holy Ghost given, were not so given at once, whatever the result; but that the place and power of the Spirit, so given, were distinct. In the one He was the pledge and power of Sonship with the Father. In the other the effectuator of the Lordship of Christ; and the animating energy of every member according to the measure of the gift of Christ; and the power of unity to the whole body. We do however see that Christ risen, but not yet glorified, could communicate the Holy Spirit to them; though till glorified He could not send it down as witness of His Lordship. We have seen that, while as individually blessing us He fills the soul for the exercise of whatever gift is bestowed, He may bless us in fulness of communion when no gift is in exercise—so that they are distinct. The former point being the difference of habitual *Christian* gift from

antecedent working of the Holy Ghost: that before it was put, “thus saith the Lord,” and individually the prophet might find he ministered to another. In the exercise of it by a real Christian, though he might minister it without actually realizing it in communion at the moment—he ministers the things which were his own, and known as such through the earnest of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

I would now trace some of the scriptures connected with this point. In this the Holy Ghost is a Spirit of power, not a Spirit of Sonship; though it may be the sons, who having the Holy Ghost have the power, according to His will, by His presence working in them. This presence of the Holy Ghost is withal corporate presence, though it works by individuals of course, but by them properly as members of the body, working in power not in communion. Consequently we see if the gift was not available for the body (where the edification of the body was the intent of the gift), it was to be suppressed in its exercise, even though confessedly the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the particular gift of the Spirit was to be subjected to the title and rule of the Holy Ghost in the whole, as the member to the mind of the whole body, for the glory of Christ (though power was entrusted to the individual for that use of the whole body, for that glory), and the glory of the body with Him; for no power was rightly used out of the objects of the grace that gave it.

This train I have been led into by the first scripture I would refer to, Luke xxiv. There Christ is looked at as exalted in glory, and the world and all flesh alike here below. It is not there, Go disciple the Gentiles, as in Matthew; but repentance and remission of sins to all nations beginning at Jerusalem, merely the first place here below amongst them. This commission St. Peter was accomplishing in his early sermons in Acts. The word of the Lord in Luke was, first “Ye are witnesses of these things,” then, “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in Jerusalem till ye be endued *with power* from on high,” and afterwards He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

In the first sermon of Peter we have precisely this :—“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 both see and hear.” He then quotes the testimony of the 110th Psalm, and adds, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” The rejection of this testimony set aside the form of the commission in Matthew, in which Jerusalem was made the formal centre of organized evangelization, according to her ancient standing, the Gentiles being treated as such. It was only in grace she could have so stood, but grace had not put her out of this place till she rejected it for herself. I do not know but this point has been noticed in the “Christian Witness” by a brother already, but I do not pass it by as unfolding the present subject.

But the character in which the gift of the Spirit is here presented, as given to believers and forming the Church, is very distinct. Jesus sends the promise of the Father. This is the same great common truth. But in what character is it sent? It is to endue with power from on high. It displays itself in exhibition in the first instance to the world, not in communion of sons with the Father—though, of course, the very same and only Holy Ghost which was the power of this. Its *primary* testimony is to the Lordship of Christ.

We have seen the identity of the expressions in Luke xxiv. and Acts ii. ;* let us observe the terms in which the Spirit by the Apostle bears witness to Jesus.

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did, by Him. 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. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath *made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

* See Luke xxiv. 48, 49. Acts ii. 32—36.

Now in the whole of this passage it is clear, that our blessed and adorable Lord, who had humbled Himself to become so, as we have seen from Philippians, is spoken of as man. As man He is made Lord and Christ. This we shall see to be directly connected with consequent operation and power of the Spirit, but yet, not the whole of the principles connected with it. The corporate character of the scene of its operations was not yet developed. We have already then this first point distinctly brought out: the testimony, through the medium of the disciples as the Spirit gave them utterance, to the Lordship of Christ as man, before the world. But, whatever the rumour occasioned by the facts, the word of preaching to the Jews, is all of which the effect is related. They were to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise was to them and their children, and to all afar off, even as many as the Lord their God should call. Whoever then, received the word gladly, was baptized, and there were added about three thousand souls.

The assembly of God was now formed, and the Lord added to it daily such as should be saved.

The testimony had been given to the world—beginning at Jerusalem, by these witnesses, chosen of God, to the Lordship of the man Christ Jesus. The Church had been formed by it, and then the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved—the remnant of Israel.

In this we see the operation of the Spirit, founded on the exaltation and Lordship of Christ, by chosen witnesses; *but antecedent to the Church, and forming it.* Of this character is all preaching.

When the assembly is gathered, then the Lord adds to it daily such as should be saved. The highest privileges of the believer are then known, in the revealed portion of the believer brought home to his new man, by the Spirit of adoption—the Holy Ghost given to him, the seal of the faith wrought in his heart by God.

The work of the Holy Ghost is then pursued in abundant testimony of Christ's power, proposing (Acts iii.) the return of

Jesus, and the times of refreshing on the repentance of Israel ; the opposition, and rejection of the testimony, by the rulers—the disciples' confidence—His power and blessing and judgment within the Church—the determined opposition and rejection of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, and constant testimony thereto, of the Apostles as his witnesses : as is also, say they, the Holy Ghost which is given to them that obey Him. We have then (Acts vi.) the exhibition of the energy of the Holy Ghost, providing for the circumstances, even of partial failure in the Church. Then on the renewed testimony, in His own prerogative power in Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost"—the judgment of their rejection, nationally, of the Spirit, is pronounced ; and the Jewish history closed, with that which introduced the Church, as so witnessing, into heaven, on its rejection, as full of the Spirit, in Jerusalem the centre of God's earthly system ; and actually the Spirit in the intermediate state there.—"They stoned Stephen, calling and saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit ;" and with intercession for the unhappy people, as Jesus on His rejection—"Lord lay not this sin to their charge." Thus the Spirit, so acting, recognized the Lord Jesus ; as Jesus, as the Son had commended Himself—His spirit—on His rejection—to the Father.

This broke up, as has been frequently observed by those familiar with these truths, the earthly scheme and centre of the Church. Matthew's commission, as has been remarked, in its actual form dropped. *For the Jewish people, by their rulers, having nationally rejected the testimony by the Spirit to the exaltation of Christ, as they had rejected the Son of God in His humiliation, come amongst them as Messiah, Jerusalem ceased to be the centre from which the gathering power thereto was to flow.*

Thereupon accordingly, the Church was scattered, except the Apostles. I would remark in passing, on the very distinct manner in which the personal presence of the Holy Ghost is presented to us in all this history. Ananias lies to the Holy Ghost—tempts the Spirit. The Apostles were witnesses of the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, and so *also* was the Holy Ghost which was

given to them that obey Him. "Filled with the Holy Ghost," as the Lord had promised, was the power and source of their speech, as we see on every occasion. Thus the Holy Ghost as that other Comforter, present with them personally, was clearly before their minds. As the Son had been with them once, *so*, according to promise, the Holy Ghost was with them now. The Son had brought the love of the Father (now indeed yet more clearly apprehended by the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of adoption), and the Spirit now fully revealed to them the Lordship of the man, Jesus, who had been slain and rejected by the world.

But another great frame work, and form of the dispensation was now to be introduced.

Saul, through the instrumentality of a simple disciple, Ananias, receives the Holy Ghost on his conversion, and begins to testify of Christ in Damascus.

The Gentiles then receive the Holy Ghost, and are admitted through the instrumentality of Peter. The reading of the 11th, 12th, 13th chapters of Acts, will show distinctly what prominence this presence and power of the Holy Ghost held. There is just in addition, the service of angels in the Apostle of the circumcision; but the gift of the Holy Ghost is just the sign of acceptance.

But in the calling and conversion of Saul, a new and blessed principle was presented as identified with that, to his mind: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" In a word, the unity and identity of the Church with Christ, of which the Apostle thus called, irregularly called as one born out of due time, became the eminent witness and teacher. Indeed, though there may be kindred truths in the other epistolary writings, we never definitively read of "His body, the Church," save in those of St. Paul. He seems specially to call it his gospel. In this (the *power*, in whatever form, of the glory of Christ, the knowledge of, or unity with Him) the Holy Ghost is found to operate and unfold itself. Not, clearly, quitting the ground of the Lordship of Christ, but withal, working as the power of unity in the whole body and diversity of operation in the particular members. In each, at the same time, for this *highest* and *most* blessed character of it, I need

hardly say, was not lost, “the spirit of adoption crying, Abba, Father ;” but this was a distinct individual operation, though of the same spirit : a joy true to the individual saint, were there but one, though enhanced doubtless by communion, and which contemplated our joy with the Father, as sons along with the blessed Son of God, Jesus the first-born among many brethren.

The corporate witness of His Lordship and glory, and of the union of the Church with Him as Head over all things, is a distinct subject. The ground of this, *in union*, as well as the Church’s blessing and portion by virtue of that union, is specially found in the Ephesians, and is there therefore looked at for the profit of the Church. Its administration, and, therefore, the general ordering of it in its principles and exhibition before the world, is found in Corinthians. The epistle which affords the Apostolic directions for the management of the Church in its internal economy here.

But before I enter on the formal economy of the Spirit, as presented in these chapters, I would turn to the doctrine of the word as to it, as the ordinary portion of the Church in general, as there are one or two passages of scripture which speak definitely of it in this light. The resurrection had marked out Jesus to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of holiness. He might be of the seed of David according to the flesh, but He was the Son of God according to entirely another life, spirit, and energy. Of this, His resurrection was at once the proof and the glorious character, for it was triumph over death ; of which, according to that life and holiness which was in Him, it was not possible, though He might imputatively take sin, He could be holden. In this resurrection and power of accomplished and triumphant liberty, liberty of holiness in a new life, He became the Head of a new family. The first-born from the dead, the Head of the body, the Church, having in all things the preeminence ; and the Son, taking His place now as such in resurrection. Thus our justification became, in fact, identified with our position as sons, and as risen, i.e. with holiness, according to its character in resurrection, before God as children. Therefore it was that, if the Apostle had known Christ

Jesus after the flesh, henceforth he knew Him no more ; for he now knew Him in this character, in resurrection the Head of the new creation—the new family of God—the Second Adam, and so to us the quickening Spirit when our living souls had died in the first Adam in sin. The Head of a new family of men, with whom in the close, the tabernacle of God should be.

The justification of the Church having been first reasoned out by the Spirit, the Apostle turns to this ; first as regards death and resurrection in the 6th of Romans, then as regards the law in the 7th, i.e. first, “nature” or “the flesh,” in se : then the operation of the law on the question into which spiritual understanding and a new will brought the conscience :—and in the 8th takes up the presence of the Spirit in moral operation and witness. Having stated the source of this mighty change and holy liberty, in “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (the breath of life to our souls being *the very same power* in which Christ was raised from the dead, and our partaking in all the consequences of that resurrection. God having done what the law could not do, condemned sin in the flesh, *and that in atonement*, in grace to us), the Apostle proceeds to instruct us what the *power* and the *character* of the Spirit, in this new nature, is.

It is the Spirit of God, as contrasted with *man in the flesh*. It is the Spirit of *Christ* in respect of the form and character of this new man. It is the Spirit of *Him that raised up Christ from the dead* according to the power and energy in which it works *full deliverance in result*. Thus its moral character and operation were unfolded as a spirit of power, and deliverance, and character IN us ; in answer to the question, who shall deliver us from the body of this death ?

But there was also the doctrine of the relationship which we have in the new man, as well as moral character and power. As many as were led of it are sons. Sons, and therefore, heirs ; “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. If so be we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together.” And here the groaning is not on the question of what we are *as to God's judgment of evil in us*, a spirit of bondage to fear ; but, our own judgment of it

in its effects, because we *are sons*, and are *certain* that we are, and *know* that we are heirs. We take up the groans of the whole creation, of which we are part in the body, and express it to God in sympathy in the sense of the blessedness of the glorious inheritance, when the creation shall be delivered; suffering *with Christ* in the present sorrow by His Spirit, and express it by the Spirit to God, even though we have no intelligence to ask for any actual remedy. In this then, the Spirit has a double office: the witness with us, for joy, that we are sons and heirs, and helping us in the infirmities lying on creation and on us in the body; and when He, thus acting in us in sympathy, thus groans in us expressive of the sorrow, He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, *because He maketh intercession for us ACCORDING to God.*

The Galatians with less fulness teach us the same truth, securing the foundation on which it rests. But we see, thus far, the sons joint-heirs—joint-heirs with Christ, and the Spirit at once the seal of the redemption which is accomplished, by which they have it; the witness of sonship in them, and the earnest of the inheritance which they have with Christ: known by the revelation of the glory of Christ and the things to come, connected with His person. Thus we have it expressed in the 1st of Ephesians 9—14.

There is another very interesting passage as instruction upon this point (2 Cor. i. 20, 22)—“All the promises” belonging to Christ as heir—“All God’s promises are in Christ, yea, and in Christ, Amen, unto the glory of God *by us.*” The promises are of God, and in Christ. God then establishes us in Christ, and then for our knowledge, assurance, and enjoyment, we are anointed, sealed, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. Knowing it by the anointing, as in John ii. 20—sealed, as in Ephes. i. and having the earnest in the heart so as to anticipatively enjoy the blessing known and for which we are sealed.

Having spoken of this passage in a previous paper, I do not enlarge on it; but there is another collateral passage which I would not pass by, relative to the knowledge, communication, and reception of the revelations of the Spirit; showing our entire dependance

on that blessed Comforter and power of God for all knowledge of these things. (1 Cor. ii.) "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Man's heart never conceived them, but God revealed them to His saints by His Spirit. They had received the Spirit which was of God, that they might know. They spoke by words which the Holy Ghost taught: communicating as I should translate it, spiritual things by a spiritual medium. And they were moreover, spiritually discerned. They were known, communicated, and received by the Spirit.

Having noticed these collateral passages, I pass on to the point of corporate operation of the Holy Ghost in the union of the body. The testimony to the Lordship of Christ and that character of His exaltation, we have already seen in the addresses of Peter to Israel. This of course is never lost, but we have seen the additional truth of the identity of Christ and the Church—the very basis of Paul's special ministry, brought out in the question to the Apostle, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" just as the sin of the first Adam was brought out by the terrible question, "Where art thou?" It is upon this that the grace of the ministration of the Spirit now, was to have its course. The Spirit had borne witness by certain disciples, and the Church thereby had been gathered. The Church now was to be the vehicle for the testimony and witness of the Spirit corporately. This position of the Church began by scattering the assembly of Jerusalem, and (the Apostle having been called, and enabled by the Lord, and preached at once, and laid by in a measure for a time) recommencing the work from Antioch, as a centre whence he was separated to the work to which Christ had called him, not by the appointment of Jesus after the flesh, but by the authoritative direction of the Holy Ghost in the disciples. St. Paul had no part in the testimony mentioned in John xv. 27. It was only the Holy Ghost's testimony, and seeing the glory of Christ, and hearing the words of His mouth. Hence it was not a testimony to the Lordship of Him whose companions they had been on earth; that God had exalted Him to be Lord and Christ there, but start-

ing from the point of His Lordship seen in glory, a testimony to the union of the whole body, Jew, Gentile, with Him so exalted to God's right hand. Hence the operations of the Holy Ghost—always following the testimony concerning Christ, while still declaring and subservient to His Lordship, wrought in the unity of the whole body, according to the operations of God.

Hence we read in 1 Cor. xii.—“Concerning spiritual things, I would not have you ignorant, brethren. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led, wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say Lord Jesus—or, call Jesus, Lord—but by the Holy Ghost.” That is, whoever does so (in Spirit that is), does so by the Holy Ghost. For it was the *Holy Spirit* that testified that Jesus was Lord, not an *evil* one.

But there were along with this testimony, diversities of gifts, but not many spirits, but the same spirit. And there were differences of administrations—ministries, but the same Lord; not lords many, Jesus was Lord. And diversities of operations, but the same God, for the operations were truly divine, that worketh all in all. There were not gods many. All were the operation of the one true God.

It is not the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which are here presented to us, though from other scriptures we may know its connection with it; but God, the Lord, and the Spirit, working in the Church upon earth. Though lest we should suppose He was not God, it is afterwards said, “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

We have seen then these two points—the Lordship of Christ and that taking its place in the services of which the gifts were the power; and the unity of the whole body in which, as by its members, the Spirit wrought according to their diverse appropriate

functions. The operation being all the while God's operation, but ordered according to the functions of the body ; and the purport of the whole. For the members' service was for the good of the whole body.

From this I think we distinctly learn the order of the ministration of the Holy Ghost as thus presented to us. What additional instruction the word may give us we shall afterwards see.

First—there was the primary testimony that Christ was Lord, more correctly that Jesus was Lord. That formed the great basis truth. All was subservient to this. The Holy Ghost as in operation, though supreme to distribute, was subservient to this. This was the great testimony He blessedly rendered.*

He bore it in gracious faithfulness now, as hereafter every tongue shall be obliged to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Upon this hangs consequently the responsibility of every gift. We are servants by them to the Lord Christ. "I serve the Lord Christ." "Such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies." "Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ," is the well known glory and faithfulness of the Apostle. It was to "the Lord, the righteous judge" he looked. Thrice he besought "the Lord" that his thorn in the flesh might be removed. "He that is called being free is Christ's servant."

These gifts of the Spirit then set them in ministries to the Lord in which they were individually responsible for their exercise to Christ—talents with which they were to trade ; but then they were responsible to exercise them within the body according to the order in which they were set in the body, and in subjection to the mind of the Lord the head of the body. This preserved entire *the full personal responsibility and liberty*, for no one was Lord but one, not even an Apostle, and yet mutual dependance healthful for all, even for an Apostle, for the Lord's authority was great over the foot or over the hand, and as exclusive as over the Apostle himself. Nor would an Apostle, having the flesh to contend with,

* It was this, and not touching the question of His divinity, makes the Apostle say "to us there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ."

keep his place unless this were carefully held. Though by pre-eminence of gift he might guide, lead, direct, and by revelation from the Lord give a commandment to the Church, he could not in the smallest degree or tittle touch the direct responsibility of the least member to Christ the Lord Himself; he would have been setting up himself as the vine, had he done so. They were alone as helpers of joy, and that by authority entrusted for edification, but never as lords over their faith. Authority however, as a gift from the Lord, increased responsibility; but of this more hereafter. If he, the Apostle, counselled any member by the Spirit, woe be to that member if his counsel was despised. Of course if he revealed a commandment of the Lord, the believer became immediately responsible to the Lord for obedience to that commandment. And again, though he specially and the whole Church might judge by the Spirit, still it was always with this remembrance—"another man's servant."

But it must be distinctly remembered, this was not for private right or title in the individual. I recognize no such thing as right in an individual. Right, in the human sense of it, is some title to exercise his own will in man, unimpeded by the interference of another. NOW CHRISTIANITY ENTIRELY SETS THIS ASIDE. It may be very speciously maintained by dwelling only on the latter half of the definition, because grace does give a title against the interference of another; *but that title is in and by virtue of responsibility to God.* No man has a right to interfere with any thing in which I am responsible to God. But the light which christianity sheds on this, is not my meddling with the will of that other, but my obligation to do the will of God at all cost,—“We ought to obey God rather than man.” And having first done the will of God, then to suffer it; for it is better if the will of God be so, to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing; for Christ in the best sense, has once suffered for sins. If we do well, suffer for it, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. But this, right in the individual, in the human and common force of it, christianity cuts up by the root, because it pronounces the human will to be all wrong, and the assertion of its exercise to be *the principle of*

sin, so that we “*are sanctified unto obedience*” as to “the blood of sprinkling.” Thus the idea of all having a *right* to speak in the Church, could never enter into the Christian mind. It has no place in the scheme of christianity, which begins its moral existence by the breaking down the human will as evil. The Holy Spirit has the right, which He exercises sovereignly, of distributing “to every man severally *as He will*,” and hence responsibility subject to the purpose of the Holy Ghost in all. For the *manifestation* of the Spirit, which gifts are (they are not the Holy Spirit itself), is given to every man to profit withal. There is purpose in it, to which the power of the Holy Ghost is to direct the use of these gifts, for the good of all, as this epistle clearly shews us. The gifts to men, or in men (both are used—one referred to Christ, the other to those to whom Christ gives them), are not the Holy Ghost, though they be by the Holy Ghost, and hence are guided by the mind of Christ, for the accomplishment of which they are given. Thus to display the gift of tongues, or use it where there were none to whom they applied, is described by the Apostle to be the folly of childhood; they were given to profit withal. So also the spirits of the prophets, the highest desirable gift—were subject to the prophets. The not seeing this, and confounding these gifts in men with the Holy Ghost, has led to much and mischievous confusion. And it has been thought impossible that they should ever be restrained, or subjected to even apostolic rule—turning, as every departure from scripture does, to the licence of the flesh and will, or the even worse delusion of the enemy.

The Holy Ghost Himself dwelling in the individual, and above all in the unity of the body, guides, directs, and orders by the word, the use of these manifestations of His power in man, as He does every thing else. I repeat, by the word; just as the conduct of one *led of the Spirit* is ordered and guided by the word, the power of the same Spirit directing and applying it. It is this that maintains *responsibility* whatever the power given, and by that unity; through the Holy Ghost in the whole body (for power being given, its exercise would be by man’s will else), or it would not be in man at all. This was true in the highest instance, where

error or failure could not be. When the Son of God in infinite grace and counsel of wisdom became a man, it was not to destroy responsibility, but to fulfil it all in absolute abstract perfection. "He became obedient." Even in working miracles He would not depart from this. He would not make stones bread, without God His Father's will. It was precisely to this the enemy Satan sought to lead Him, what might be called the innocent exercise of will and using His power for this. But He was perfect, and the enemy confounded. He was content to do God's will. He kept His commandments and abode in His love. And if therein, He, a divine person, could show that He loved the Father, and in His suffering there was *a therefore* that the Father loved Him; still He blessedly adds, and this was His perfectness, "And as my Father hath given me commandment so I do." And thus closed His blessed and perfect career, with this true word to the Father, "I have glorified thee on the earth : I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Blessed Jesus ! justly art thou glorified in all things,—Our Lord.

This difference now however exists, that Jesus having taken the place of power—"all power given to Him in heaven and in earth"—His place is not merely the manifestation of perfect obedience in self humiliation, but the manifestation of exaltation and power. But this, while it has altered the position of Jesus, and the place of His disciples' as vessels of this power, in the testimony of the Spirit of God ; has in no way touched the principle of their responsibility, though its sphere may be enlarged by it ; nor let in the principle of human will in the smallest degree, because *power* was increased ; but merely introduced the principle of that responsibility into the exercise of the power entrusted, whatever it may be ; and connected it with the Lordship of Christ, whose servants they are in it, that they may minister it to His glory, in love and testimony to the world, and in the edification of the Church. And the word affords the rule for the order of its exercise, as of all things else.

It is a *part of this responsibility and reference to the head of the Church, not to "quench the Spirit," nor "despise prophe-*

syings," be they the simplest or the humblest in the Church as to mere circumstance, if God be pleased to use them.

The title and the right is God's, proving it divine, and therefore good: the responsibility man's, and the gift only the occasion of responsibility in that; the Lord Christ being He under whom it was exercised; and by this responsibility necessarily independent of all others, for no man could serve two masters; but, within the Church, exercised according to the mind of Christ, of which the Spirit is the *power* in the Church, and the written word the guide and standard. It is in this last point the scriptures hold a place, which in many respects the Apostles held, that is—of revealing the mind of Christ. They cannot have in themselves the place of power, but they do contain the wisdom of God, and as to this in the New Testament, the mind of Christ. We must distinguish this point of revelation. The other points of apostolic office may be spoken of hereafter.

There are some other points to be noted in this 12th chapter of Corinthians.

Having spoken of the Spirit, and Lord, and God:—the two first showing the relationship and power of this service, the last making us understand that it was withal truly God's power and working; and then in the same language (that the divinity of the Spirit might be recognized, though in a certain sense taking the place of service, as acting in the subject instruments of Christ's Lordship) ascribed the power and working to the Spirit: having thus cleared this point, the Apostle takes up the subject in connection with the unity of the body. And here Christ, at least the body of Christ, becomes the subject of divine operations; for we are by one Spirit baptized into one body—thus is Christ. And the whole is spoken of as the subject of divine counsel; Christ only being the Head, and we in mutual dependence; but the whole sphere is looked at as a subject scene of operations. It is not merely now, the Holy Ghost bearing witness by which the world was convicted, or individuals convinced, and the Church gathered; but "now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him."—"God hath tempered

the body together.”—“God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles,” &c. They were “the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

We have thus the operations of the Spirit of God formally established in the corporate unity of a body, in the various gifts of the different members, of which the Spirit itself formed the unity and the power; subservient to the Lordship of Christ, and therefore directing the Church by His mind, whether for its edification in love or testimony to the world. God setting the members of this body as it pleased Him.

The controul of the Spirit, as communicating the mind of Christ, over the exercise of these entrusted powers is next brought forward—after the superior excellence of love to any gift. Love was, and witnessed, God, and was the bond of perfectness in essential blessing. These, the testimony of power; prevailing indeed over evil, but still ministered in the midst of it, and not to continue therefore, but to pass away or cease. The use of these *for the purpose of love* thus became the true test of grace and the mind of Christ, in using them; otherwise turned into personal display. The edifying of the Church was to be the rule of all used there, and no individual title, for they were to follow the mind of Christ.

This also gave rise to a distinction in the gifts, of those suited to the world, and those meant for the use of the Church. Thus “tongues” were a sign to unbelievers, not to the Church; this was their use. One gifted with tongues was not therefore to speak in them unless there were an interpreter, for the Church would not be edified; it would, by the subject matter, if there were an interpreter. So “signs,” or “miracles,” confirmed the word.

The gift of tongues was peculiar, and characteristically evangelical: overreaching the consequences of man’s sin and judgment in Babel, and setting aside manifestly the confinement to the Jewish people; constituting an active ministry towards those without, which was distinctively essential to christianity. It thus became, distinctively, manifestation of the Holy Ghost on the Jews

and on the Gentiles (the 120 and Cornelius), as sent down the witness of this grace and glory and Headship in Christ. Miracles had been wrought among the Jews; even there however it was among those departed from the covenant, or, when at first the national system was established. In Judea the prophets recalled to the law and let their predictions verify themselves or be owned by faith. Their summons to the law required no verification; its obligation was acknowledged. But tongues were properly applicable to the Christian dispensation as acting on the world, and therefore became the characteristic manifestation of the Holy Ghost sent down as acting before the world that needed this.

“Tongues, miracles, healings” there might be exercised by the Church, but they were exercised by it as the witness of the beneficence of Christ’s Lordship to the world, and not towards the Church already alive in heaven by the deeper quickening power of that beneficence. This was its general character. The proper character of the Church’s blessing was edification.—“Let all things be done unto edifying;” or, as expressed in the Ephesians, “the edifying itself in love.”

This appears to me the true distinction. Not that usually made between miraculous, and not miraculous; as if God gave no positive gifts to the Church now, and as if miraculous were synonymous with supernatural; and that the Holy Ghost had ceased to act, and thus human powers are practically referred to as the sole agent in the Church. If miraculous be spoken of as meaning those which were signs to the world, I have no objection, provided the direct power and gift of the Holy Ghost be not set aside, in those which are not for signs but for edifying: otherwise great dishonour is done to the Holy Ghost.

There is this distinction given us in these gifts by the fact of some being for signs, some for edifying: the former are to act on the senses and mind as applicable to those without; the latter on conscience and spiritual understanding, and consequently the subject of intelligent judgment and reception. This remark is of importance. The Spirit of God acting in the force of responsibility in us is always paramount to any means of power and

gift—even if real; for, thereby the authority of God is owned and set up over ourselves. The true use of gift in the Church is just to enforce this; wherever it departs from this it is clearly false in principle. “I must judge them which say they are Apostles”—“let the rest judge”—“the spiritual man judgeth all things.” Self-will which refuses the enforcement of responsibility by gift; or which would use gift to exalt itself, instead of enforcing it; are alike the flesh set on by Satan to its own lawlessness. There is no remedy for this but grace, and the power and presence of the Holy Ghost condemning and mortifying the flesh in each. The want of this is recognized as possible, and to come, by the Apostle:—“the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”

I should also remark that the Holy Ghost teaches us here that, while He distributes to every man severally as He will and uses whom He will;—so that all openness is to be maintained for His operations;—there are distinct permanent gifts whereby men are constituted teachers, prophets or the like: though their teaching and prophesying may still be in constant dependance on the action of the Holy Ghost Himself. These directions in fine as to tongues and interpretations—the number and manner of prophets speaking—women speaking—shew the distinct controul of the Holy Ghost Himself (thus in its order expressed in the word) over the exercise of all entrusted gifts *in the Church* where the Holy Ghost habitually dwelt and guided for the end of edifying all. Liberty and guidance is characteristic of christianity; and is distinctive of *power making willing* and the wisdom of *God for us*.

This testimony to the world and edifying of the Church involves also another consideration besides the signs wrought by the Church before the world (a principle of service a little modified by the position of the Apostle Paul),—that the operation of the Spirit in gift, though working in and by, precedes the formation of the Church.

Gift of evangelizing, though it be in a member of the Church, yet is clearly antecedent in its own character to the existence of the Church, for it is by that the Church is gathered.

The highest form of this was shewn in the Apostles at Jerusalem, as we have already seen. And though the Evangelist may go forth from the Church and be aided by the Church, it is a gift exercised not towards the Church or to its conscience, and of which the Church therefore cannot be properly cognizable. It must be exercised on the possession of the gift, and bears its evidence in its fruits by acting in the primary work of God's spirit on the conscience of the unconverted ; judging it not judged by it ; coming in the grace and truth of Jesus to it. Other gifts—as prophesying—may convince others in conscience, but its exercise is *in the Church*, and the Church having a conscience taught of the Spirit is bound—it may be through other prophets efficiently, but, is bound to judge ; but the Evangelist is to the world, and there is no competency of judgment, though there may be holy counsel and advice as from the Lord. As aiding in grace, temporally, the Church, or rather each individual in it, be it a woman, is bound to have no fellowship with doctrine not according to the word ; and the Church would take all needful notice of this, and not be partakers of this sin. The same would apply as to any evil practice ; but the exercise of the gift, as such, in its nature, though it flow from the midst of the Church, goes forth *out of it* and not referring to its conscience does not raise a throne of judgment *there*, which responsibility to God does, in what is addressed to the Church. The Evangelist is responsible to God for the exercise of his gift towards those without, and becomes *manifest in their consciences* in the sight of God.

The highest form of this was the Apostles' on the day of Pentecost. It was a direct authoritative address as the Apostles of Jesus, appointed by Him and ratified in power by the Holy Ghost to the world ; thereby forming the Church, and becoming in a certain subordinate sense, heads of the Church to guide, regulate, and order, and direct those whom they so gathered, which gave the subsequent character to apostolic office.

Thus *the Evangelist* becomes in a certain sense independent of the Church, though *the man* be always subject to it. And though the ministry of evangelization be in the Church, yet the Church is

not properly missionary, nor the manager of missions. It is "a city set on a hill," founded by missions from God.

The sense of this position of the Evangelist, I believe to be most healthful to the Church, keeping it in its place and from assuming the place of God, as if it sent. It is gathered and does not send. God sends; though in love those whom He sends may go forth from its bosom. This was clear in the first Apostles. "As my Father hath sent me so send I you," was the Lord's word to them.

But this was true of ministers of this character, inferior in rank to the Apostles, and of the whole body when under this character, a character assumedly it, as "*scattered*" not "*gathered*" as "*going*" not "*sending*." They that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word, the hand of the Lord was with them and many believed. Nay before this, Stephen (of whom we may perhaps say—he had gotten to himself a good degree and great boldness in Christ Jesus) full of the Holy Ghost was mighty in the word. Philip in like manner was blessed in Samaria, which when the Apostles heard, they sent Peter and John to confirm the work; but the work was done before even they heard of it.

This is the character then attached to evangelizing in the word; the weakening of it in individual energy, will always weaken that, and the Church too; for God will be independent of man, though he cannot be of Him nor of his neighbour in love.

I said this was a little modified in St. Paul, yet withal clearly sustained in principle. But he went out as one born out of due time, after the body was formed in a certain sense. This therefore was recognised, not in sending him, but in his going forth from it and returning to it whence he had been commended to the grace of God.

The positive independence of his mission, he is most careful to assert. "It was not of man, nor by man." Immediately Christ was revealed in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles he conferred not with flesh and blood, but straightway preached Him in the synagogues. Thus the character of this ministry was fully maintained.

But after a lapse of time, Paul comes from Tarsus brought to Antioch, and there for a year assembles himself with the Christian congregation, and teaches much people, and then "the Holy Ghost," certain prophets being there, while they fasted and prayed, "said, separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them." Thus while directly sent of the Holy Ghost they went in obedience to Him, not to the Church, they went from the bosom of the Church commended of them to the grace of God for the work whereunto He had called them and returned to the bosom of the Church—not returning any intermediate reports indeed, as responsible to them, for the true apostolic office would thereby have been detracted from ; but—communicating for the joy of all what God had done through them. Thus, though it was not a gift exercised in ministry in the Church, its union with the Church was maintained, and the comfort of all sustained therein. The Apostle became authoritatively sent amongst those whom he had himself thus gathered—Apostle of the Gentiles.

I have said thus much of evangelization, because though not a sign to the world, but a ministry flowing in the Church, it was still towards the world, and came in a special place in distinction of gifts as for the world or the Church. It was, if I may so call it, a moral gift—i.e. a gift acting on conscience, but not as within, but as of the natural man. It is not actually mentioned in the gifts God has set in the Church. It is amongst the gifts which Christ conferred on ascending up on high for profit and the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ—as are pastors also—for the special subject of that epistle (Ephesians) is the love towards and blessedness of the body in its union with Christ and consequent unity. Having completely redeemed it and filled all things, it being to be His fulness, He ministers from on high the gifts necessary for its advancement in grace, security from being deceived and led astray, and its self-edifying till it grow up into Him. This was not what the Church was to the world in display of Him, but what it was to and for Himself ; though in *that* the evangelizing minister of His love, as a help-meet for Him in grace.

This is the real difference of this epistle and the Corinthians. There the Spirit is looked at as present, and operating in the body generally, in the power of God—"as God hath set in the Church"—witness of and subservient to the Lordship of Christ, and therefore including that in which it was the witness of this to the world; and therefore in exercise dependant in many respects on the competency of the Church by its state to be sent a witness, or the wisdom of God in so using it. Here, in the Ephesians, the state of the Church is not adverted to. It is not its internal administration that is the subject, but Christ's own love to His own body, His spouse—one He cherished and nourished as His own flesh, and thus cherished and nourished for Himself. Hence we have Christ—who loved the Church—ascending up on high and filling all things, giving the gifts; and it is said—not the Spirit works as He will in power, but (while the same unity is spoken of, though more of blessing than of membership) "to everyone is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." This then, is not the witness of the power of God above the flesh and its ruin, and the Lordship of Christ, but of the love of Christ and the ministration of that; and had therefore a more permanent character, for Christ's love to the Church is permanent; not resting on the suitability of the medium to display power, but on the Church's own need of that gracious and tender love. This therefore we may reckon upon. I do not say that our faults may not hinder the manifestation of the love in plain and happy favour. Surely they may—still it is always in exercise.

Perhaps it may be said that the evil state of the Corinthian Church, shews it was not a ministration of gift dependant *in any way on that state*; for these, so evil, came "behind in no gift."

It shews indeed, that our patient God does not withdraw the honour of His covenant at once on short coming; but the principle is exactly shown by it. The Church still in unity, though having failed in practice, is corrected by the Apostle in all points; showing the importance of the apostolic energy which still sustained it, that it was not mere primary position; but while it held its place, though falling into evil, it could be restored by that and all go

right. Satan not be allowed to get advantage after all. But still this was just the evidence, that the state and administration of the Church was in question, not the self-moved tender love of Christ to it, caring for it as His spouse ; but it as the responsible witness of His glory, not the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. In Ephesians it is the blessed and holy privilege of grace, not the condition of the Church itself which is in question as the ground and theatre of the display of Christ towards the world. It is what Christ is towards the Church, not what the Church is for Him, or, what God has set it in its Head and body towards the world around it. It is “till *we all* come.” Hence as the special personal care and love of Christ for the Church it is not the Comforter whom the Father will send in my name—nor, whom I will send unto you from the Father—nor even members which God has set in the body subservient to the Lordship of Christ—but gifts which He, ascending up on high, has given, on leading the adverse powers captive. He who fills all things, has given these the tokens of the nearness of His love. “That he might fill all things,” “and He gave.”

This then is the portion of the Church in Christ's love as caring for it, in the midst of His filling all things—as His spouse, the place of His special love. That which is given to the Church not for His display of Lordship to the world, but the link of the Church as associated with Him, and to lift it up into heavenly places, and to form it in spirit into all His fulness ; preserving it from being frittered away in mind into various and strange doctrines, and ministering to its direct growth into the heavenly character and fulness of Christ. This is the character of these gifts here—the link and association with the heavenly fulness of Christ.

The Church is “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” But He is the head of the body also as exalted over all things *to it*. The anointed one is set in this place that He may by immediate communion and gift to it, according to this anointing, associate it through the ministration of these gifts as His body into all this fulness. It is here, not merely the headship over all things *to it*, but the entrance into the *understanding* of His fulness as filling all

things, as descended into death and ascended on high above all ; and by the communication of the gifts as the anointed—the “Christ”—*then* entering into intelligently and spiritually as—though subordinates, yet—really associated and brought up into this fulness. This is the portion of the Church. It is a step above and more intimate than the witness, or even partaking of Lordship ; though the sphere in which *that* is held. For indeed this fulness in Christ involves Divinity ; though fellowship with it be communicated by the anointed man, or at least, the ministration of that fulness, in gift.

He “filleth all in all,” and the Church is “His fulness ;” but then this is spoken of one whom God—“the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,”—has raised from the dead, and this is just the connection of the Church with it. He is in the Father, necessarily, therefore intrinsically Divine. We are in Him, and He in us. All the fulness was pleased to dwell in Him—as afterwards stated as to the fact—“In Him *dwelleth* all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ;” and we are *πεπληρωμενοι* in Him.

But in the passage immediately preceding the one we are upon in Ephesians, this is pursued more directly as to power in us ; because the Colossians treats more of the fulness of the Head for the Church ; this of the Church as the fulness of Him that filleth all in all—the corporate fulness as His body of Him that is head over and fills all things. We read of “strengthened with might by His Spirit in our inner man—able to comprehend, the length and breadth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ;—that we may be filled with (*εις*) all the fulness of God.” Thus the Holy Ghost becomes in us now the power and strength of this fulness. The second chapter had introduced—after stating access to the Father by the Spirit through Jesus for both Jew and Gentile—the additional truth that they were “builted together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” This ground having been parenthetically unfolded in its fulness, in the third the Apostle resumes the thread of the second.

We “strengthened with might by His Spirit,” “that Christ may dwell in our hearts,” thus “rooted and grounded in love” “able

to comprehend *with all saints*" the plenitude of blessedness and glory in divine counsel and fulness—to know the love of Christ that we might be filled with the fulness. Thus we find it *in Christ*; known by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Thus this fulness of God *is known, even in Christ*, for so are we brought into it. And this is by power working in us, that we may enter into that into which we are brought. "Now unto Him that worketh in us"—concludes the Apostle—"be glory in the Church!" Now all this blessed fulness—of which the unity of the Church united to Christ is the sphere and scene of development, that is, in understanding and fellowship—in the love of Christ her head is *ministered*, to the growing up of the body, by these gifts of Christ. They are the ministrations of Christ the head in the body. It is *His* gift—the edifying of *His* body—that they might grow up into *Christ's* fulness of which we have seen the character just now. This gives us the character of the gifts. Here there is actually no mention of the Spirit, though doubtless the Spirit was the *medium of power*,* but they are given by Christ, who fills all things, that He may introduce the Church into His fulness: the Church in which the Spirit dwells. His fulness being the fulness of God—in Him all fulness dwelling—and He filling all in all and the Church His fulness. It is then here, Christ according to this blessed fulness giving in love to His members, for the growing up to Him in all things who is the Head, till we all come to the measure of the fulness of Christ: not the display of His Lordship to the world, the Spirit acting as subservient to that display; divinely distributing; "God working all in all." It is—Christ giving to the Church to minister on the ground of union, entrance into communion with His fulness!

I would now turn a little to the character of the gifts here spoken of; we shall see they are associated with this special character of giving to the Church, not witnessing by the Church.

* See chap. ii. 22, iii. 16. But the 3rd chapter has brought it into union with Divine fulness, and that as we in Christ so Christ dwelling in us, and therefore pursues it here as of Christ ministering of and in the power of that fulness, to the bringing up of the Church into it in actual joy security and fellowship by these ministrations of it.

Having urged upon them in individual lowliness, which the sense of the excellency of the body would induce—a body which had its existence in the unity of the Spirit, and therefore in the suppression of the flesh,—to endeavour to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as the sphere in which the gifts had then place and wrought; the Apostle proceeds to declare what gifts Christ gave (as gifts, nothing righteously to exalt); given to man on *His* exaltation. That exaltation being of Him that first descended and that into the lower parts of the earth, as now far above all heavens so that He filled all things, captivity being led captive—that is, the powers of darkness having the Church captive were now led captive themselves, so that Christ could freely communicate to the Church so delivered communion with His fulness, who in this act displayed how He filled all things, and accordingly gave these gifts for this purpose—Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Hence, I would now notice, it is to be remarked that all gifts of sign to men as such are entirely omitted, all that dealt with nature, and all even that merely, dealt with the flesh in the Church; those only are mentioned initiative, and that edified in the Church.—Thus miracles, tongues, healings, and helps, and governments are omitted, Apostles and evangelists, prophets pastors, and teachers are introduced.

As to Apostles, what has been observed will partly lead us to some distinction in this office. Primarily they are no part of the body properly speaking—they gather it. It is built on them. Thus the twelve were sent as Jesus was sent of the Father. Paul was sent of the Lord directly. But in another character they had a place in it, in the continual exercise of their functions. In the former character they stood alone, save in one particular. But as authoritative regulators of the Church by revelation, they had a peculiar and definite place. In the one particular of revelation of the mind and will of Christ and of God, the prophets might be associated with them, but these had no authority delegated of the Lord in their office as sent forth. The holy beneficence of this arrangement I think is evident. Thus while the Church was regulated and ordered responsibly and authoritatively by an Apostle, yet

they had to say, “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets.” In this sense of revelation as laying down the foundation, their work is complete and fulfilled. The word of God is written for us. The fruits of their authoritative regulation, was left as every dispensation in the responsibility of man, and men have entirely failed. But the revelation of the will of God is complete, and is there for us to refer to by the Spirit, according to the light of the word in our present condition, not by imitation but by obedience ; hence tradition disappears, for at best that is imitation not obedience, a very important distinction as will soon be proved in its application.

But moreover it is clear to me that in a subordinate sense, Apostles and prophets had a place beside this. That the Apostles expected no continuance of their functions is clear, for the Apostle Paul declares the evil that would come in after his decease, and commends them to God and the word of His grace, and Peter says he will take care that they have the things in remembrance ; and indeed one familiar with the New Testament will see that the character of the Church’s responsibility, is founded on the departure of direct apostolic authoritative care. The Church could not leave it to them as the complete competent authority, who had communicated the Lord’s will, and before whose departure the Lord began to act in judgment, if equally authorized communicators were constantly with the same authority present in the Church ; the casting a dispensation on responsibility of a given deposit would have been entirely set aside, that is the whole principle of God’s dealing to the end. And the assumptions clearly taken up by the Apostles falsified, and the title set aside by a constant succession of equally authoritative communications. For the principle of the office of which we now speak, is the authoritative revelation of the will of Christ.

We find then that in one sense, apostolic ministry precedes the Church. The Church being gathered by it. Its character being then gathering by the authoritative revelation of the will of Christ, as the testimony to Christ in the power of the Spirit, whether by themselves or others, draws and quickens souls. Under this Evangelists came, another testimony of their gift being of God, and

that He could in His sovereignty communicate important parts of it to others. But this form of apostolic service found its place also in the Church, when the participated Evangelist's gift did not, i.e. the regulating authoritatively the gathered according to that revealed will.

But as has been elsewhere stated, a new principle was introduced in the apostolate of Paul, on the dispersion of the order of the Church at Jerusalem, *individual agency* according to the energy of the Spirit, according to its measure. The operation proving itself and its own efficacy. "The signs of an Apostle were wrought in me." "Make full proof of thy ministry;" "let no man despise thee." Hence though not in the authoritative revelation of the will of God, yet in a subordinate sense, it seems to me that the gift of Apostle and prophet is not passed away. Barnabas was an Apostle. Junius and Andronicus were of note among the Apostles; and it was praise to a Church that they had tried certain whether they were Apostles and they were not, but liars. Doubtless these pretenders set up for the highest form of apostolate. But the Church could not have been commended for trying them, if there had been question only of the twelve and Paul. In truth, the word Apostle though now of definite force, has it not properly, it just amounts to one sent, a missionary. The messenger of the Church is called "your Apostle" in the original. That which seems to designate the character of Apostle, is the being directly sent of Christ, raised up to act in His own personal responsibility to Christ. Not merely a gift exercised on such or such occasion subject to Church rules, nor the going forth with good tidings to sinners. But one as sent by Christ acting from Him on his own responsibility to Christ, having a given errand and sphere in which to exercise his commission. In this sense, while the authoritative primary revelation of God's will gathering and regulating the Church, has clearly closed in the scriptural record to apostolic ministry, I do not see but that apostolic service may still subsist and probably has been exercised, though the name may not have been attached; men raised up and sent by God for a certain mission, to effect a certain result in the Church or on sin-

ners ; though with no fresh revelation (but with a special energy in which to fulfil it, beyond the bounds of mere circumscribed gift as members within), but special in its relation to Christ. The faithfulness of its accomplishment, the mixing of other things with it, or the failure in clear following in particular instances, does not it seems to me touch this question. In the same way prophets, who were associated with Apostles as the foundation because they revealed the mind of God, may, it appears to me, in a subordinate sense, be believed to exist. It is not that they now reveal fresh truth not contained in the word, or the foundation would not be completely laid. This I hold never can be touched, but that there may be those who not merely teach and explain ordinary and profitable doctrine and truths, guide by the Spirit into present truth, but who by a special energy of the Spirit can unfold and communicate the mind of Christ to the Church, where it is ignorant of it. Though that mind be treasured up in the scripture, can bring truths hidden previously from the knowledge of the Church, in the power of testimony of the Spirit of God, to bear on the present circumstances of the Church and future prospects of the world ; shewing the things to come, only that those things are all actually treasured up in scripture, but can give them present application and force according to the mind, intention, and power of God ; and thus be *practically* a prophet, though these be no new facts revealed, but all are really in the word already : and thus be a direct blessing and gift of Christ to the Church for its emergency and need, though the word be strictly adhered to, but without which the Church would not have had the power of that word. This reference to that word I hold to be the essence of the Church's safety, accompanied by acknowledgement of and dependence on the Spirit of God, the Comforter. The plain written word, that of which it could be said, including now of course the New Testament, that *from a child* (scorned by some as knowing it in the flesh), thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. No tradition can in the smallest degree take the place of this, it is at best the certifying of men's minds as to the

certainty of certain points. But see what the Apostle refers to in assuring them that they should see his face no more ; clear evidence as we have seen he thought of no Apostle or successor to supply his place. “ I commend you to God ” says the blessed witness of Christ—that is the first great point, it must always, and in a special manner now he was gone, be found in Him directly ;—“ and the word of His grace, which is able *to build you up*.” This was exactly what was needed, let a teacher unfold, a pastor graciously guide by, or a prophet apply in power this word. This was what was able to build up and give an inheritance. Now no tradition however guiding is a word of God’s grace. It may direct the forms of man,—it may order the rules of the Church,—it might even record a form of correct doctrine. It is not the word of His grace “ *able to build up*.” This makes, I trust, this point, and the sense in which there may be in a subordinate and inferior sense, Apostles, and, in a nearer sense to their original character, prophets, now clear. Revelation of new and unknown, unrevealed truths being quite excluded ; prophets as expressing the mind of God could speak, and did to exhortation and edification and comfort in thus applying the mind of God to the saints. So did the prophets of highest character of old.

These subordinate parts of the gift we see again participated by others, and diffused in the Church that unity and deference for all might be maintained. He that exhorted was to wait on exhortation—and so one that taught, not necessarily a pastor, was to wait on teaching—using his talent.

These might in a certain sense—that is, apostolic and prophetic ministry—be called extraordinary, coming on special occasions, and with special objects into the Church ; though always witness of the goodness of God and for the glory of Christ, Evangelists were of another character ; the natural and constant testimony to sinners of the grace that was revealed in the good news of God in what we call the gospel. Any saint had to tell it, but there were those specially gifted to proclaim the glad tidings. Timothy is exhorted to do this in the midst of his care of the Church for the Apostle. It is always in such care healthful and a

good sign that we labour in the scene of the grace of Christ. Generally an evil sign when we do not. None can so deeply understand the basis of love without it. An Apostle wrought in this work. The bearing on souls is understood by it, specifically *grace* is felt and understood in the heart; we are on the ground our own souls have felt the need of.

The next class, for they are brought together as one—is pastors and teachers. For watching and feeding, and that with the word are most closely united and identified, only pastorship includes guidance in holy wisdom and grace and applying teaching to the state of the saints. We have seen the subordinate part of this distributed by itself—"he that teacheth on teaching"—but the gift here is guiding as pastor; shepherding and feeding the flock, applying the word in wisdom, watching against intruding heresies, building up by the word, guarding and securing from evil, guiding the feet of the saints into straight paths; in a word, the care of the saints. It is not here, as was remarked, government controuling the flesh, but the ministration of grace nourishing and cherishing, guiding and feeding—some were "pastors and teachers."

These were the ministrations. The first two being in their primary sense, the foundation—extraordinary; the last three the ordinary abiding ministrations of the Church to build them up in Christ's known, and thus ministered, fulness. That the body of Christ might be edified, "grow up into Him."

The primary and full object was the perfecting of the saints: their being formed and fashioned according to the pattern of this fulness and into it. But there was a formal and instrumental object as medium of this. As to this in its two-fold character, the preposition is changed, and the article omitted. "*προς τον κ. τ. α.—εις εργον δ. εις. ο. τ. σ. τ. χ.* for ministerial work for edifying the body of Christ." This ministerial work was clearly merely ancillary, and the edifying the body of Christ for the perfect enjoyment of the fulness by the saints.—*προς τον καταρτισμον* is the direct and positive object; the other two were the service and form of blessing in which this object was carried on, and to which therefore these gifts were directed till we all come in the unity of the

faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God to full grown men—to a perfect man—to the measure of the stature in mind and in blessing of the fulness of Christ, of which we have before spoken. That we be no more children, nor blown about by every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, being preserved through these gifts of God.

This leads us to see the blessing and importance of these gifts, definitely committed by Christ as He sees good in grace, for the good and communication of His blessed fulness to the Church; whereby, fed with what is good, it should be preserved and guarded against, hankering after the false trash of deceivers. They are gifts to the Church, not to all, but for all. The development of these in full liberty and openness of ministry is most important. Nor can they be really or rightly developed otherwise. Hence God has commanded—made it a matter of command, and thus guarded the closing of the door by making it a matter of personal responsibility—that “he that exhorteth should wait on exhorting, and he that teacheth on teaching;” and “as every man has received the gift, so minister the same as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” So Judas and Silas being prophets, also themselves exhorted the people much at Antioch.

By this use of every gift in its place, as the Apostle speaks, “the whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,” and “according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love.” Still observe these ministrations are all to the edifying and increase of the body, not to the external testimony of Christ’s Lordship to the world. They are the fulfilling of His love to the Church in ministering to it of, and so building it up into, His fulness, not the verification of the assertion of His Lordship to the world.

The only other reference of importance, that I am aware of, as to distinctness of subject, is in the book of Revelation, which I shall only briefly notice, because its character is quite different. In the three first chapters, the unity of the body ceases to be recognized, and the Spirit is not seen acting in the Church in the

power of this unity, of which Christ is the corporate Head; but Christ is seen in a judicial though priestly character in the midst of the Churches, and the Spirit is a Spirit of address and prophetic warning to them, not of gift in them.—“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.” This might be gift in the Apostle, but this is the character of the address, and hence every individual with an ear is called upon to hear for himself.

After this the Spirit is seen in its fulness in heaven, not in the Church; and is sent forth as the providential agent of the Lamb's power, as the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth, not as the power of communion and gift in the Church at all. Thence it is seen as in the Church, as the bride directing her aspirations and desires after one object, the coming of the Bridegroom. “The Spirit and the bride say come,” and this closes the whole scene.

I have now traced the operations of the Spirit individually as a Spirit of adoption, its highest and most blessed office in us. Then as coming paramourly to convict and guide, as shewn in John, as the Comforter sent.

This is traced after the unity of the body with Christ, is revealed in His corporate operations and character; first as the witness of Lordship in Christ, acting in the members of His body in witness; then as the ministration of His love to His body for its growth up into His fulness; lastly as a prophetic and judicial witness to the Churches themselves, thence forward only in heaven as regards the Church in acting on the earth.

Such are the operations as fully developed of this blessed agent of divine power in us and towards the world. The chief topics, I believe, are noticed, I pretend to nothing more. Those who seek to search Him out, must do so by his own aid in the word itself; and may they while dwelling in it here, as a subject of thought, be led to dwell in and refer to that Holy One Himself in His presence and personal power, as one who is with the Church—the Comforter sent, not merely resting in thoughts about Him, but led by, actuated, directed by Him, and honouring Him as energized by Him in all things. This is specially the Church's need.

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ABSALOM. 2 SAMUEL, xi.—xviii.

“The fool hath said in his heart, no God.”

DAVID is the principal object before the mind of the Spirit of God in both the 1st and 2nd book of Samuel. In the 1st book, we see him brought from obscurity into honour and praise, and there standing, by the good hand of God, in full righteousness amid the persecutions of the wicked. In the 2nd, we see him descending from honour, through sin, into degradation and ruin, but there learning the rich and marvellous ways of the grace of God. It is thus the sorrows of righteousness, or “David the martyr,” that we first see, and the shame of sin, or “David the penitent,” that we next see.

And these things give us different characters in the Psalms. In some of them we hear the breathings of a convicted conscience, a heart exercised in thoughts of transgression, searching after God again, and from thence rising into a blessed sense of grace and salvation. In others we hear the sorrows of conscious righteousness suffering the reproach of the wicked, but knowing all the while its title to fulness of joy and strength in God.

These are the varied exercises known to David’s soul; and in all

this he is the type of God's remnant in the latter time, who will have to pass through the shame and sorrows of afflicted and yet conscious integrity, and the shame also of convicted sin. For that remnant, though righteous in their own person and conduct, will identify themselves with their nation in all its blood-guiltiness,* and look on Him who was pierced, and mourn as though they had pierced Him themselves.

And wonderful, and yet blessed to tell it, David would not have known all that is in God, had he not passed through the sin of the 2nd Samuel, as well as the sorrow of the 1st, for it is sin that manifests God. And what a truth that is! I learn God in the darkness of mine own iniquity. For there was in God a deeper secret than all that His hand revealed in creation. There was the treasure of His bosom. There was grace in God, *love for guilty ones*, and Adam's sin drew that secret out; for "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," at once came forth to tell him that God had something better than all the fruit of His six days' work of creation.

A previous paper in the "CHRISTIAN WITNESS" has given us "Saul," with some general thoughts on the first book of Samuel. I desire grace and wisdom in like manner, now to present "Absalom," with the same general notice of the 2nd book.

The direct history of Absalom may be considered as beginning with 2 Sam. xi. In the previous chapters of this book, David had been advancing into power and the kingdom, approving himself to God and to the conscience of all men. In no scene in which he is called to take a part, does he seek himself, or eye his own advantages. He considers the sorrows and dishonour of others rather than his own gains, and will be serving others though at his own expense. Thus he weeps over Saul and over Abner, (i.—iv.) and it is his first concern, after he comes to the throne, to bring home the ark of God to Israel, and prepare it a worthy habitation; for which end he would be base in his own sight, and

* And as this unguilty remnant thus confess the sin of the nation, because they identify themselves with it, so does Jesus in the Psalms, though without sin, confess it, because he has consented to be "made sin for us."

despise the shame of others. He sought the greatness of God's house, and not his own wealth, and the Lord prospered him whithersoever he went. As David would be only a *servant*, the Lord would make him *honourable and prosperous*; and even his mistakes savour of his virtues. It is his impatience to be *serving*, that leads to his errors touching both the carriage of the ark, and the building of the house. No doubt he was to be blamed, for in those matters he had not waited on the counsel of the Lord, as he had been wont to do; but this came from his desire to be doing service for God. He thought, to be sure, that in these things he must be right. He trusted his heart in them, and therefore did foolishly (Prov. xxviii. 26); but still his errors savour of that which was characteristically "David," being connected in his mind with desire to be in service for the Lord and His people. (v.—x.)

All this indeed is excellent, but all this does not make out a well fought fight, and a stainless victory for David. All is not over even yet; such holy beginnings as these are not every thing. The strength of the summer sun is still to try this promise of the spring. He that girdeth on his armour, must not boast as he that putteth it off. "Ye have need of patience," is the word, and so we shall find it even here with David. (xi.)

It was the time, we read, when kings went forth to battle. (xi. 1.) But David the king tarries at Jerusalem, and that sets him at once in the flesh. He was not where the Spirit could own him, but has chosen his own way. It may seem to be a small thing, but it is enough for the enemy of his soul. It is only, one might say, a tarrying in the city when he should have been in the field of battle. But the little foxes spoil the vines, we read, "for the vines themselves are tender," and this beginning may account for any result. Soft relaxing habits quickly come in, for the next moment we see him, instead of having girded the sword upon his thigh, lying on his bed at eventide. The outposts had been left unguarded, and the very citadel becomes an easy spoil for the enemy. Nothing could do for him now but to arise and shake himself, like Samson, in the strength of Lord. But, like Samson, he appears as though he had already betrayed the secret of the

Lord. And all because he got into the way of his own heart. He was drawn away by his own lusts and enticed ; and lust was soon to conceive sin, and sin to bring forth death. Jerusalem, beloved, was David's place for himself, when the field of battle was God's place for him ; and little as that may seem, it is enough to lead to adultery. "Lord," may we all say, "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

But it is not merely one lust that enters by this door and riots in David's veins, for love of his fair name in the world now proves just as much a lust in him as the desire of his eye. The one led him to adultery with Bath-sheba, the other goads him to the murder of Uriah. He had no thirst after Uriah's blood, but rather contrives expedients to preserve it, and to that end will do all but surrender his place and reputation among men. He sends to the field of battle to fetch him home to his wife, and thus to be a covert for his sin ; and when that will not do, his subtle and uneasy heart devises to make Uriah drunk that he may still accomplish his end, and use him as a veil under which to hide his own iniquity. Nor is it till all these schemes were baffled, and righteousness in Uriah refuses to be so used in the service of sin in David, that David sacrifices him to his lust. To his love of the world he sacrifices Uriah now, as he had just before sacrificed Bath-sheba to the desire of his eye. And he will sacrifice even his nation to the same. He will so order it that the army of Israel may be defeated, as well as the blood of Uriah be shed before the walls of Rabbah, rather than that his good name should be made a scandal. All must go rather than David hazard that. Just as Pilate afterwards. He was Cæsar's friend, the world's friend, and rather than hazard any breach in that friendship Jesus must die. Sad thus to tell it, David and Pilate are found together. There was no more thirst for innocent blood in Pilate, than there was in David ; but there was the same love of his credit in the world in David, as there was in Pilate. Pilate as well as David can try many devices to preserve the innocent blood and the world for himself at the same time, but David as well as Pilate will give up the one for the other if both cannot be retained together.

It is sad thus to class David and Pilate together. But flesh is flesh in whomsoever found. But David had now to prove that "sin when it is perfected bringeth forth death." And well is it for us when we prove that here, through the Holy Ghost, and do not wait to prove it by the judgment of God by and bye. So was it now with David. Adultery, murder, and falsehood had perfected the sin, and now came the bitterness of his soul. He takes the sentence of death in himself. "His bones wax old, and his moisture is turned into the drought of summer." (Psalm xxxii.) Death within was consuming him as a moth fretting a garment. There was no strength of grace as yet to confess the sin, but the life within was sensitive of the wound it had received. The spirit felt the grief it had been put to, but David kept silence and did not tell out his shame as yet, for guile was still in the spirit. (Psalm xxxii.) The voice of a prophet must call forth confession; but when it does come forth it is indeed of a divine quality, for it is not merely the trespass against Uriah that his soul is conscious of, and his lips confess, but he sees his sin in the light of God's glory. And it is there, beloved, we always see it when we see it aright; it is there we divinely know what sin is. "I have sinned against the Lord," said David; and with this apprehension he utters, "against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." (Ps. li.) Before this confession the spirit had its wound within and it was intolerable. But this confession perfects his conversion, and then he was able to teach sinners the ways of the Lord, as Peter after he was converted could strengthen his brethren. When he had learnt the blessedness of grace abounding over sin, he could present himself to all other poor sinners as the warrant of their confidence in the Lord. "For this," says he, "shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found." (Ps. xxxii.) Like Paul he is set forth a pattern of all long-suffering, and like Peter he knows the restoring of a soul that had erred from the ways of righteousness.

In the striking style of scripture, we now read, after David had accomplished his sin, "the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." There is no long account of God's anger, but this

tells us of his mind towards the sin of his servant. But if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive them, and so we find it here. "I have sinned against the Lord" says David. "The Lord has put away thy sin," answers the prophet. (xii.)

But acceptance into God's favour, always puts us into one interest with God's honour in the world ; and from the moment of our acceptance through His grace, we are to be the servants of His glory. The moment we rest as sinners, we begin our labour as saints. By faith we rest as sinners, knowing the virtue of the blood of Jesus for the full repose of the conscience before God ; but from thence we labour as only in the prospect of the rest that is ours as saints. We become the servants of God's glory when we are made free through God's grace. And so here. David had been just led to his rest as a sinner—"The Lord has put away thy sin ;" but now he must serve God's glory as a sinner brought near. As the name of God had been reproached through David, David must now bear the reproach too ; and God will show His entire separation from the sin of His servant, and before all men measure his former work into his bosom. The child that Bathsheba had borne him must die ; as his sword had slain Uriah, the sword now shall not depart from his house ; and that which he had done to the shame of others, and done it secretly, others should now do to his shame in the sight of the sun.

It is in connection with all this, that Absalom is introduced to us. He is to be made the rod in the Lord's hand for the chastening of David ; a rod, too, taken out of his own stem, his own child ; as the Lord by Nathan had just said to him, "behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." Absalom meant not so, like the Assyrian afterwards. (Is. x. 7.) The Assyrian was to have a commission from the Lord against the hypocritical nation, but in his heart he thinks only of the spoil and the prey. Absalom is now to serve his own lusts, but God will use him for the renewing of His servant in holiness.

We need not particularly consider the circumstance which is made to introduce Absalom to us. The sin of Amnon, and the sorrows of Tamar, had their purpose, and could well have been

used in God's grace to keep poor David in lively recollection of his own sin and sorrow. It was a voice "in his own house" that must have spoken in thunder to him. Blood and uncleanness were staining his own children under his own eye. Tamar's virgin garment was now rent, a sore remembrance of the stain upon himself; and Amnon's blood was shed, awakening the voice of Uriah's blood in his ear from the earth. But we need not more particularly look at this. Absalom was Tamar's brother, and the son of David by a daughter of the king of Geshur (2 Sam. iii. 3); but we have nothing of him till now, when he appears at once before us the subtle and wilful one, whose heart and eye were full only of their own devices and objects, to reach which appears to be all his care. Amnon's wrong to his sister had raised a deadly fire in his heart, which two full years had no power to quench; but his crafty soul must find the happiest way to let out his rage on its victim. The fire burns as though it had been kindled but yesterday, and his subtilty devises a sure passage for it. It is all of Satan. The guile of the serpent ministers to the fury of the lion, and Absalom plots the matter of the sheepshearing that he may get the blood of Amnon. David has some misgivings. How indeed could it be otherwise? Must he not, after all that he had done, and all that the prophet had said to him, have feared every stir in the house? For one of his own house was to bring the evil upon him. He does not like this sheepshearing feast which Absalom proposes. But he is pressed about it, and Amnon then goes, and falls before the treachery and sword of his brother. (xiii.)

Absalom by this had defiled the land, and forfeited his life. (Numb. xxxv. 33.) All that he can now do is to fly to strangers, for the land had no city of refuge for such an one. The avenger of blood might claim him of Bezer or of Kedesh. He had shed his brother's blood, and that cried for vengeance. But David was a man of affection. He had a heart that sought its indulgence in the relations and sympathies of human life, and being the man after God's own heart, he would have found his joy rather in the ministrations of grace, than in the exactions of righteousness. But Absalom had fled, for he was now debtor to that law of which

David was the guardian, for David held his throne on the terms of reading the law continually. (Deut. xvii.) What then, can now be done? David may mourn for the son slain, and for the son banished, but are not both equally lost to him?

Now Joab was, in modern language, a consummate politician. He was nephew to the king, and thus the king's honour was in some sense his honour, and that he knew and valued, and sought to retain; and therefore never seeks to disturb the throne as now settled in the house of Jesse, his grandfather. He was content to be the *second* in the kingdom, for that his worldly wisdom told him he might be in safety, but more than that, he knew he could not seek without hazard. He would get both Abner and Amasa out of his way, when he thought they were intruding into that place which he had eyed for himself, but the first place he would leave with David, and therefore never conspires against him, but is ever watchful of his interest, ever ready to let David take the principal post of honour (xii. 28), and is even quicker than David himself (xxiv.) to discern and provide for the stability of the throne.

Such an one could not but be busy at such a moment as this. He knew the softness of David's heart, and easily calculated that any device to help him to bring back his banished child, would be acceptable, and to do this acceptable service to the king, and thus to have a fresh claim to be the second round his throne, sets Joab in motion now. He did not much care for Absalom's exile, but in some sense "he carried the bag and bare what was put therein."

But the case was a very difficult one, for David, as I have said, might love his son and desire his return, but David was guardian of that law to which his son had exposed himself, and it was hard for Joab to contrive a way whereby David might let "mercy rejoice against judgment," and thus bring back his banished one.

"A wise woman" of Tekoah is, therefore, provided, whom Joab instructs in this matter. Perhaps we may not know the proper sense of that description of her, but it will shortly appear that she was wise indeed, and that too in the secrets of God Himself. She feigns herself a mourner, and comes to the king with just such a tale of sorrow as must at once have caught his affections,

and brought his own sorrow fully to mind. She tells him of her two sons, how one had slain the other in a quarrel, in a field, and that the kinsman was out against the manslayer, threatening to leave her a withered stump in the earth. David is surprised. Such matters should lie with the proper judges to determine between the avenger and the manslayer. (Numb. xxxv.) But David is surprised—nature speaks in him too quickly—the yearnings of nature move him, and he gives her a pledge three times assured that nothing shall befall her son. Then armed with this pledge, she more distinctly assails the heart of the king. She is willing to let the pledge be to Absalom the king's son, and not to her son, and would have it known that she had been all the while pleading for David's sorrow and not for her own.

But “wise woman” as she was, she had deeper resources than even these. She had reached David's *heart*, and got a pledge from the desire and heat of human affection, but she seeks now to reconcile his *conscience* to all this, and to let him learn that he had a title in God Himself, to let “mercy rejoice against judgment” to the guilty, as his soul desired, and as his lips had pledged. For all would be imperfect without this, for the king, as we have seen, was debtor to the law, and none could set it aside but He who established it. Samson, it is true, may marry a Philistine harlot, though the law denied all such commerce with any Gentile, when he has a dispensation from the Lawgiver. Gideon or Manoah may sacrifice on a rock, though the ordained place is elsewhere, if the Angel-Jehovah will stand by, and David himself may forsake the altar at Gibeon even for the threshing-floor of a Jebusite, when the God of grace meets him there. Now it is this principle of truth which this “wise woman” now brings to bear on the conscience, as her tale of woe had lately borne on the heart of the king. *She pleads with David in behalf of Absalom, the very mercy of God in the gospel.* She tells the king that he should fetch home his banished one, for says she, “we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground (i.e. good for nothing. See 1 Sam. vii. 6), which cannot be gathered up again, neither doth God respect any person, yet doth He devise means that His banished be not ex-

pelled from Him.” Here she brings God’s own way before David. She pleads that law of liberty (James ii. 12) which rules even the heart of God Himself, in His dealings with poor sinners, the gospel of God’s grace in which He righteously refuses to hear the law, and is just while the justifier of the guilty, having devised a way by which his banished ones return to him. Thus she pleads with his conscience, as she had before pleaded with his affections, and what can David do? Must he not give an answer in peace? Is he not satisfied? If the light of the gospel be thus by this wise woman brought to shine on him, must he not walk, and act in the light of it? Can he refuse to reflect it? This seems to be the way of her wisdom, and indeed it is strange and blessed. What a testimony this is! What a telling of the mystery of grace! That which is no better than water spilt on the ground, is gathered up to be brought home to God Himself. (xiv.)

This that we are meditating on, is somewhat a neglected scripture. But it shows us that we may oftentimes find some stray and rich kidneys of wheat in the distant corners of the Lord’s granary. And this gospel in the mouth of this unknown widow, this “wise woman of Tekoah,” further shows us that Israel, even in their infant dispensation, had sweet truths to feed upon. From the beginning indeed the joy has been but one. “The woman’s seed” was the king’s highway cast up under the eye of faith, the known and published mystery, whereby God had devised to fetch home His banished ones.

The king, however, seems not to be quite at ease. The pleading of our wise woman was as wise as it could have been. Nothing in its season could have been more perfect. But the king was the guardian of the law, and the softness of his heart had betrayed him into an act of grace by which he had undertaken to set the law aside, but the thought seems to be lurking there, that he was debtor to the law. However according to the king’s word, Absalom is brought home, but it is on terms of not seeing the king’s face, and so he dwells two full years in Jerusalem apart from David.

But he is still Absalom; wherever or however we see him he

is himself. His taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed, even though he had now returned from captivity. (Jer. xlviii. 11.) He comes home the *wilful* Absalom still, the servant of his own passions and of them only. "Who is lord over us," is the language of all his actings. His tongue was his own. "No God," says he, in his heart continually. All that can be said in any way of commendation is, like Saul before him, of his comeliness in the flesh. "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him." We have no account of him beyond this of his beauty. His acts from first to last are enough to give him his right name and place before us, for in his own personal character, and in all in which it displays itself, Absalom is still the wilful one. He is the Saul of his day, or the apostate seed of the serpent, and the agent of the dragon, the usurper, the proud one who consults only his own will, which most surely carries him forth into full and constant resistance of God and His people. Even favours have but little claim on him. He may send to Joab to whom he owed every thing a second time, but beyond that small courtesy his heart owns no debt to him.

But the heart that is thus dead to the claims of kindness, finds it easy to entertain any thing that Satan would propose. Thus, having exercised the rude strength of the lion in the corn fields of his friend, he is quite prepared to practice the guile of the serpent in the kingdom of his father. The one or the other must be the way of Absalom. The child of him that was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, he knows no other master. He is Absalom, "the father of peace." But it is the peace of a deceiver. He comes in peaceably and takes the kingdom by flatteries. By good words and fair speeches he deceives the simple. He steals the hearts of his father's subjects, the people of the Lord and His anointed.* Nothing can be more corrupt than all his ways, for

* That description given us by the prophet of a kindred enemy of God, quite suits both Absalom and his actions. "He shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And by the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall

he is the mere slave of his own evil desires, let them urge him as they may, or set his heart on work with whatever device they may. And he will use any means for his own ends. He pretends the payment of a vow at Hebron, and takes with him two hundred men out of Jerusalem, to furnish as it might seem, the table at the sacrificial feast; but all this was only to further his design upon the throne of his father. His slanders of his father, and flatteries of the people, had already prepared the nation for his pretensions; and now he sends out spies from Hebron to declare him through the land, and all was too well in readiness for him, and speedily, therefore, the conspiracy was strong, and the people increased continually with him.

The Absaloms of every day have had their evil counsellors. This has been already noticed in the case of Saul, and some of these confederacies were then traced. (See p. 25.) Now we see it in the case of this apostate son of David. He gets Ahithophel to be with him: one who had stood among David's counsellors, as he himself had stood among David's children. But the counsellor joins the child: one who had eaten of David's bread, and another with whom David had taken sweet counsel, none other or less than they, must now be found together against him.

But all this gives occasion to one of the most affecting scenes in the history of God's people. I mean the history of David as a penitent. We know not whether the more to admire the beautiful workmanship of the Spirit of God in David, when suffering for righteousness, or when suffering for transgression. This I have before touched upon. We see him the martyr in the days of Saul, but then as led by the Spirit, reading a sweet lesson of instruction to us, showing all patience and all holy confidence in God; consenting to be hunted as a partridge in the mountains day after day, rather than take vengeance into his own hands, or lift himself

come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest place of the province." (Dan. xi. 21—24.) This is like Absalom and his deeds. The flatterer who prevails by his deceit against the anointed One, the Prince of the covenant, and overflows Jerusalem, the fattest place of the province. This just suits him as though the Spirit had taken him for his theme, such kindredness is there between Absalom and the last great enemy of the Lord's anointed.

up against the Lord's anointed. (1 Samuel.) And so now, though the scene be changed, and we have David *the penitent* rather than David *the martyr*, yet all is of equal interest and value to us, under the forming hand of the Spirit of God. (2 Samuel.)

Thus, when in 1 Samuel, the testimony of his conscience was *for* him, he would gird himself with all the gladness in God that he could get. He put on the ephod, he ate the bread of the sanctuary, he had the prophet and the priest with him in exile, and he carried the sword of Goliath, sweet pledge as it was that no weapon formed against him could prosper. All this was his then, and he claimed it all with confidence, carrying within him his title to rejoice in spirit, though circumstances were against him, knowing full well that he might have all in God, though nothing in man. He ate the fruit of an unwounded conscience, the glad feast of the Lord's unclouded countenance. Indeed he dared not then to have eaten the bread of mourners. Could he surround the altar of God with tears? Could he fast while the bridegroom was with him?

But now in 2 Samuel, it is otherwise, for the testimony of his conscience was *against* him. He is now a sinner. It is sin that has found him out, and has brought him into remembrance before God, and it is not for such an one to keep holy day. He must bow his head and accept his punishment. And so he does, and brings forth fruit that was as much in season, as his previous harvest of joy and confidence had been in season. And in the same spirit of true repentance, he would be alone in the trouble. He would have Ittai his friend go back, and leave him to meet the sorrow alone, for it was he alone that had sinned and drawn out the hand of the Lord; but what had those sheep done? And still in the same spirit he sends back the ark and its priests, as having a joy for him that it did not become him now to taste. The ark, the presence of God, was David's best joy, but he was not entitled now to have it, and therefore he sends it home. All this was just the sorrow that became him now. "Carry back the ark of God," says he, "into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again and shew me both it and

His habitation ; but if He thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good to him." Nothing of joy was his at present. Let the ark go back to the city, to shed the gladness of its presence there, he will go forward to Mount Olivet with tears, and barefooted. He will eat nothing but the bread of mourners, and know nothing but the sorrow of the bridegroom's absence. Surely this was godly sorrow working repentance. And beside all this, he will allow even the wicked to reproach him. Another Benjamite comes out against him to plague him sorely ; one too whom he had never wronged, or done despite to, any more than to his kinsman Saul of old. But Shimei comes out against him in this the day of his calamity, and reviles him, casting stones at him, and cursing him still as he goes. But David reviles not again. He hears the righteous rebukes of God in all this, and bows his head. God had given Shimei a commission to do this. What could David suffer more than David deserved, was the thought of the heart of our penitent. Therefore let Shimei, the unworthy and injurious Shimei, do or speak as he may, with David it is not Shimei but the Lord. (xv. xvi.)

All this was fruit meet for repentance. It was all perfect in season. But though thus silent as towards Shimei, David in spirit judges that he may plead against Ahithophel, and he says "O Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." And this desire the Lord allows, for He answers it by speedily confounding that evil counsellor.*

The counsel which this apostate friend, and companion of David, counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God. But the Lord had now appointed to overthrow him. Absalom rejects his counsel, his word is passed by, and as his reputation for wisdom in the state was every thing to him, his

* In connection with Shimei and Ahithophel, David utters Psalms xxxviii. xxxix. lv. cix. and others. Ahithophel and Judas are both found in Ps. cix. Indeed Ahithophel was the Judas of his day, being the guide or counsellor of them who were wronging David, and both of them "fall headlong in the midst," or meet judgment from the Lord in their death ; and they are both the types of the false prophet, or evil counsellor who is to wait on the beast, or the wilful king, the true Absalom in the last days.

household gods are thus now stolen from him, his "good thing" is gone, and he sinks down a defiled dishonoured ruin.

What a lesson to us all, beloved. What did any thing avail Haman, while Mordecai sat at the gate? What would not Saul give up, if he could but be honoured before the people? O the solemn lesson which all this reads to us. Have we, beloved, any thing that if it were touched, our life would be touched, or is our life so bound up with Jesus, that we could stand the wreck of all beside? What treasures are they which we are laying up day by day? what vineyard is it that we are cultivating? Where is the ruling passion fixed, brethren? Where is the current of the heart flowing, what point is it hasting towards? Does Jesus draw its desires, and awaken its intelligence, or what of this world is its master-spring? It is well, beloved, to put these challenges to our poor hearts, and try them thus in the presence of our blessed Lord. "When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died." (xvii.)

And Absalom the king is soon to be like this counsellor of his kingdom, for the beast and his false prophet perish together. But there was no prayer in the mouth of David against Absalom, as there had been against Ahithophel. How very striking is this, as indeed is every expression that we get of his heart all through these scenes. *Nothing can be more perfect than this drawing by the divine hand.* I have noticed this already in some features, and here again we trace it. He numbers the people, setting captains over hundreds and thousands of them, and making Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the chiefs. But he would fain go forth himself, for it was his sin which had brought all this mischief on the land, and David was of too *noble* a heart, to let the mischief find any in the foreground but himself; and beside, he has his desire on Absalom still, and judges that his presence might help to shield him, for David was of too *soft* a heart, to disown the feelings of a father even towards a rebel son.

But his people will not hear of this. What a loved man he

was ! And deservedly so, I am well assured : one, I judge, of the most attractive men that ever lived, who had qualities which could well command, and then detain beyond almost any other, the hearts and desires of all who knew him. “Thou shalt not go forth,” the people answered, “for if we flee away they will not care for us, neither if half of us die will they care for us, but now thou art worth a thousand of us, therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.” As afterwards, when he was hazarding his life in battle with the Philistines, his men sware to him, saying “thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.” (xxi—17.) And indeed he was their light their gladness, and their leader, the honoured and loved one of his day, in favour with God and man. But he now bows to the word of his people, and though his heart is still towards Absalom, he goes not out, but, “deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom,” is the last command he gives his captains on sending them forth to the battle.

With a heart stored with such affections, “he sits between the gates to wait the solemn issue,” and the captains and their armies go to the battle of the wood of Ephraim. Victory or defeat would be much the same to David. No result but must tell him whence it came, and be armed with a sad remembrance of that other battle in which another had fallen, fallen too, in the judgment of God, as one murdered by his hand, though he was all the while dallying in the city. But the Lord is but refining, and in no wise destroying him. His chastening, blessed be his name, is salvation. For though He is jealous for his holy name, he pities His people. The battle is hot for a moment in the wood of Ephraim, but the Lord is in it, as before at Gibeon ; and as there the hailstones, so here the wood, devours more than the sword. There was a great slaughter that day of more than two hundred thousand. All is confusion and utter destruction in the ranks of the apostate, and Absalom is caught in the boughs of a great oak, and is taken up between the heaven and the earth, a spectacle to both. He is made a shew of openly, for “he that is hanged is accursed of God,” “and cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (xviii.)

Here was the end of another apostate, a more fearful one even than Saul. The paper on "Saul," to which this is in some sort kindred, has shewn us that that evil king of Israel was a type of the wicked one in the latter day, who is to do according to his will, to magnify himself above God, and hold nothing in honour or desire but himself and his own way. Absalom in his day, as I have already observed, is type of the same wicked one. They are different samples of the same last great enemy of God and His people, who is to fill up the measure of human iniquity, and then call down the penal fire of God on all the corruption of the earth. But there are features of all this self-will and wickedness in Absalom, that exceed even what we saw in Saul. Thus, Saul had been produced by the desire of the revolted heart of the nation. He was the man after the nation's heart. But Absalom generated his own evil preeminence. It was not the nation's, but his own desire that brings him forth. And there is more of the violation of all the laws of nature in Absalom than in Saul. Absalom is the *profane* as well as the *wicked* prince (Ezek. xxi. 25). With him it is not simply unbridled wickedness, but that profane wickedness that could trample on all the claims even of nature. Heady, high-minded, disobedient to parents, unthankful, without natural affection, the very characteristics of the perilous times in the last days, are more awfully developed in Absalom, than perhaps in any other even of the same rank of persons in scripture.

It is not merely a corrupted, but an usurped kingdom that we see in the hand of Absalom; and that is another advance in iniquity upon the times of Saul. And still further I may observe, that Absalom seems entirely to disclaim the Lord all through the day of his usurpation. There is not one thought of God in the kingdom then. Ahithophel's counsel, but no counsel from the Lord,—the strength of his thousands, but no strength in the Lord, appears then. And as there is not one thought of God to stir his conscience, neither is there one thought or softening movement of heart because of his father's sorrow. Even the counsel to smite David alone pleased Absalom well (xvii). But Saul could weep at times, and confess righteousness in David; but Absalom's soul

has nothing like a gracious visitation even for a single moment. He never, if I may so say, even thinks of saying, "I have sinned," as Saul does. For what does Absalom care for sin? "Tush, God does not see," that is the language of his uncircumcised heart and lips from beginning to end.

Nor is there one Jonathan to relieve the entire darkness of the scene, as there had been in the court and camp of Saul. There was not one single point of relief with Absalom, and all that was confederate with him. It is all the unmixed darkness of an evil and apostate hour. And the Lord can in no wise own him. He gives him no commission all through the days of his usurpation. He could not. He had entrusted Saul with the slaughter of the Amalekites, but Absalom is in no wise known to Him. He is his own, and none but his own, from beginning to end.

Such was Absalom,—one of the darkest pictures of human nature that we are given to look at in the word of God, and such is now his end. He hangs in the tree,—another Lot's wife to be had in constant remembrance. He had taken and reared up for himself a pillar in the king's dale, and called it after his own name, because he had no son to keep his memorial alive in the earth. But the Lord was now giving him another and a far different memorial—a memorial in shame and not in glory. His body was cast into a pit in the wood, and a great heap of stones was laid on him. All his glory was thus tarnished. He was hung by the hair of his head, which had been his boast in the flesh; and instead of a pillar to his own name, he is made a pillar to us—a witness of the shame and ruin of apostacy.—"The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools."

This overthrow of Absalom was like the loss of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, or as the fall of Saul on Mount Gilboa, or as by and bye, the ruin of that man who having planted the tabernacle of his palaces in the glorious holy mountain shall then come to his end, and none shall help him.

But here let us mark it, that Moses and the congregation of Israel may sing "the Lord has triumphed gloriously; and Deborah and Barak in their turn may likewise sing, "so let all

thine enemies perish, O Lord," for songs belong to a merry heart, to those who have the testimony of their conscience with them. But there could be no music in David's heart now. That heart was no sanctuary of praise now. How could David at this time enter the gates, and praise the Lord? Those gates open only to the righteous nation that keep the truth. God had appointed salvation for walls and bulwarks, and praise for gates; but David must be silent there, because he had sinned against the Lord. O dear brethren, that we may be faithful to our own joys; that we may so carry ourselves before the Lord our God, as to be able to run along with the saints in their prosperity, and with the chosen in their gladness, and know no check in our spirit, as poor David now knows in this feast-day of the Lord.

No: David has no music at this time. Absalom had fallen, and the blood of Uriah was crying from the ground afresh in David's ears. It was not meet that he should make merry and be glad. He could not eat of the sacrifices, for such and such things had befallen him (Lev. x. 19). Victory was defeat, and life was death, to David. His path is still the perfect path of the penitent; and thus he now goes to his chamber rather than to his throne; and as he goes, he weeps, and says, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Better is it to have our path ordered by the Spirit within, though it may be a path of heaviness, than allow it to be determined by mere circumstances around. Thus was it now with David. The Spirit of God was leading him along, and he shall find life and peace at the end, though his sin had made the way dark and dreary for the present. But his sorrow must be all his own. The people had earned a victory, and were entitled to its rewards, and the king's sorrow must not be allowed to tarnish their joy. Joab therefore recalls David to his people and his people's claims upon him, and David is awakened and goes forth to take his place in the scene again. He arises and sits in the gate; all the people come before him, and the tide of their desires return to him, and all his enemies are put to shame (xix).

Thus was the restoration in happy progress ; but there arises even after this, a little delay and difficulty in setting all in order, for the mischief had been great. Hence the matter of Sheba, the son of Bichri, another Benjamite (xx).

But the Lord returns to him in full reconciliation. He is again inquired of by him ; and in a day of public calamity, David learns that no sin of his was then in remembrance, but the sin of Saul and his bloody house. And this was for the healing of David's wounded spirit. The goodness of God had led him to repentance ; and no sting was to be left behind, no remembrance of all that had now passed was to remain, save where our sin, beloved, is ever to be remembered, in the increased care and diligence and watchfulness of our own spirit (xxi).

This was very gracious. But even more than this, is preparing to witness to David what God was ; for in the same grace and tender-kindness, the good Lord, in due season, prepares a song for David, wherein the Spirit leads him to forget all but the divine mercies,—“David spake the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.” It is Saul that is here called to mind and not Absalom. Nothing is remembered but the injuries of an evil and unoffended enemy, and all the tale of sin and shame that followed is forgotten. David sings like a “virgin soul.” The Spirit recalls nothing that could have checked the song, and the flow of his heart in the joy of it ; for when the Lord forgives He forgets also. At the end of the wilderness (though the Lord had disciplined and rebuked Israel by the way), it was only this : “He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel” (xxii).

There was something very gracious and exalted in the Lord putting this song into David's lips. But we are to see greater things than even these, for after this song which thus rehearses the goodness of God and his rich triumphant grace, we read “the last words of David.” In them the Spirit leads him to trace the moral of his whole history. His commission as King of Israel had been, to rule “in the fear of God,” and thus be as “the light of

the morning" to his people. But this had not been so, and therefore his house was for the present not to be established ; but the Spirit leads him still onward, to look above present failure to One who should thus rule and thus establish his house for ever, and in whom these mercies of God to him should be sure and abiding mercies, when also the sons of the alien, the sons of Belial, the seed of all evil doers, should be utterly consumed in the decreed place, thrust away as unprofitable pricking thorns. To this, as to his rest, the Spirit of God leads David, and these are his "last words"* (xxiii).

Thus, in these three chapters, we get the full reconciliation between God and his servant, attested by three witnesses. The matter of the Gibeonites—the song—the last words of David—all tell us this. And thus we have seen the way of David, but also the end of the Lord. "The man who was raised up on high," "the anointed of the God of Jacob," "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," is set up to celebrate in his own person and history, the shining ways of God. Sin had reigned unto death, but grace had also reigned, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here we end the path of David through the 1st and 2nd books of Samuel, or through the times of "Saul" and "Absalom." It is *Grace* which God has been exhibiting in this history, and exhibiting it in all its blessed fulness.—We see its early dawn in the election of David, when men were despising him (1 Sam. xvi. 11).—We then see its brighter and fuller shinings all through the days of the trial and sorrow of righteousness, for grace then was watching over its object, lest any fowler should hurt him, keeping him,

* Chapter xxiv. which comes after these "last words" of David, may be read as something supplemental to the history of David. But the scene that it records is in the most perfect harmony with all that we have been here looking at. For it shews that the house and worship of the God of Israel was to be established on the ground of "mercy rejoicing against judgment," just as we have now seen the person and throne of the king of Israel are established on that ground also (see vol. i. page 320); on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

though hunted like a bird in the mountains, night and day (1 Sam. xviii.—xxxi). Then, grace establishes this elect and favoured one in honour and peace above the malice and power of all his foes (2 Sam. v). At the end grace shews its brightest glory, and does its noblest and holiest work,—it restores this elect and honoured one, when, in a dark and evil hour, he had turned from the ways of righteousness and peace (2 Sam. xi.—xxiii). Then did it rise to its noon-day strength. Its early dawn had been sweet, the course which it then ran, as in the heavens, was bright and steady, but its full glory now broke out, when tainted David, like a “virgin soul,” sings his joys and triumphs in God.

These were the treasures of Grace ; and God was making a shew of them, to His praise and our comfort, in David. Glory comes forth to shine afterwards, in like manner, in Solomon ; but grace thus beforehand, had told of herself in David. It was grace *electing*, grace *preserving*, grace *exalting*, and grace *restoring*, that the lips of the sinner might be occupied with a theme of blissful and everlasting praise.

But there is one other thing that we have to notice still.—As grace was thus displayed *towards* David, so was it displayed *in* David. It was the great rule of his life, giving character to his dealings with others, as it had thus given character to God’s dealings with him. Being called to inherit blessing, he renders blessing. Thus, when reviled, he reviled not again (1 Sam. xvii. 29). Afterwards when persecuted, he threatened not, but suffered it (1 Sam. xviii.—xxxi). In every scene in which he is called to take a part, either in action or in suffering (save where he is turned aside by Satan for awhile, as we have been seeing), it is not himself that he is seeking or honouring, but others that he is serving in grace and kindness. The death of Saul and Jonathan make easy way for David to the throne ; but his own advantage is not the circumstance in that event which governs his thoughts about it, he sees only the dishonour of the Lord’s anointed in it, and therefore weeps, instead of triumphs, over the day of Mount Gilboa. So in the fall of Abner and Ishbosheth, which was the quenching of the last light of Saul in Israel, it is only the sorrow

and fasting of David that we hear of. It was not his own honour or advantage, that even then determined the state of his mind. —And so, when fully settled in the throne, he is the man of grace and kindness still, remembering in that hour of glory those who had been the friends of his affliction and exile, and making it his care and business to find out some of the house of Saul to whom he might shew “the kindness of God” (2 Sam. i.—x). He would be an imitator or follower of God, as a dear child; for what a God-like desire was that, “Is there not yet any of the house of Saul that I might shew the kindness of God unto him?” Saul’s house had deserved evil, and not good, from David; but this made David’s kindness to them, *God’s kindness*, for “God commendeth His love toward us, in that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”—And in the same grace afterwards, David refuses to judge Shimei (2 Sam. xvi. xix). The thought of the sons of Zeruiah was loathsome to David’s soul. “What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?” says he to them, when they were for exacting righteousness. They understood not grace, but David understood nothing else. Mercy had rejoiced over judgment towards himself in the heart of the Lord, and nothing but the same can or must be found in the heart of David towards Shimei or the worst of his enemies.

Thus the history of David, through these 1st and 2nd books of Samuel, or through these times of “Saul” and “Absalom,” tells us beloved, what God’s ways *are*, and what our ways *should be*. As his ways to us are in grace, so should be our ways to one another and to all men. In “this present evil world” of sin and sorrow we are learning God’s grace to perfection, in our own souls, daily, and should let others learn it in our walk and intercourses with them in like manner daily. By and bye in the shining “world to come,” we shall learn glory in the same perfection. For David was followed by Solomon, and the God of all *grace* has called us unto His eternal *glory* by Christ Jesus, that He Himself may be our boast and song, and satisfying praise for ever and ever.

Dearly beloved, in the joy and liberty of the precious and perfect love which is ours now, let us pray that we might abound

in the hope of the kingdom that is to be ours also, and walk above a world in which our blessed Master could not rest.—Grant this to all thy saints, O Lord, for Jesus our Saviour's sake ! Amen.

THE KENITE.

THE scriptures reveal to us the history of a part of the tribe or nation of the Kenites, detached from the rest, and falling into the stream or course of Israel's destinies. Though occupying but a small space in the holy narrative, as compared with that given to Israel, yet is it replete with important instruction—instruction indeed which Israel's story could not convey, either so pointedly or so plainly.

It is well that we should refer, whenever we open the Old Testament, to the assurance of the Apostle Paul, that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16). The spiritual wisdom or profit to the soul to be gained from so strange, and at first sight, so obscure a narrative, may not readily be seen ; yet still instruction there must be, and for us, for God has said so ; and if the soul and the Church are so thoroughly furnished, we must know why the Holy Spirit has told us about the Kenite, and gain our lesson from the history.

I address myself to this inquiry, trusting that many may obtain the reproof and the instruction, to say the least, that I have gained by what I judge to be the intention of the Lord in perpetuating thus their name and character.

Brought out before us here and there only for a brief space, and to be lost again. Yet if we put the chain of their course together by these links, we learn how that course runs parallel with that of Israel, from the moment God was meditating the deliv-

erance of that people from Egypt, until they are hidden as captives in the palaces or dungeons of Babylon.—

1st.—It is written, “Now when Pharaoh heard this thing (that an Egyptian had been killed), he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to day? And they said, an Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses, Zipporah his daughter” (Exodus ii. 15—21).

“Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noon-day; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler” (Is. xvi. 3, 4).

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. xxv. 35, 36, 40).

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews xiii. 2).

Open-hearted kindness to the poor outcast—hospitality and affection to the stranger—is thus marked as the earliest feature of the Kenite’s beautiful character, and in contrast (as it is throughout) with Israel’s misconduct. Moses had twice stood up and defended Israel even to the Egyptian’s death; and he had forsaken all for Israel, but Israel rejected and despised him:—yet this alien from Israel’s privileged commonwealth, when Moses stood up to resist the Shepherds, and give water to his flock, received him with all frankness and affection to his tent and to his heart.—Is not this a

shadow too of Israel's rejection of a greater than Moses? while the Gentile afar off both received and worshipped Him;—but this is only a passing question, as I now have only to do with the Kenite's character.

It would be extravagant to suppose that Moses could dwell forty years in the tents of the Gentile, without instructing him in the knowledge of the only true God, and of the Lord Jesus, whose reproach he was bearing (“esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt”), although it does not appear that he *then* yielded to his instruction; but as the faith of Moses was so clear, it cannot be doubted that the Midianite often heard of the promises to Abraham and his seed so soon to be accomplished; for the four hundred years were drawing to their close: and as he did not hesitate to suffer Zipporah to go at once with Moses, he must have given heed in some measure, at least, to the wonderful vision of the burning, yet unconsumed bush. Ample recompense for his courteous love. Unawares indeed, he had received more than an angel, “the faithful servant in the house of the living God.” The king in Jeshurun in type at least—he that was to see “the similitude of the Lord,” and with whom He spoke mouth to mouth apparently, and not in dark speeches (Numb xii.)—the deliverer of Israel.

All that God had promised is speedily accomplished. The oppressor's fury is quenched amidst the waves and weeds of the Red Sea. The hosts of Israel are led round by the cloudy pillar to the mount of God, and there stands the wandering outcast, encompassed by the six hundred thousand people, besides women and children, the counsellor and guide to them all.

2ndly.—And “when Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt; then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back. . . . and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God. . . . and Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and did obeisance and kissed him, and they asked each other

of their welfare, and came into the tent.” How beautiful the lowliness of Moses in such circumstances of human glory, and how strongly marked the affectionate and courteous character of Jethro : “and Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel’s sake, and all the travail that had come on them by the way, and how the Lord had delivered them. Yes, he could now tell of the deeds that were confirmatory of all he had told him in the days of his banishment. And Jethro believed and “rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel ; and Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh. *Now I know* that the Lord is greater than all gods, for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, He was above them” (Ex. xviii). “In very deed,” is the word of the Lord to Pharaoh,—“In very deed, for this have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, *and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth** (Ex. ix. 16). Thus Jethro learns and trusts in the name of the Lord ; and “Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came and all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.” His offered sacrifice according to the appointment of God, is the proof of his knowledge both of God and of himself, and of that shedding of blood without which there is no remission of sin ; and it is a public confession likewise of his faith before God and Israel, consequent upon which he has fellowship with God’s sainted people and with God Himself,—“they came to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God” (Ex. xviii. 12).

Israel’s triumphant song on the shores of the Red Sea,—“Sing ye to the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously,” was heard no more ;” the signs that had been wrought in Egypt, and the wonders in the field of Zoan,” were hardly remembered ; and the unbelieving murmur, “Is the Lord among us or not ?” (Ex. xvii. 7) was not seldom uttered, when this mysterious Kenite reaches the camp to re-string Israel’s forsaken harp, and to rebuke by his faith

* “He saved them for his name’s sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known” (Psalm cvi. 8).

and joy, their forgetfulness and ingratitude. "Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, and said, Blessed be the Lord.....Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods:" "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Ex. xv). "There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee, neither is there any rock like our God" (1 Sam. ii. 2). "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" (Rev. xv). Praise to the Lord for the exercise of His might, in the deliverance of the oppressed, and the righteous judgment of the oppressor, is the theme of each of these songs; but it cannot be said either of Israel, Hannah or the victors with their harps of gold on the sea of glass, as it can of the Kênite,—“Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.” The stranger stood amidst the camp of the Lord’s redeemed; and, while their hearts were fainting, and their timbrels silent, and their feet weary in the dance, revived the remembrance of their peril and of their rescue by his song of faith,—“Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, He was above them.”

The courteous, tender-hearted father-in-law—the believer and the worshipper, are names we can now add to the Kenite, beyond what we at first found. Nor is this all that may be said of the head of this mysterious tribe; for with wisdom, afterwards proved to be divine, he counsels Moses to share the burdens of his government, with those who are “able men, such as fear God; men of truth, hating covetousness.” The number selected according to his advice is not at once mentioned; but in the 24th chapter, “the seventy elders and nobles” of Israel are so spoken of, as to make it more than probable, that they are the same chosen and privileged rulers. The narrative of Moses’ trouble, in Numbers xi. is

not more than twelve months subsequent to his following this plan of Jethro; and as the Lord there calls for the seventy, known to be elders of the people, and in no wise condemns the arrangement, we may conclude that there was no want of wisdom in the plan, and their moral character fully justified the selections; but that they were incompetent to the task without special gifts. Indeed to be a sharer with Moses in the sorrow and anxiety he then felt as the shepherd of the people, required more than ability or uprightness; and the difficulty taught them this, as well as the sufficiency of God's grace. Still it was the Kenite that gave the counsel which God ratified in the gift of the spirit of power; and thus in his brief visit to the mount and people of God, he led them anew to praise and worship their deliverer; and in holy fellowship with them before God (and was it not the manna that he ate with them—the bread of God), instructed them in “the spirit of wisdom and counsel;” and then “Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went his way into his own land” (Ex. xviii. 27). Of Reuel, or Jethro, we hear no more; but the family or tribe are still attached to Israel and to Israel's God, and each notice of them presents us with some fresh grace.

3rdly.—Twelve months had passed away since Israel had been brought out of the house of bondage, and they were still encamped at Horeb, the mount of God; but now the tabernacle was reared up, the statutes and judgments completed, “the cloud of the Lord” moved away, and the ark and the people followed; and then, though Jethro had gone, Hobab his son is found lingering with Israel, for “Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, we are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And he said, leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto

thee" (Num. x. 29—32). The request of Moses may seem at first sight, to throw upon Hobab the gracious service undertaken by their Lord and guide, but it is not so. The pillar of cloud was to mark *where* they were to encamp. Moses did but ask Hobab to show them *how* to encamp, because he was well acquainted with all the tracks and passes of the wilderness; and to this long and tedious labour of nearly forty years, does he yield himself in compliance with Moses' entreaty,—the proof of which I find in two indirect passages of scripture, the proof however is obvious enough, though the passages were not directly written for the purpose. First, in 1 Samuel, 15th chapter, Saul, by the Lord's commandment, goes up against Amalek, because of their sin "in laying wait for Israel in the way, when he came up out of Egypt" (ver. 2). Some of the Kenites being there, their conduct to Israel in the wilderness must needs be contrasted with Amalek. The remembrance of Amalek's sin, revives the remembrance of the Kenite's kindness; and so "Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt; so the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites." Secondly, we learn that when Israel's travels and conquests were over, and the land of their inheritance allotted to them according to their tribes, the Kenites were there to take their part according to the express promise of Moses,—“And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad, and they went and dwelt among the people” (Judges i. 16). The word of Moses to Hobab was, “If thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.” If part of the portion of the most favoured of Israel's tribes is given to the Kenite, how simple and obvious is the conclusion, that it was in recompense for tribulation and service undertaken for, and shared with, Israel in the wilderness—the fulfilment of the conditional promise of their leader.

The strange and gracious character of the Kenite is strongly

drawn in both the cases thus stated, and their mysterious attachment to Israel the same throughout. While Jethro, surely an old man, returns to his land, the more youthful and vigorous Hobab and his family remain to be the companions and servants of this chastened, afflicted, wandering, yet beloved people—like “Issachar, a strong ass couching down between two burdens; and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.” But then Israel sinned, and was driven back into the wilderness; and was not the Kenite’s patience exhausted? not so. The cloud abode with them in the chastening, and so also the tabernacle, and the adoption, and promises, and glory, and so did Hobab—the patient servant still. The carcase of the Kenite fell not in the wilderness through unbelief or rebellion, but like Caleb and Joshua, who had followed the Lord fully, they entered into the rest and received the promise. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewn toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb. vi. 10). “Bear ye one another’s burthens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Gal. vi). The Kenite had not sinned, but he bore the burden sin had brought on Israel. Sin had driven them back into the wilderness; and there, while the Lord in sorrow, yet in faithfulness and patience, hovered around them in the cloud of His glory, so the Kenite on earth took the towel and girded himself as the witness of the Lord’s abiding compassion and truth.—Blessed, favoured Gentile!

4thly.—But the land is won, and what part is the stranger to have? Reuben, unstable as water and never excelling, puts forth no claim for the fairest and best portion, though as the first-born it is his by right: lingering in the vallies and fields of Bashan, he yields his place to Judah.—“Judah thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise;” and led on by the faithful Caleb (one of the spies who had plucked the cluster of grapes from the very land he now receives as his lot*), Judah receives the south land full of

* As the cluster was carried on a staff by two, were they not Caleb and Joshua?

upper and nether springs ; and here also is the allotment of the ambitious Kenite. Not content to have the refuse of the land, though all alike be holy and favoured, he seeks his part with Judah,—“and they went and dwelt among the people.” First in lowliness and burden, bearing in the day of tribulation. Among the first also in the land, the pleasantness of which he had looked forward to.—Blessed and favoured Gentile !

5thly.—And now Israel, forgetting the Lord’s charge to destroy all the people of the land, are seduced away by them, first, into unholy intercourse, and then into idolatry ; and the Lord in chastisement delivers them into the hand of their enemies. First the king of Mesopotamia oppresses them, and then Eglon king of Moab, and then still more cruelly Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera, having nine hundred chariots of iron. The tribes of Zebulun and Naphthali were specially oppressed,—their lands being more contiguous to Hazor. Poor Israel ! ever weak in themselves, yet called to be stronger than all, in the strength of their God, how fallen now ! They had sinned and grieved their strength, and they were “mightily oppressed :” yet though their sorrow was but the fruit of sin, in “all their affliction he was afflicted ;” and there were some on earth besides Deborah and Barak afflicted too, yet they were not of Israel, but still the mysterious Kenites. For “Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites (those dwelling in Judah I judge), and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim which is by Kedesh.” The history of Jael’s destruction of Sisera, the manner of it, and her joy in it, alike prove how her heart must have been bound up with Israel, and oppressed in its oppression. It is thus described :—“The Lord discomfited Sisera and his host with the edge of the sword before Barak ; howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite : for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite” (and why ? but because they had not sinned as Israel, and so were not delivered by the Lord into His hand) : “and Jael went out to Sisera, and said unto him turn

in, my lord, turn in unto me ; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink ; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him. Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here ? that thou shalt say, No. Then Jael Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent, and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground : for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will show thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples."

And thus the Spirit of the Lord in the triumphant song of Deborah recounts the deed.—"Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent. He asked water, and she gave him milk ; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer ; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down : at her feet he bowed, he fell : where he bowed, there he fell down dead" (Judges iv. & v).

It was but a remnant of Israel "that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field." Some refused as Meroz to "come to the help of the Lord against the mighty ;" and others more distant from the place of conflict, made excuses for their unbelief and neglect ; but even Barak and his ten thousand fell short of this woman in hearty zeal for Israel's glory ; and the distinction reserved for her by Israel's God, "for the Lord sold Sisera into the hands of a woman." Sisera had not wronged or oppressed her, and yet was her soul evidently satisfied by ensnaring this fiercest antagonist of Israel to her tent, and slaying him there. Why not let him sleep till Barak came ? He might awake from sleep refreshed, and so escape to be the oppressor still, and this

must not be. But what boldness in a woman !—the slightest noise might startle him ; and if he were to see the hammer and nail in her hand, she must perish, for who could rescue her from his cruel hand,—they were alone in the tent. If her heart had failed, and her hand trembled, and so she had but smitten with a woman's blow, it would have roused him as the wounded tiger, to her instant destruction. But no—there was the lord of the nine hundred iron chariots, by which Israel's fertile plains had been trodden down. There was the tyrant that had oppressed the beloved people of God so long, and he was delivered into her hand : and this woman, —this Gentile woman, fearlessly struck the blow for Israel and for God. “ At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down : at her feet he bowed, he fell : where he bowed, there he fell down dead. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord : but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.” And the land had rest forty years. Blessed were Zebulun and Naphtali, the champions of Israel, with their leader Barak. Blessed too, Deborah the mother of Israel in her stirring calls. Blessed the stars of heaven that fought in their courses against Sisera. Blessed the river Kishon that swept away the Canaanite from the field,—yet far more blessed the brave and faithful woman, ay, blessed above all Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite.

Yet may I not stay to remind those, whose hearts may be considering her blessing, as thus described, that none can enter thoroughly into the afflictions of another, while under the pressure of affliction themselves. Heber had not committed Israel's sin, and was not therefore subject to Sisera's iron rule. God had not delivered him into the hand of the Canaanite. Free from the anguish of the oppressed himself, he could bear the burden of their oppression in sympathy and sorrow, and seek their deliverance as though it were his own. While we are swallowed up in the Church's common degradation and slavery to the world, we cannot take the place of deliverers or intercessors ; but if personally free, we may turn back in charity, and forget our own freedom in sympathy for the sorrows and bondage of others. Holy and happy condition, how should our souls pant for it for the Church's

sake—the faultless bride of the King of kings before God ; but alas in our sight, the world's harlot and slave.

6thly.—In 1 Chron. ii. 55, it is thus written in the midst of Israel's genealogies.—“And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez ; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.”

The city of Jabez was near Hebron, and the choicest part of Judah's land, and was doubtless named (as was the common custom) after the remarkable man noted in the 4th chapter in Judah's genealogy. The situation and local advantages of the town are almost lost in the character of its father and founder. “Jabez was more honourable than his brethren,” and yet “his mother called his name Jabez, saying, because I bare him with sorrow.” “And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me ! And God granted him that which he requested.” With this sorrowful, yet blessed servant of God, did the Kenite dwell, true throughout to his own gracious character ; he who had the hardest portion in the wilderness, has now the best, both locally and spiritually, in the land of rest. But besides this, of which the verse I have quoted assures us, we learn from it, that Rechab the father of Jonadab was a Kenite, and a lineal descendant of these faithful witnesses of divine truth in the midst of Israel's errors ; and so by it we are carried forward to the Rechabites, as but another name for the same strange and consistent people.

7thly.—From the secret and solemn interview between Elijah the prophet, and the Lord God of Israel at Horeb, we learn the Lord's intention concerning the people. “Behold a voice came unto him and said, What doest thou here, Elijah ? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts : because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, I only am left ; and they seek my life, to take it away. And the Lord said unto him,

Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus : and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria : and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel : and Elisha the son of Shaphat shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay : and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay" (1 Kings xix).

This is the word of Jehu—"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 kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining..... And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him : and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart ? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand ; and he took him up to him into the chariot. And he said, 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..... Then Jehu gathers all the worshippers of Baal together.—And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal. And the guard and captains slew both worshippers and priests. And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. And they brake down the image, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel" (2 Kings x. 10—28).

From first to last the deadly sin of Israel, or the ten revolted tribes, was idolatry. This sin if it did not bring to pass, yet kept up their separation from Judah and the house of David,—their various but almost increasing calamities were occasioned by it, and on account of it at last, they were banished from their hills and vallies, and from their God. The height of this iniquity had been

attained in the reign of Ahab and his Zidonian wife, as it is written, "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. 33); and to execute the vengeance of the Lord on his iniquitous house was Jehu sent. It may be expected that at such a time the faithful in Israel would have been forward to the same work, there were some doubtless like Elisha mourning before the Lord; but the Kenite alone became the companion of the anointed servant of the Lord—holy wrath!

When Israel made and worshipped its golden calf at the foot of Horeb, and were naked to their shame before their enemies, "Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." And Levi as a tribe were separated to the service of the tabernacle, instead of the first-born of the people (Ex. xxxii. 25—29, Numb. iii. & iv).

"When Israel abode in Shittim (but a little before entering the land), the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor." Then Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, slaying with his javelin, Zimri the prince of the tribe of Simeon, and Cozbi the Midianitish woman, "The Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, *while he was zealous for my sake among them*, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant

of peace : and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood ; because *he was zealous for his God*, and made an atonement for the children of Israel (Numb. xxv. throughout).

The 8th chapter of Ezekiel is an exposition of the sin of the house of Israel in other days.

The 9th opens to us the glory of the God of Israel forsaking its house,—as given to others. “And, behold, six men came from the higher gate, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand ; and one man among them clothed with linen, with a writer’s ink-horn by his side. And the Lord said unto him, go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, go ye after him through the city, and smite : let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity : slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women : but come not near any man upon whom is the mark ; and begin at my sanctuary” (Ezekiel ix).

On the same errand of holy zeal, for a holy and zealous God, do we thus find the tribe of Levi. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar—the man clothed in linen with his six companions. Jehu the anointed king and his strange yoke-fellow—Jonadab the son of Rechab the Kenite. And these various histories are a full commentary on this other beautiful feature of the stranger’s character, and they need no further explanation.

8thly.—Once more and for the last time are they brought before us in the book of the prophet Jeremiah, “The word of the Lord which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord....saying, Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. Then I took....the whole house of the Rechabites, and I brought them into the house of the Lord.... And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine : for Jonadab the son of Rechab

our father commanded us, saying, *Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.* Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us."

"Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me."

"And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel.....Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever," or, there shall not a man be cut off from Jonadab the son of Rechab (Margin).

Inattention to the word of God, or self-will, is marked throughout the book of Jeremiah as the sin in Israel, over which he mourned and which led to all others. Obedience and attention to the voice or word of Jonadab their father, marked by contrast the conduct of the Rechabites. But this is not all—rest and human glory might have been the heaven-awarded portion of Israel, had they been obedient and sinless; but while earth is soiled by sin, there can be no establishment or rest for the Spirit of holiness. This was the spirit of Jeremiah, and the still and ever strange family of Kenites. And instead of seeking an abiding dwelling-place and earthly indulgencies where sin was abounding, they were consistent pilgrims in the midst of plenty, looking for their rest and portion where sin could not enter, and therefore where the portion could be abiding as well as abundant.

"By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the

heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country....a better country, that is an heavenly : wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God : for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews xi. 8—16). And did not the Kenite walk in the steps of the father of the faithful (Romans iv. 12).

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saith the Lord, when either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord : he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk" (Numbers vi).

"And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel ? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink ; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not" (Amos ii. 11, 12).

Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire : their visage is blacker than a coal ; they are not known in the streets" (Lamentations iv. 7, 8).

The children of Abraham had forsaken the steps of their father. The Nazarites were wine bibbers.—But when the pots of wine were set before the children of Jethro the Kenite in the chambers of the Lord's house, this was their reply, "We will drink no wine : we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father, in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our daughters ; nor to build houses for us to dwell in : neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed : but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according

to all that Jonadab our father commanded us" (Jeremiah xxxv. 8, 9, 10).

Obedient, faithful in much self-denial—"strangers and pilgrims abstaining from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul"—the Kenites thus crown their previous character of consistency and knowledge of the mind of the Lord—Israel's perpetual monitor; and are they not thus portrayed by the Spirit of truth in His word for our profit, as showing us the true Israel from among the stranger—a type and portrait of the Church of God.

I need but recapitulate briefly the features of their character, and those who are interested enough in it to search the scriptures that are referred to, will find how true it is that all scripture is given for profit, either in reproof, correction, or instruction, and the history of Jethro's descendants will not be as an idle tale to them.

1st.—Jethro's hospitality to Moses in the tents of Midian—kindness and courtesy.

2nd.—Jethro's visit to Israel's camp at Horeb—faithful affection—strong faith—the worship of praise—and wisdom.

3rd.—Hobab's service to Israel in the wilderness—faith—patient service—tribulation and sympathy with the afflicted—hope.

4th.—The Kenites' portion in the land—holy ambition—seeking the best of God's gifts to His people.

5th.—The removal of Heber to the host of Israel—sympathy with the sufferer—Sisera's death at the hand of Jael—holy desire for the Lord's glory in His people, and their true standing above their enemies.

6th.—Their association with Jabez, as fellowship with the holiest of God's people.

7th.—The fellowship of Jehu and Jonadab in the slaughter of the priests of Baal and overthrow of idolatry—holy zeal for the Lord's name as the only true God—jealousy for and with God.

8th.—The refusal of the wine in the Lord's house—obedience and subjection of spirit—abstinence from fleshly lusts—the stranger and pilgrim.

Leaving out the sixth statement which would be fairly found in

its place in the fourth, there are left seven different accounts, under very different circumstances, making a perfect and beautiful portrait of the Church of God, as that Church should be. May He who gave the grace to this strange people, provoke us to jealousy by it, for His own holy name's sake.

PHILEMON.

THERE are two ways in which truth is presented to us, didactically and in the living exhibition of it. There may indeed be a certain admiration of the character in which truth is embodied, without perceiving that it is the truth which moulds the character. But for the most part we are much readier at learning truth didactically, than as presented to us livingly. In the one case it is often the mere exercise of the mind, in the other the affections are almost necessarily engaged. It is not however my intention to institute any comparison between the relative value of these two ways. God has been pleased to use them both, and it is generally found that where there has been the setting aside of doctrinal truth, because it has been systematically held by some, and severed from the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great doctrine of God, there has been instability. But it is exceedingly delightful to witness the progress of one, who having received the truth doctrinally, is led to connect it with Jesus in his own soul. The purpose of God and all that flows from it, still have their proper place in his soul. He does not deny, but most fully avows all the truth contained in the most rigid doctrinal statement. The electing love of God, His effectual calling, His predestination to Sonship, the indefectibility of grace and perseverance of the saints, are no longer to him so many abstract truths, but become embodied in his own soul, by the known character of God in redemption. It is thus the soul is delivered from questioning and debating

about such points, it assumes them because it knows God ; and it is this acquaintance with God which gives real peace. I believe that even the recognition of one's own personal election, fails in giving peace apart from the character of God, revealed as love. There are jealousies and suspicions in the soul, as to God, even where the truth is most distinctly apprehended doctrinally, until God's perfect love as revealed in Jesus, casts out all fear. There is no real boldness (doctrines never give it) until we know that God's love has made us, even in this world, as Jesus is before Him in heaven. This is the result of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, to every one that believeth. And as such a knowledge of God as this, is eternal life, we find the soul unconsciously acting on and out, those very doctrines which it had previously acknowledged as truth. But now they have become as it were its life and existence, and therefore without being mentioned are continually being confessed. It is surprising how much is necessarily assumed, when once God is known by the soul in the relationship of Father,—many a babe who has been brought to know Him as such through faith in Jesus, although he might be for a moment stumbled at a systematic presentation of the doctrines of grace, will be found to have the elements of them all in his own soul. As born of God, he really lives and moves and has his being in Him, and instead of questioning about God is happily living in Him. When this is the case, there is a beautiful ease in Christianity,—it is not effort, it is life. And the true grace of God is as much traced in a precept as in a promise, because the precept assumes redemption and a new relation to God. The precept could only suit one placed in a particular relation. For example, “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” assumes the knowledge of complete redemption : the soul is set completely at rest about itself, before it can possibly seek to carry out the precept ; and in carrying it out is only learning more of the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of God. And thus we become practically acquainted with the grace of God, every step we are seeking to take in obedience to His will.

Now I believe that many parts of scripture are neglected or

slighted, because they do not appear to bear on doctrinal truth, while they are the exhibition of that very truth in living power. One such part of scripture is the Epistle to Philemon. It does not contain a single doctrinal statement, and yet could only have been written by one whose very soul had embraced the whole doctrine of Christ, so that his life and thoughts were all expressive of it. It ought to be matter of great thankfulness on our part to our gracious God, that He has chosen such engaging ways to bring His blessed truth to bear on our souls. And I would earnestly desire, whilst seeking to trace the mind of Christ in the Apostle Paul writing to Philemon, that we might have fellowship with Him in it.

In the Lord Jesus personally, we see the whole truth embodied and livingly presented,—He is *the* truth. In the Apostle we see the blessed result of communion with the truth, and the presentation of the mind of Christ. This is our portion. “We have the mind of Christ.” It is this which makes us know how we ought to walk, so as to please God. The rule of Christian conduct is not “I say unto my servant, Go, and he goeth,” without knowing the reason of the command, but it is the ability to recognize the propriety of the command itself as suitable to the condition in which we are placed, and therefore the obedience of the Christian is intelligent obedience. He is *led* of the Spirit, and this too in those very things which are most opposed to all that is natural. God, with all the power to command, treats us as friends; He informs us and shews us what would be well-pleasing unto Him, and thus we have fellowship with Him in carrying out his will into obedience, which we could not have had if He dealt with us as servants. But I would now turn for illustration of these things to Paul’s Epistle to Philemon.

The salutation or address, brief as it is, contains in it, the substance of the Epistle. It is all so pertinent to the subject on the mind of the Apostle, that one might be led to think there was studied art in it. But I believe that no artificial arrangement can ever come up to the simple expression of the mind of Christ. And all the beauties of the sacred writers have not arisen from

any studied composition, but are the necessary result of inspiration—the Spirit expressing by them that subject which he fully knew, and was therefore fully competent to teach. But to return to the address of the Epistle. We have Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ; Timothy, a brother; Philemon, one dearly beloved, and a fellow-labourer with the Apostle; Apphia, the beloved; and Archippus, Paul's fellow-soldier. Now the mention of all these names is expressive of fellowship,—those who had no natural fellowship one with the other, nothing in common one with the other, strangers in country, in habit, in language, had now by union with Jesus, common relationship, common affections, common service, common warfare. Here is the wondrous power of the cross, it not only brings the soul into peace with God, as seeing His love to a sinner therein expressed, even in the judgment of that sin which would hinder fellowship with Him, but it brings men of the most opposite character, and most different condition in this life, into oneness also. How fully must the soul of the Apostle in writing this address, have known nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. He saw an end of all those distinctions which separate man from man in the cross; and a new union with a new head in a new creation in the resurrection. This true doctrine of the cross we need to know,—this Paul would have Philemon to know. That the very same power which had slain the enmity between Paul, a Jew, and Philemon, a Gentile, “making them *one* new man *making peace*,” the very same power by which they were engaged in the same work, would be sufficient to make peace between Philemon and his slave Onesimus, to give them a oneness of interest, affection, and service, which they had never had before. I need hardly state that this is the true doctrine of Christ as expressed Ephes. ii. 13—22. There indeed it is stated in its largest principle, that God had introduced a power by which even the partition wall, which He Himself had placed between Jew and Gentile, was broken down, and they, so contrary the one to the other, brought into amity—not by the Jew becoming a Gentile, nor the Gentile a Jew, but the twain becoming a new man in Christ Jesus.

I would not omit here to notice the mention of “the Church in

thy house," as in strict keeping with the whole subject. The Church is the household of God; and how very blessed to have a small household here conformed to God's great household. Now Philemon and Archippus, who once had been far off from God, had now by the blood of Christ been brought nigh, and standing before God in Him, had become of the household of God. There was no difference before God on account of their relative conditions here, in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free. With what propriety therefore is the Church in the house mentioned here, as that which would lead Philemon immediately to see the blessedness of receiving Onesimus in brotherly love, and regarding him of the household of God, and therefore of the Church in his house. But if we enter a little more into detail, I think we shall be able to trace more of the living grace which is in Christ Jesus, for us, as well as the Apostle Paul. "Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus"—"a prisoner!" why not an Apostle? surely he was one, and could not give up that title and office, however grace might lead him to do that which his Master had done, that he might bring sinners to God, and lead on saints into obedience by love. His authority he most clearly asserts,—“Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” Paul dared not give up his authority as an Apostle,—he was responsible for its exercise to Him whose servant he was. When the occasion came, he could use sharpness. But though the relation in which Paul stood in the Church to Philemon was most distinct, yet his soul was resting much more on that which he had in common with Philemon than on that which distinguished him from him. It was thus too he would teach Philemon by his own example, how he should act towards Onesimus: their relation was that of master and slave, and the gospel did not the least alter it. Philemon was responsible as a master to his Master in heaven; but yet there was open to Philemon the shewing forth of the grace of the Apostle, or rather of the Lord Himself, who never could alter by any humiliation that which He essentially was; but was enabled

by it to bring to bear on the soul, that which otherwise He never could have done—His own gracious example. “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” It is the joy of the heart of the Lord Jesus Himself, to place Himself in that posture in which He can bring us in to share His own blessings with Himself. As Lord of all, He stands alone, and above us all; and this He cannot give up, for it would be the denial of Himself. But when He has all authority to command as Lord (and this is speedily to be revealed), He has as humbled, been pleased to give us an example that we should follow His steps. He delights to come down to our level, in order to exalt us to His own glory. This is the way of grace: it would have been no grace in the Lord Jesus, had He not been an equal with God, to have made Himself of no reputation, and taken on Him the form of a servant, because the highest created intelligence is but a servant. But grace is God’s ability of preserving His own character, when He is not demanding of us His own rights; although He can never waive those rights. And the wonder of redemption is, that without any demand on the part of God on us, it shows us all His claims most amply satisfied—“a just God and a Saviour.” Paul therefore could not waive his apostleship, but it was open to him to act in grace, and to take his stand on that which he had in common with Philemon and the whole Church—brotherhood in Christ Jesus. And here instead of authoritative command, he could “beseech.” And then with the full recognition of the relation in which Philemon stood to Onesimus, which Paul had no power to dissolve, although he might have enjoined what was “convenient,” he leaves Philemon in the place of exercising grace, and taking his stand with Onesimus in the common brotherhood, and valuing this new relationship above the old one, although that still continued. It is deeply important to remark how our gracious Lord constantly affords us opportunities of showing grace. It is rarely that He addresses us in the tone of authoritative command, saying, “Go,” “Do this;” but it is, “here is my

mind," go and carry it out as far as you can—and every one that is perfect shall be as His Master. Nothing can be more destructive of the gospel, than to assert a common brotherhood, apart from that grace of God which has given it, and that living grace in which it is to be carried out. It has not pleased God in giving to us a new and eternal relationship, to alter our relative conditions whilst we are in the world. He allows the world to go on as it is, and does not interfere with its regulations *now* for the sake even of His own dear children. Paul continues high in the Church as an Apostle, Philemon continues a master, and Onesimus a slave, though God had made them one in Christ Jesus, and He by His blood had washed them from their sins and made Onesimus as well as Paul, a king and a priest unto God and his Father. It would not have been grace in Onesimus, because he was a brother and an heir of God and joint-heir of Christ, to say he was no longer a slave. Neither would it have been grace in Philemon because he was his master, to refuse to acknowledge Onesimus as a brother. It was the Lord who had made him such, and it should have been the joy of the heart of Philemon to receive him as such. But it was left to Philemon to shew how far his soul estimated his standing in Christ above any circumstantial difference of condition here. And therefore says the Apostle, "that you might receive him for ever, not now as a slave, but above a slave, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee both in the flesh and in the Lord." Now I fully believe that any attempt to exhibit Christian brotherhood apart from individual and personal grace, as that which alone can sustain it, must be most mischievous, and in the end lead to confusion and disorder—if not practical atheism. Men see by their natural understandings that there is a common brotherhood recognized in the New Testament, they assert it as if it were of nature, not of grace, and use it to the subversion even of the authority of God Himself. It is the very essence of lawlessness, to make that which is the blessed result of the riches of God's grace to be the natural right of man. It is this use of the blessed gospel itself which produces the worst form of evil—such as we see characterized by the Apostles Jude and Peter.

God has not placed his children here to assert their rights. He has saved them according to His own *mercy* and *grace*, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost ; and He leaves them here to learn obedience to Him in all things. It is in our several relations one to the other, that obedience to God is manifested, and the grace of which we have been partakers shown forth. If Onesimus had demanded as a matter of right, to be received as a brother, there would not have been given to Philemon an opportunity of showing grace to him, and loving obedience to God. How beautifully does grace keep every thing in its right place,—surely it must do so, for it maintains the character of God. It is in us alway self-denial, never self-exaltation ; and it is equally shown in Onesimus, yielding all willing service, as in Philemon, not exacting it.

But still to return to the salutation,—“ Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ.” In this he showed Philemon two things : first, that he was a sufferer, and not one who had maintained his place in the world by his confession of Christ ; secondly, that all the irksomeness of his prison was removed, by his ability to see that men were only the hand of the Lord, so that he was content to be there, for he was the Lord’s prisoner. And when he comes to the special point of his writing to Philemon, he then presents himself “ such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.”

And what had Paul the aged been learning in his long course ?—the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and his claim on Philemon is not the authority he might have used, but his experience of the blessedness of the ways of grace in his own soul, and his present suffering for preaching the gospel of that grace to Philemon and other Gentiles (Compare Ephes. iii. 1). But just as he was content to be in bonds, because he was the Lord’s prisoner, so was he delighted to recognize those bonds in which Philemon was eternally one with him. Speaking of Onesimus, he says, “ whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me *in the bonds* of the gospel.” Here is the very mind of Christ. He (Jesus) was content to suffer alone, and for

us.—He called none in to share all that He had to do in atonement—none could have stood with Him in that. But what was the end of it, but that we might be united to Him in eternal bonds. And the present end of this union is ministry to Him, in the person of His saints, and confession of Him in the world which has shut Him out. Paul stood forth as the elect vessel to bear the name of Jesus. He speaks it to the credit of one, “he was not ashamed of my chain” (2 Tim. i. 16). Here then was the opportunity for Philemon to show that notwithstanding the degradation of Paul in the eyes of men—a prisoner—yet that he reckoned him as the choicest servant of the Lord, and his present condition would only render his obedience more prompt. But how deeply must his soul have tasted of the spirit of Christ, whose obedience was always both willing and intelligent, when he says “but without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity but willingly.” “The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.” He delights that our obedience should be intelligent and willing. How gracious is this,—how unlike the hard master and austere man that our foolish and wicked hearts are ever disposed to believe Him to be. He shows us His own gracious ways,—He informs our understandings and makes us to see the fitness of that which He desires, so that walking in the Spirit is going along with the Lord in the path which He points out. And although it must really be constant death to the flesh, and therefore constant suffering, yet in the intelligence of the new man, we can say “His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace.” “Not of necessity,”—how often do our poor hearts ask, is it necessary? must it be done? He does not address us in that way, though He cannot deny His Lordship, but He shows us what is convenient and we have the renewed mind to discern it; and He tells us what is pleasing to Him, that He may engage our affections, and then, “If ye *love me*, keep my commandments.” How deeply must that soul have known of fellowship with Christ, which could thus say, “not of necessity;” and how little do our souls know of His grace when we are putting our obedience on the principle of duty, instead of seeing it as the development of the life within us. It was the

life in union with Christ, which Paul knew to be in Philemon, which he sought to actuate, and then obedience would be willing, natural, and easy. There is always, if I may use the expression, an awkwardness in Christian conduct when it proceeds from necessity,—it is like being turned out of one's way, instead of walking in the Spirit. How needful then for deep personal intercourse with the Lord Himself, that we may know His thoughts and learn His ways; and then obedience, though learnt in suffering, will be willing obedience. But there is a little point to notice, and it is just where discipleship turns: there may be things, and there are many, which Jesus as Lord does not command, but yet which as Master He teaches. I believe the greater part of inconsistencies are justified on the principle that they are not forbidden, or that a particular line of conduct is not systematically laid down in the word. The Apostle says “that thy benefit (thy good thing, verse 6) might not be of necessity.” Now I believe that a great many of the good works by which the gospel is adorned, are not pressed on us by positive commandment, but are learnt in the school of Christ, for He is our one Master, and we are His disciples. The Lord and servant are correlatives, and so are Master and disciple: every one that is perfect, shall be as his Master.

There is one thing more to notice in “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ,” and that is, how his soul was led out into practical fellowship with others in like circumstances.

There is nothing more blessed than the thought that Jesus is able to throw Himself into our individual circumstances,—He was in prison with Paul. He could as easily have delivered him out of prison as He had Peter. But He had rather have fellowship with him in prison, and there make him the depository of His deepest thoughts. It was the prison, not the active journeying, to which (instrumentally) we are indebted for the deep revelations of the mind of God in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. And so it was in a lower degree with Paul and Epaphras,—the prison deepened their fellowship one with the other. “There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus.” And may we not justly conclude that it was such fellowship, both with the Lord

Himself and His devoted servant, that led Epaphras into that blessed service for the Church of Colosse, which is mentioned in that Epistle. "Epaphras who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." If there were deeper fellowship with the Father and the Son, and more real fellowship of the saints, surely there would be more of the effectual labour of Epaphras; and when did the Church ever stand more in need of such labourers?

The next part of the salutation is "Timothy our brother." Philemon had not fellowship with Paul as a prisoner; but here comes in the link, "our brother" connects him both with Paul and Timothy; and if the Lord of all is not ashamed to call us brethren, how will it delight the soul of His servant to put Himself on this standing, wherein He was one with every saint. That word "fellowship"—what a blessed word it is—all that is common to us with the Lord, and common to us one with the other, as one with Him. God delights to communicate, and to share with us that which He communicates; and grace would do the same, but man would always stand on that which is peculiar. It seems to me that the way in which the Apostle brings as it were the soul of Philemon into the realizing this fellowship with himself, is exquisitely beautiful,—“For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, *brother*.” And again, “Yea, *brother*, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.” The soul of the Apostle delighted in this relationship,—it knit him to Timothy, and Timothy and himself to Philemon. It stood upon far higher ground than any natural relationship, for they were only brethren one to the other, because each of them was the brother of Jesus. And Jesus had received Onesimus also; and He desired Philemon to own the relationship, even as the Apostle so gladly owned it with him,—that he would receive him, “not now as a servant, but above a servant, a *brother* beloved.” It seems to me that the soul of the Apostle ever sought its repose in this fellowship of brethren, and not in that which distinguished him from them. And is not this the

mind of Christ. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Lord He is, and Master He is; but in those His titles, there is no fellowship. But it was the first expression of joy that came from Him after the travail of His soul, when He said, "Go to my *brethren*, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." Here was fellowship,—the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, was the God and Father of others. But the soul of the Apostle, so deeply taught in fellowship with the Father and the Son, delighted in all he had in common with others, and desired its communication onward through Philemon. Is Philemon his beloved? he would have him receive Onesimus as a brother beloved. The soul of the Apostle expanded at the thought of fellowship. Philemon was his fellow-labourer, so were Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas (verse 24). How blessedly does grace make us bound over the littleness of our own minds. It owns every thing in others that it possibly can. Paul stood in the place of conscious authority, and therefore he does not desire to assert it. But what enlargement of soul is there, in his thus noticing his fellow-prisoner, fellow-labourers, fellow-soldier. After this how fitly is he able to press on Philemon that practical fellowship, which he was thus manifesting,—that communicativeness of blessing to others, because God Himself was known as communicating all blessing.

Verses 4, 5, 6.—The love and faith of a single saint called forth thanksgiving from the Apostle to God. His soul had often other exercises—deep humiliation before God on account of the walk of some—but here it was that which glorified God. That love, and that faith, the Apostle ardently desired to see enlarged, but he had spread this desire before God, before he made mention* of it to Philemon, and he so makes mention of it as to bring the soul of Philemon immediately before God. He would have Philemon know the joy that his own soul knew in communicating. "That the *communication* of thy faith." It was the faith of Philemon

* This I believe would give much confidence in admonition,—it would not be assuming the tone of exemption from fault, but the expression of desire for the blessing of those admonished, the desire which had been presented to God.

which was to be carried out into exercise ; every natural feeling and habit would be opposed to that which would be convenient in the present case. It must be faith working by love, which alone could cause Philemon to receive Onesimus cordially as a brother. And where would faith put Philemon ? surely before God as a lost and ruined sinner, saved solely by His sovereign grace ; and if he put Onesimus beside him there, where was the difference ? he could only see one equally ruined in himself, and him saved by the same grace. But what depth of truth is conveyed in what follows. “ That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” The faith of Paul reckoned largely on the good thing which was in Philemon* in Christ Jesus, because he knew that all the fulness of Christ was the property, so to speak, of the weakest saint. And he would stir up the faith of Philemon to the acknowledging of the good thing (the same word in the Greek as that translated benefit, v. 14). Surely Philemon would have acknowledged that in him, that is in his flesh, no good thing dwelt ; but Paul addressed him as one in union with Jesus, in whom every good thing dwelt, and thus called on him to exhibit “ the good thing which was in him in Christ Jesus.” This is our Christian responsibility. We are responsible for exercising the grace which is in Christ Jesus, because we are in union with Him, not for security only, but for fruit-bearing also. The great blessedness of that union will only be fully known in glory ; but now our Father is looking for a result from it,—“ herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” Paul would have Philemon thus practically live the life of faith on the Son of God ; and when he felt all natural repugnance to receiving Onesimus back, he would look to Jesus and his oneness with Him, to see what the grace of Christ would do in such circumstances, and then draw out of His fulness grace answering to grace. How wisely does the Apostle put Philemon upon the sure basis of security, while he is thus leading him on into that act which would require a great exercise of faith.

* You is plural in the Greek—taking in Apphia and Archippus and the Church in the house.

Paul could have no confidence in Philemon as a man,—he might sullenly have done the thing requested out of deference to his authority, or Paul might have asked it as a debt of gratitude to himself (see v. 19). But he knew how to touch a string which would draw forth willing acquiescence (v. 14) ; and in doing this puts Philemon in remembrance of all his own blessedness as one with Christ. How little do we poor degraded saints reckon on any thing more by our being in Christ, than mere sufficiency for salvation : we are afraid to look for any good thing,* and what is worse, often use the knowledge we have of the evil that dwells in us, as a reason for not looking for any good thing, as though it contradicted the other truth. But in union with Christ, we are called upon to acknowledge every good thing in us unto Him, and faith would call it out on the fitting occasion. Such an occasion was now offered to Philemon ; and when acted out, the Apostle would have praised God, not Philemon, for its exercise. Lord increase our faith, increase our faith.

What unselfish joy did the soul of the Apostle possess,—“ We have great joy and consolation in thy love because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.” Surely this is the joy of the Lord,—it was His joy personally to minister to the saints while here, it is the same joy now to Him to minister to them in heaven, and to supply those gifts by which His nourishing and cherishing love to the Church shall be continued. It was the refreshment “of the bowels of the saints”—their inmost affections were engaged to Philemon by witnessing the faith, love and grace in him, and Paul too was seeking the same refreshment from Philemon for himself, he would draw it forth on the occasion of sending back Onesimus, and, whilst drawing it forth, would at the same time impart all his own heart’s affection to Philemon,—“ thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels.” And is not this the exhibition of the way of our gracious God ? Is there nothing now that refreshes Him in this world which has rejected

* Any good thing. “ In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” But it is written, “ That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us,” not in our flesh, so here good is reckoned on as dwelling in Philemon, to be called into exercise for Christ’s glory.

Him, by casting out His Son, His well-beloved—His bowels. Surely it is the bowels of His mercy (Luke i. 78. marg.) which has refreshed us ; and it is the answer to this from us, which refreshes Him.—“ Put on therefore as the elect of God, bowels of mercies.” It is receiving a little one in the name of Christ, which is the receiving of Himself ; and when one such little one is received by us in the nourishing and cherishing love of Christ, then we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ. How constantly do our hearts disallow that God has any fellowship with His saints in their joy. If an Apostle could say, “ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth,” he says it, as an expression of the mind of Christ. Oh that the joy of the Lord might ever be the joy of our hearts.

What has God wrought ? well may we say this, when we see the Lord God Almighty, the High and Holy One, so presenting Himself to us as to beseech.—“ Now then we are ambassadors for God, as though God did beseech by us.” This is the grace of God exhibited in the ministry of His own Son first, and now in the ministry of reconciliation on the sure foundation of complete atonement. And this is the grace Paul would witness unto : he could have commanded, and yet for love’s sake he rather besought—he besought for his son Onesimus whom he had begotten in his bonds. Had Philemon listened to the ministry of reconciliation, and received the Son of God into his soul ? now let him as one reconciled to God himself, exercise it towards Onesimus. Paul, as the instrument, would say, whom I have begotten in my bonds ; but there was something much deeper than that, for every one born of God had been begotten out of the grave of Jesus, the first-begotten from the dead. How must every plea for Onesimus have led the soul of Philemon before God, and made it go over afresh all the detail of God’s grace to himself. What a blessed way to teach obedience by bringing all God’s love to ourselves before the soul. “ Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me ;” and what had Philemon been in time past to God, foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, but the knowledge of the love of God in his own soul

had now made him a useful servant of the Lord and His saints. Surely the leadings of his own soul must have directed Philemon to see what was convenient, and his benefit would be willingly conferred, not of necessity. How blessed is the intelligent and willing obedience of the saint, since it springs from the recognition of all the fulness of God's love. God exacts of us nothing, but sets before us His own ways; and those who are led of the Spirit follow them. There must be a much deeper knowledge of the grace of God, in order to more fruit-bearing unto God. The Apostle speaks of the gospel to the Colossians thus: "and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and *knew the grace of God in truth.*" This is what is needed by the saints now, the knowledge of the grace of God in truth.

Verse 15.—No one knew better than the Apostle, that where sin had abounded, grace had superabounded. But yet there seems a holy caution in the Spirit, whilst speaking of these things, lest we should think or speak of sin lightly. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, and delighting as He does, to magnify the grace of God in Christ, He always vindicates God's holy detestation of sin. Alas, how often do we find, that familiarity with the doctrines of grace, where there is no deep work in the soul, leads to light thoughts of sin. What holy caution is there in the words, "*For perhaps* he therefore departed from thee for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever." Onesimus, it is hinted, had wronged Philemon, had robbed or purloined, and then ran away from his master. Could God justify dishonesty and fraud? no; for no unrighteous person shall inherit the kingdom of God. The dishonesty of Onesimus led him to Rome, led him to Paul, led him to hear the gospel, but that did not alter its character the least. It might have brought Onesimus to self-acquaintance, and doubtless it did, to honest confession of what he had done, and thus to real humility; still it would always have stood by Onesimus, so as to prevent his glorying in any thing save in the grace of God abounding over all his sin. And thus whilst most secure in the knowledge of God's love, he would be most humble in himself. The very freeness of God's grace, and the completeness of the

purging of the blood of the Lamb, would give the justified sinner the deepest hatred of sin. But no one whose soul was not habituated to the tracing the ways of God in redemption, would have ventured on such a thought as is here expressed. In the largest view we see man, fallen from God as a creature, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, received back to God for ever. We see the prodigal departing from his Father's house for a season, after tasting of the bitterness of his own ways, through the love of the Father, received back for ever. Man, as a creature, might depart, and did depart from his standing in blessedness in relation to the Creator. Man, as a servant, was bound by no inseparable tie to God. But he that is born of God is inseparably united to God,—he is received by Him for ever. This is the joy of the Father's heart,—“thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.” What a place of blessing for Philemon to be put in, to share the joy of heaven over a repenting sinner, in receiving back Onesimus as a brother. Their relation one to the other, as master and slave, would speedily be dissolved,—“the servant abideth not in the house for ever,” but brotherhood in Christ is for ever. Had not the truth been that in which the soul of the Apostle lived, it could never have expressed itself so. His soul dwelt in God, and therefore expressed the ways and the thoughts of God.

But the Apostle would have Philemon share with him in this divine fellowship—“have fellowship with us, for truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ,”—the Lord had made Paul the partner of His deepest thoughts, Philemon knew that he had much in common with Paul, like precious faith and the common salvation and all the fulness of Christ. “If you count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.” He would have Philemon share with him in his joy over Onesimus, even as he shared with him so much in common besides. It is thus the Lord Jesus has fellowship with us, and we with Him, in the person of every saint, and makes each newly converted sinner to be a link of connection to bind Himself and us. If we receive them in His name we receive Him, and we partake of mutual joy. He would

have us count Him a partner, and then share His joy with Him. This is practical fellowship. But surely Philemon in the wisdom of the Spirit would have known, whilst his heart was bounding with gratitude to Paul, how to transfer the language of the Apostle as to himself, to the Lord Jesus, as true alone in the highest sense of Him. No one not living in the fullest power of communion with God, could so confidently have written as the Apostle here. He knew what that meant—"He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren:" He bore all for us; so the servant treading in the steps of his Master, would put himself under any responsibility that he could.—"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." Is not this the very language of Christ? Has our brother wronged us, let us look to Christ,—He has borne the wrong; how many a heart-burning, how much strife would thus be avoided. God has received him, by setting down the wrong to Christ's account: what blessing would it be to our own souls, to see the very wrong done to ourselves, borne by Christ. "I Paul have written it with my own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides." O the riches of the grace of our Lord. The servant dare not undertake more than the Lord has done; and surely it was in the knowledge of the ways of his Lord, that he used such language as this. If any thing is due to us from a brother, let us not exact it. He has written it with His own hand, He will repay,—"Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather be defrauded?" No one is a loser by foregoing any thing for the Lord's sake; although we owe ourselves to Him, and all that we have, yet He is so gracious as to undertake to repay any loss we put up with for His name sake. What a double obligation of grace was Philemon thus laid under,—a debtor to the grace of the Lord,—a debtor to the grace of the servant: surely this must have constrained him to cheerful acquiescence. How assuredly must Paul have reckoned on Philemon having the mind of Christ; and his desire was to call it into practical exercise. We too ought to reckon more on this mind in one another, and thus "to consider one another" to call it out. Onesi-

mus was not his own, he was his master's ; Philemon was not his own, he was Paul's, he was Christ's. But the Lord, and his servant who knew His ways, would not exact compliance on that principle : what a lesson was thus taught Philemon. It is the Lord's joy, when He might claim every thing, for " we are not our own," so to give us to stand in grace, as to do that which is well-pleasing to Him. Paul had now put Philemon on his standing in grace, and then he adds, " Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord : refresh my bowels in the Lord." How joy in the Lord ? unless the Lord was a sharer of the joy : He delights to see the fruit of His own grace, and therefore exacts nothing. Paul too would have his most inward affections refreshed, even as the bowels of the saints had been refreshed by the faith and love of Philemon. Well would it be for us, if we thought more of the inmost affections of Jesus ; and then we should easily learn that which would be refreshing unto Him. It is wonderful indeed, that any thing here should refresh Him ; but even from this polluted world, there is in the love of the saints, an odour of a sweet smell—a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God (Phil. iv. 18). God knows what is in man, and He knows what that new nature is which He has imparted,—it is His own nature. God can and does reckon largely on it, although He can put no confidence at all in the flesh : yea, He hath set it aside, He has judged it. God expects obedience in the spirit, it can and will obey God, and so judged the Apostle. " Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say." God of His grace has done more for us than ever we could have asked ; and He puts us in the place of showing grace, when He might have required all as Lord. The obedience of the saint cannot be circumscribed by literal enactment as that of a slave, for who would set bounds to love ? who would say to a child, this is all my heart expects from you ? We are " accepted in the beloved"—" sanctified unto obedience," but grace would lead beyond mere satisfying the actual demand made upon us in any given circumstances. The Apostle told Philemon what was convenient, but then leaves his soul to be exercised before the Lord, so as to carry his obe-

dience beyond that which might satisfy the actual call made on it, into the exhibition of the true grace of the Lord. This is the way of the Lord: He does not deal with us as servants, but leaves room for the exercise of grace. There would be no refreshment to Him, in seeing an unwilling obedience being rendered to a positive command, but He does delight to see the fruit of union with Himself manifested whilst we are here. Every day affords the occasion for thus manifesting this grace. And what is the Church, but the school where it is learnt. And what our miserable daily failures, but that we instead of seeking to exhibit the mind of Christ, are standing each one upon the ground of some right we have, which we will not allow to be interfered with. There can be no ground more wrongly assumed, than that the Church is a voluntary association, dependent on man's will. Every believer is of and in the Church, and it is disobedience on his part, if he fails to shew this.

But it is a great mistake to suppose that Church fellowship is a relief from individual responsibility, or a substitute for personal fellowship with the Lord Himself, it is the sphere where the grace learnt in personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus, is to be brought into exercise. The grace of the Lord Jesus Himself is learnt in its manifold exercise in His own wayward family. The grace which Paul learnt by the transforming power of fellowship with Christ, was carried out in his care for all the Churches. And when he saw his son in the faith, sinking under the pressure of much evil in the Church, he says to him, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." What we need is not so much knowledge, as the transforming power of fellowship with Jesus (2 Cor. iii. 18). Nothing can be put in the place of this. God will allow no flesh to glory in His presence, but he that glorieth, shall glory only in the Lord. And the training and discipline of the soul now, is to know this practically,—learning, painfully learning, the absence of all that is good in ourselves, and happily learning the fulness of Christ, which is needed by every one of us. And God in His wisdom, brings each one of us into those circumstances wherein the fulness which He knows to be in us in Christ, shall be called forth. Surely His ways are higher than our ways,

and His thoughts than our thoughts. Blessed school indeed, though we are the most inapt of scholars, to be brought as Moses inside the very glory to learn His ways, whilst those who are outside can see no farther than His acts. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

THE REVELATION.—CHAPTERS IV. V.

"THE following remarks are presented by the writer with much more of diffidence than those in a preceding paper (page 216). He would wish them, and indeed every thing else, to be read with the feeling—these are only suggestions for examination. Let all as taught of the Spirit, "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

The communication of the Son of man made to John, *on earth*, in the character of Ancient of Days, being closed, we have (in this 4th chapter) a new scene presented to us,—a door opens *in heaven*, and a voice calls John to ascend. It was the same voice which spake to him in Patmos, yet his person is now hidden—He is still of course in Himself, Son of man, and Ancient of Days too; yet it is not in either of these characters that the call is made; but, so to speak, anonymously. His proper place too as centre of the heavenly calling, was the Father's throne; as He says Himself, John xvii. 5,—“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was;” and Rev. iii. 21, “am set down with my Father in His throne.” In Himself, He is still without question, the centre, as well as originator, and certain confirmer of all the blessings and glory of the heavenly calling; for the substance of that word—“why persecutest thou me” (the expressive motto of the heavenly calling),

is "the union in the Holy Ghost of the Church and the eternal Son of God;" and nothing can change that. In Christ from before the foundation of the world—in Him now—dead and our life hid with Christ in God—thence the Church cannot emerge, till to be presented before the throne faultless, with exceeding great glory.—Oh! the riches of His wisdom, grace, power and love. Yet while we thankfully acknowledge that our portion cannot change, because His glory in whom we are, is ever the purpose of the Father's mind; let us not be so absorbed in that which touches us, as to forget that He (and not we) is the centre of God's thoughts.

Now in the revelation of the heavenly calling there seems to me (I will not speak positively) to have been in the Father's mind a double object as to Jesus: first, the formation, by the revelation of it, of the bride; secondly, as looked at simply in connection with dispensation, the showing out the irreparable character of man on the earth.—The Holy Ghost was on earth, sent as the power of life and testimony from the Son of man in the height of God the Father's glory, witnessing to them that received His testimony, of their individual union with Him, concerning whom the testimony was. To those who know Jesus, these blessings are unchangeable; but in regard of dispensation to the earth, looked at as the earth, it is clear they were given to prove its badness, and then to pass away. Now though as to testimony in dispensation, nothing else may be opened, to the Church (properly so called) fuller and deeper things are opened, as the power to sustain it in the perception of the failure of all around; for, from the moment God pronounces a dispensation, as to the earth, frustrate, the remnant always have had the additional strength ministered to them, "of the prophetic light of that which is to come;" though the mercy of God may still keep him, waiting to be gracious, and not immediately bring in the judgment threatened. The faithful Jew was not robbed of the blessings first ministered to the nation, when its apostacy from God was in principle consummated (for the essential principle of God's conduct is uniform), but He was cast by the testimony of prophetic light (and

prophecy came not in save with failure), upon better things to come; and, on the other hand, the judgment was not immediately carried out because of the long-suffering of God. Just so with us—He who now calls to John from the heavens, though Himself still the centre of the heavenly calling, calls not in that character; in Himself, still, the sure charter of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and known as such to them that believe, but his report in the world, in this character, having failed (though it in grace may still be continued), He takes another, and for the Church, a higher place in this his return to heaven from the isle of Patmos. And thus, I think, they who know the principles of God's dealings, must here look upon the Lord. Moreover, the mode of revelation is a new thing, not "faith," as in the heavenly calling, but caught up into heaven—the *servant's* portion. We have not here the glory (referred to above) proper to God as God abstractedly, dwelling in the light to which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen nor can see, but something new,—“A throne *was set* in heaven,” and this throne specially connected with providence as subject to redemption.

The throne* here presented to us does not seem to me to be

* The term “throne” is comparatively but rarely used in scripture as meaning the thing we call a throne: it is generally used to present the abstract ideas of authority, dignity, &c. This is remarkably the case (Gen. xli. 40) when it first occurs. And thus we have, in Jeremiah, the Lord saying (chap. i 15) “all the families of the kingdoms of the north... shall come and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem;” and (chap. xliii. 10), “I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid.” The import of these passages, as to the transfer of authority and dominion from Jerusalem to the nations, is very plain. I would remark that we have the throne of the Lord spoken of in a somewhat similar way in Jer. xlix. 38, where the Lord says “I will set my throne in Elam;” meaning, as the context shews, that Elam should not longer exercise sway in independence of Him—that His own sway should be there, destroying its evil, and eventually establishing it in blessing: just so in chap. iii. 17, at that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; i.e. in the day of the future return of Israel, as it is said also (Ez. xliii. 7), “The place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile.” Thus in those portions of scripture, which describe God's having shown His throne to any of His servants, the place it occupied, or the place *from* which or *to* which it was moving, becomes very important:—if seen resting *in* a place, there the power of the Lord abides; if seen coming *from* a place, there, whence it comes, the power of the Lord now is; and if seen going *to* any place, thither the power of the Lord is removing. Thus when the Lord would deeply impress upon Ezekiel

the throne of the Father, properly so called, nor the throne of God, as dwelling in the heaven of heavens, but a new glory,—the seat and position of the sustainer and ruler of providence in His acts for Jesus and the Church, in the midst of all opposed to them both; working out, as has been noticed in a former paper, *the links of connection between this and the future dispensation*, and so bringing in His and her nuptial day. There is a greater depth in all of John's writings, than in those of Paul, because by Paul the Spirit was pleased, as by the Apostle of the Gentiles, to give those manifestations of truth in Christ, and those flowings forth of truth by Christ, which, while the basis of Paul's gospel and the dispensation, were, in their proclamation, the means of laying hold,

the fact of Israel's being given up to judgment, He presents him *first* (chap. i.) with the throne of the Lord coming *from the north* (v. 4),—if the power of the Lord was in the north, then not in Jerusalem; and then, *secondly* (on the principle of confirmation, Gen. xli. 32, "for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God)," in a vision, he is shewn the temple of Jerusalem and all its defilement (chap. viii.) and consequent judgment; (chap. ix.) and then (chap. x. and xi.) this very same throne going with the glory,—first, toward the threshold of the house (ver. 4); then from the threshold (ver. 18), mounting up above the earth (ver. 19), and then away right out of the city (xi. 23). Micaiah's vision of the throne (1 Kings, xxii. 19, and 2 Chron. xviii. 18), as connected with Ahab's death and the scattering of Israel, and Isaiah's vision of the throne, (chap. vi.) as connected with the judicial sealing of the nation, are important, as throwing further light upon the subject. In principle, I should think, they stand toward Israel's rejection, in the then dispensation, in very much the same way as the appearance of our Lord, (Rev. i.) and the revelation of the throne, (chap. iv. and v.) do toward the passing away of the present dispensation. Neither the one nor the other are proper to the order of the respective dispensations; and to me, the discovery of Jesus upon such a throne, and so engaged, tells as much as to this dispensation, as the remnant of Israel in the Psalms, seeing his throne, not among themselves, but *in heaven*, does as to them (Ps. xi. 4, &c.) The position of our Lord, on His rejection by earth, is marked (Heb. iv. 16) as a throne of grace, and this as we see, none other than the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (chap. viii. 1)—the throne of God (xii. 2), even of the Father (Rev. iii. 21): after this we have Him shown to us on the throne of providence, so overruling things on earth for Himself and the Church, as to bring in the new glory awaiting them.—The book of thrones would do well as a name for this book, for many thrones are spoken of, and the word itself occurs in the short space of the book about forty times; showing this, at least, that the ideas connected with thrones, are the subject matter of the book. Besides this, there are the thrones which He and the Church are to sit on (Dan. vii. 9, Rev. xx. 4): as a part of these, the twelve of the apostles rule in Israel (Matt. xix. 28, Luke xxii. 30); His own seat among them (Luke xxii. 30, and Zech. vi. 12, 2 Sam. vii. 16, 1 Chron. xvii. 12, Isa. ix. 7); His seat of assize of the nations (Matt. xxv. 31), which should, perhaps, have been mentioned sooner in the order. These as to judgment and rule in man's day. Then the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11), ushering the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

by the Spirit, upon the souls of the elect while still in the world. But by John, the Spirit communicates rather what was true of and in the Son in God—the sure, inalienable portion of every *servant* of God—the root rather of that which was dispensed, than the thing dispensed itself. And here, I think, we have just this, the *opening* more definitely, because simply as connected with *servants*, of the springs of the moral glory which had been the basis of the heavenly calling; and the peculiar value of the revelation here given will, I think, be found to be the discovery to those whom it affects, of what is the proper sphere, power and aims of Jesus after the Church, *as a witness*, had failed; as His revelation, in the character of the servant of God to John, in chap. i. see p. 220, shows it **ALREADY** had.—That it will be found to unfold the history of the apostasy's latter-day course and judgment too, I doubt not. The song of the elders (chap. v.) explains who they are.

The symbolic force of a throne, I take to be “dominion” in the large sense including as much the regulation of what is subject, as the subjugation and repressing of what is not subject. The place in which the symbol of this dominion is displayed, is important, *heaven*: it was a dominion also in exercise, *one sat on the throne* (in the day of the vision—not therefore a vision of future glory), and He was, to appearance, connected with things on earth things of glory, strength, and beauty among men—*like to a jasper and a sardine stone*.

Around this symbol of dominion, as it were, the arch or canopy over it, was the sign of the covenant in providence. Whether the comparison of the rainbow to an emerald, refer to the prevalence of colour, or the brilliancy and distinctness thereof, or to the effulgence so peculiarly the property of the emerald, or to all of these, I know not. But it was not a vision of one person, though there was one pre-eminent above all others,—He had attendants—twenty four elders, and these were associate in His glory. Their twenty four thrones are noticed first, then their persons, and then the character of the personal glory—white robes, expressive of “innocence and victory;” while the golden crowns upon their heads,

told that they were sensible of the honour of this their association with Him whose was the glory of **THE** throne.

But *the* throne which grace had made to them the centre of glory, was in itself the source of manifestative discernment, authority, and judgment ; for out of it proceeded lightnings and voices and thunderings ; while before it, and, as it were, under its immediate protection, was the full and perfect judgment-discerning presence of the Spirit of God, and the symbol of unchanging purity ; for so I understand the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God, and the sea of glass, clear as crystal. Supported by the throne, and that in a way to show they were at home there, (like the seraphim in Isaiah vi.) were the four living creatures, as witnesses of all connected with that throne and the object of it. They are, I think, the four heads, to man's eye at least, of the inmates of **THE ARK**—the representatives of which would be the ox, the lion, and man, and the eagle. The connection of this throne also with providence under covenant, is marked clearly enough by the rainbow. The connection which the kingdom of Israel had with providence, will amply account for the distinguished place the living creatures have assigned to them elsewhere in scripture, in connection with *his* glory, though there they are sustaining the throne,—here, sustained by it ; while the modification of matters here, from the state of things in Old Testament times, accounts, perhaps, for the differences. The distinctive characteristics of the four, are important perhaps to be noticed, because severally connected with the four first seals being opened. The wings appear to mark preparedness for movement, as proper for the suite of one who sat upon the throne of providence ; and the eyes present them as having all their intelligence absorbed in the acts and ways of Him whose throne it was ; whilst the unwearied, unceasing character of their service, is a song of praise. Their praise is followed by the worship of the elders. The order of the songs, and the difference of them, ought to be noticed. First, the living creatures,—then the elders.—The ceaseless cry of the former—Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come :

2 x 2

the title, Lord God Almighty, and the description which follows it, "which was and is and is to come," are both abstract; and so, I think, in this case, is the thrice repeated epithet, holy; referring, I think, not to the identity of God's acts with His moral character, nor to the consistency of His acts with His being God, but more immediately to that isolate distinctness of His person, as God the author of all things. And in their song I see nothing of what we, as the Church, should properly count worship. We have now that which was here represented, I conceive, in principle at least, in "not one sparrow falling to the ground without the Lord's permission," (Matt. x.) and "their sound going forth into all the earth" &c., (Ps. xix. compare Rom. x.) and in all such things as show the glory of God in that which is upheld in providence; and surely the very being, and therefore, the every work and act of all that which was spared at the deluge, and is now equally with man upheld by the covenant of providence, has a voice of praise to God. From nature as such, there is a rising unto God continually of praise; for it is the living proof and witness of His Deity, and of the Trinity in Deity too, for providence is upheld by grace, though *by its nature* it is connected with Him simply as Lord God Almighty,—His dispensation names. These three names, I would remark, present three very different glories, as developed at creation, by *God*; toward Abraham, as *Almighty*; and with Israel, as *Jehovah* or *Lord*. While by present position it is connected with Him, as "*He who was and is and is to come*," if by this expression is to be understood "continuity of being,"* or (as I rather conceive) "that which He is in Himself." And all this, to one taught of God, is the giving to Him of glory, and honour, and thanks; for while these representatives were indeed and in truth heard by John thus speaking, believing them to be but symbols, I look for their saying that only which is truly expressed by that which they represent. And when they do thus, the twenty-four associates in the kingdom mark it.—Just, in principle, as we, noting the flowing of the tide and stream of nature around,

* The continuity of being, seems rather expressed by He that liveth for ever and ever (ver. 9).

and seeing our God in all the movements of that which is subject to providence, should mark it and give thanks. There is something blessed in the double standing of the saint,—as to body, represented by the four living creatures; but in spirit, by the elders: just as in type, the priesthood of the tabernacle marks the true standing and privilege and service of the saint before God—the Levite his service and work before the world. Well, the elders mark it, and fall a worshipping.—And first they fall before Him that sitteth upon the throne,—His person being that with which they have more immediately to do; then they worship Him as the continuous one, casting off their crowns at His feet, and adjudging that He is worthy to receive glory, honour, and power, because He created all things; and for His pleasure, they are and were created. The character of worship in the Church, as contrasted with that in nature, or even in providence (as among the Jews), is here evidenced; personal and mental prostration and surrender to the person and purposes of Him with whom we have to do, instead of an external surrender to the display of power and majesty. The enjoyment of God in outward things, was then obedience, but now the blessed enjoyment of the mind and purposes and objects of God.

Perhaps the expressions, *they rest not day and night, &c.* in the above, show the scene as in itself a continuous one, though here presented for the definite results of which we read in the next chapter.

Chap. V.—It is blessed to see the purposes of God, at all times, and especially as connected with the glory of Jesus. It may seem a little thing, yet not too little for one that loves to see God's estimate of the Lamb, to observe how all of which we read in these two chapters (the 4th and 5th), is working up to the discovery of fresh glory in the Lamb. In the right hand of power of the occupant and possessor of the throne of providence, was a book, though firmly sealed and closed, it was evidently fully written, and surely this is blessed truth for us, that the counsel of Him whom we know as Father (for whatsoever be His aspect, when revealed upon this throne, to us He is well known as the

GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus and of us), reigns ever in providential arrangements, and blessed as at all times, this would be most pre-eminently so after the scene brought before us in chap. i. But the roll was firmly and perfectly sealed, and how its contents were to come abroad to the Church militant appeared not. Now see how the mind of heaven comports with the mind we have as saints, and all giving glory to Jesus. A strong angel advances, and in a bold and audible voice challenges for one worthy to undo and unfold the book of the power of the throne of providence. But there was no one to take up the guantlet. And the challenge only, therefore, thus far availed to shew the poverty of the heaven and earth and lower parts of the earth, for no one therein could take the book, or even look thereon. A lesson, and an important one, is taught us here, of the inability of any of us, save in the Spirit, to read providence; and an example of the sorrow we reap if we do so, is perhaps present in John himself. For he neglecting this, and seeing that there was no one in heaven, earth, or beneath, worthy to open the book, or even to look on it, fell a weeping. Up to this point, all had opened to him blessedly; but here, when as the servant of God, all the mind and purposes of his Master seemed about to be unfolded, sorrow fills him to find that no one is worthy to do it.—Where was John's faith now? he wept much—wept much at what? at the fresh instance God was giving of that which was all John's delight—"that none but Jesus could be the channel of communication of any blessing from God."—Alas! how the saint gets into sorrow and uncertainty, however right the heart be, when the purposes* of God are lost sight of. God's purpose in all this was to show out more and more the glory of His Jesus. So one of the twenty-four elders says to John, "weep not"—Behold the lion hath prevailed, which is of the tribe of Juda—the root of David, to open the book and the seven seals of it. The elder speaks not of Jesus as such; but, seeing Him

* Mary in faithful love weeping by the empty tomb of Jesus, and this same John falling, in chap. i. at Jesu's feet in terror, are also striking instances of this. And yet even in these failures we see this blessed and comfortable truth, that though, as in the flesh, we may get wrong (through the eyes of our understanding not being enlightened), yet as in the Spirit being in Christ, all is still right in God, and ours too.

as in the purposes, plans, and acts of God, here employed about that machinery which was to usher in Israel's glory and kingdom, he speaks of Him as the lion of the tribe of Juda : as well the ensign of the head of the house of Israel, as the root of David, or living base of all the kingly glory of Israel. Now it is remarkable, that though the challenge was—"Who is worthy" &c. and though the failure had been from want of worthiness ; here, it is not said, "the lion is worthy ;" but consistently enough with His manifestation, it is "hath overcome." So that we see this installation of the Lord into the office of the prophet, during the apostasy to the Church, and so bringing the mind of the faithful servant to the knowledge, not only of things of spiritual nature, but also as of earthly things, is a fruit of redemption ;—an achievement of the Lord's, and not simply the result of personal aptitude, though of course, none but He could have done it. The change is immediate—abrupt, but most blessed—John was weeping that none could be found worthy, when one who had the mind of heaven, tells him that the strength of the lion &c. hath prevailed. What will be the terrific majesty of this potentate ? but no, he looked from amid the tears of his own weakness to the strong one ; and He was, though in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, the emblems of perfection of strength, and seven eyes, the perfection of intelligence, as to all on the earth, for they are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. It might surely have been said, for it was truth known, "He is worthy ;" and so it must be said, yet this is kept back here, as showing why and how He opened the book ; viz. as the Lamb with the seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.* He goes right up to Him that sits upon the throne, and not only so, but takes out of His hand the book.—Then the meed of praise arises from the representatives of the redeemed ; for to them now is reserved the estimating of the thoughts of God concerning Him thus displayed, as powerful indeed, yet more wonderful far, for that in which they more especially

* The Holy Ghost, not as in the Church, but as in the world for Christ and the living members in the body.

know him—"His worthiness." When He took the book, the heads of creation, saved in providence, fell before Him as did also the twenty-four elders, each of whom had harps and golden vials full of incense, the prayers of saints. The association of creation here with the elders, is both blessed and important, as also set before us in Rom. viii. all groaning together until now &c. &c. But how come we to find golden vials full of prayers of saints? Were they the prayers for this very thing—that accumulation of groans and sighs for this very redemption of creation, which, this new place in which the Lord was revealed, told to be at hand? For sighs and groans have been ascending for this, how long! and not yet answered, though in full accordance with the mind both of Him that said, sit thou at my right hand *until* &c. and of him who is still trusting in God (Heb. ii. 13). And they sang a new song, their tale of His worthiness. They open it with "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals of it." And then give the explanation of the worthiness, "for thou wast slain, and didst purchase us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and didst make us kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign over the earth." Now here, the cause of their love to praise Him, is given as the cause of His worthiness in this particular—not of the Lamb as connected with the throne, and the book of Him that sat thereon. The throne was *of providence*, upholding all things according to the purpose and counsel of God, to the glory of His grace as to the elect. That which made Him worthy here, as the communicator from God to God's servants, was that he had proved himself, as the Lamb, to be one, fully one with both; the servant also and means of connection of both. Thou art worthy;—Why? because in being slain thou didst declare the heart and mind and grace of God who gave the blood, and in whose hand the blessing of the blood still is—didst open His way to become again a master to man, and man's way to become again a servant to God.—And more than this didst purchase to him the Church from out of the whole sphere of the world, giving them liberty and redemption in the knowledge of the price of the ransom paid.—Who then so worthy to take the

book, or history of the acts of God reigning in providence, and open it to His servants.

No sooner have these witnesses of redeeming love, stayed from their chorus, than its echo is reverberated from those, who in them have learnt with others the manifold wisdom of God—the angels, that excel in strength to do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His words, the especial agents in the kingdom of providence—in close attendance upon its throne, and the representatives of its objects, they take up the song, and take it up heartily. Their host is numerous, for it contained myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands; their position favourable, for they stood in circle round the throne, and the beasts and the elders. All lent their voice, and that a loud voice; and the song a blessed one: yet oh how far less touching the melody that is heard (though the harmony be perfect) of this choir, than of that which preceded it, yet they did what they could, for theirs it was not, and is not, to tell the tale of pardoning blood applied to guilty consciences; nor to count the rich glory of the golden grains found on the risen body; nor to trace their privileges, how glorious, how divine! But they did what they could, and gave Him, *as Redeemer*, the full tribute of their kingdom and power, for as Redeemer He takes again and again in this book, a place among them as their Head, as God's own messenger (chap. i. 1, viii. 3–5, &c.); and they sang, Worthy is the Lamb slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory.

And then a yet lower order, the voice of creation as subject to these. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and which are in the sea, and all things in them, heard I saying, &c.

The song of these, though the chorus is yet more extensive, and none withholds its tribute, is still of a lower order.

The circle had reached a larger ring in the water, and was in itself, though the issue of that which was perfect, neither so distinctly marked, nor in itself so perfect. To him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb, thanksgiving, and honour, and glory, and strength, for ever and ever.

And then how beautiful the close. The four living creatures say, Amen, and the twenty-four elders fall and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever.

In the first of these songs, we have the representatives of the redeemed, tracing out the fulness of the merits of the Lamb, and giving God's estimate of them, or descending from God's estimate to the Lamb's perfections, themselves being judges.

In the second, the angels looking from the Lamb to all subject distinctively to themselves, power, riches, and wisdom, and generally to creation.

In the third, we have creation presenting its own tribute.

The Church never knew God, but in and through the Lamb slain.

The angels found a new relationship to Him as such ; but creation had only to recognize that the throne of its government was now likewise His throne.

It seems as though the last chorus marks a synchronism with the time of the revelation of the new name of Lordship, as set forth Phil. ii.; and so it does, yet we may observe that in principle, and in one sense in fact too, there was and is a fulfilling of it, for the choir here are inanimate and irrational creation, and though less perfectly now, yet still in measure it is sending up continually and universally some such meed of praise.

The three choruses arise from the redeemed, the angels and creation.

The burden of the first chorus, viz. that of the redeemed, is The Lamb has redeemed us, *therefore* is He worthy before God on man's behalf, to communicate the secret purposes of providence. The choir fell before the Lamb, and theirs was a new song.

The burden of the second chorus was the Lamb slain is worthy of all creation's tribute. The choir stood around and had a loud voice.

The burden of the third,—all tribute for ever and ever to both Him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.

To my own soul, this scene of worship is very refreshing and instructive. It brings before me all those moral features, characteristics, and glories, proper to our God and the Lamb, in them-

selves in a new connection. The scene cannot be dwelt on without a warm response from the inner man in each saint. And how blessedly does it instruct, like a pattern shown in the mount, of the true and real bearing of the mind of heaven. Each vessel, according to its measure and capacity, pouring forth a volume of incense, in praise and honour. Oh when we think of the weary working of man's mind, and the folly of his ways, as seen on earth, how refreshing are such contemplations—the vision of true worship ascending up before God and the Lamb. Perhaps it is felt the more, because seen in connection with *a new* throne : not as I said before, the scene whither we have been wont to resort to have communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ ; but that Father and that Son (our elder brother) in their state and majesty, as in the glory of Lord God Almighty, &c. Now the flow of affection and tribute of love and honour here, is just to me what, if a king's son, accustomed in the domestic circle to see love and confidence, the characteristics of the children toward the king—what, I say, it would be to mark the flow of gratitude and love and honour rising from the subject people toward my own loved Father, when in the throne of state. But besides this, the new throne tells of fuller honour and glory to Him, whom we love.

For our God is presented, as in the failure of His present witness on earth, taking a place again definitely connected with Israel, and the Lord still at His right hand—the revealer to the Church of all the coming exercises of His power.

May the Lord give us taste for, and enjoyment in, the contemplation of such scenes, and make them mighty to help us to keep the service of Jesus ever before us.

NOTICES OF THE WALDENSES.

DEAR BROTHER,

I met with a passage sometime since, in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, respecting the Waldenses, which interested me much, as marking the identity of their principles with those which many are now led to see as the truth of God. You will see that the principles attributed to the Waldenses, differ in many points from those which appear in Mosheim. In reading the narration, the thought which most impressed me was, that where Christians come to the Word of God, simply desiring to know "what saith the scripture," and having no system either to frame or to support, they arrive at the same conclusions.

Believe me,

Yours, very affectionately in the Lord,

W. H.

From the Encyclopædia Metropolitana, Part 35—"Heresies of the Twelfth Century." Vol. iii. of third division, chap. lxxiv. p. 653.

"Of all the sects that arose in the course of this century, the one which, as, well by the purity of its doctrine, as by the ability and courage of its leaders, attracted the greatest number of followers, and exercised the most permanent influence, was that of the Waldenses. The accounts given of the birth of this sect are various. By some they are said to have derived their origin and name from the valleys of Piedmont, the inhabitants of

which, called the *Vaudois*, had, up to this period, retained in their inaccessible fastnesses, the primitive doctrine of christianity, uncontaminated by the corruptions with which it had everywhere else become infected. Others ascribe its commencement, to the exertions of Peter Waldus, an eminent merchant of Lyons, who having employed a priest to translate for him, into French, a great part of the holy scriptures, together with portions of the comments of the early fathers, was so struck with the difference thus presented to him, between the doctrine of the gospel and that of the Church, that he was impelled to devote himself to the duty of recalling his contemporaries to the knowledge and practice of the religion of Christ. With this view, he gave up his business, distributed all he had among the poor, and putting himself at the head of a few followers, began to travel from place to place, preaching everywhere what he considered to be the pure doctrine of the scriptures. This was about the year 1180. The attempts made by the clergy, to suppress the new sect in its beginning, only gave it additional vogue; but the story of these exertions, as well as of the subsequent progress of the Waldenses, belongs more properly to the following century.

We shall only add here, a short account of their tenets, as well as we have been able to ascertain their nature, amid the confused, and often, contradictory accounts of the various writers, who have undertaken to describe them. Their distinguishing character seems to have consisted, in a strict adherence to what they considered to be the doctrine originally delivered by Christ to His apostles; and nearly all their errors are to be traced to the adoption of a too literal interpretation of the words of the gospel; without sufficiently considering how far the sense of particular precepts was to be limited or modified, not merely by the general sense of the particular passage, or by the opposition of others, but often also, by the peculiar circumstances under which they were first spoken, and the proper office and function of the persons to whom they were addressed. It was thus that taking, as they did, the sermon on the mount, as the great summary of Christian duty, they conceived themselves bound by its injunctions

to abstain from all warfare, whether just or unjust, whether private or public ; from all resistance of injury ; from suits of law ; from oaths upon any occasion ; and from all care for their worldly substance, beyond that provision which their daily labour afforded for the day passing over them. But whatever were the extravagancies into which they were betrayed on these points, it is impossible not to respect their very errors, springing as they did from a spirit of the purest self-denial, and a sincere anxiety to tread, as they conceived, as strictly as possible in the footsteps of their divine Master. Upon other matters, their opinions do not seem to differ materially from those of the reformers, who in a later age, and upon grounds substantially similar, conceived themselves obliged to separate from the Church of Rome.”

The chapter from which the above extract is taken, is stated in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, to have been written by the Rev. Alfred Lyall, M.A. Trinity College, Cambridge.

Encyclopædia Metropolitana, Part 36—History. Chap. lxxvii. vol. iii. division 3. “Ecclesiastical History of the 13th Century.” p. 755.

The sect or heresies which prevailed in this century, for the most part took their rise in the one preceding ; under our account of which period, the origin and nature of them have been described. Of these the Waldensian and Albigensian Churches, form by far the most considerable. We have already given a general statement of the opinions and tenets of these singular and oppressed people, who seem indisputably to have anticipated the promulgation of the greater part of those truths, the assertion of which constitutes the chief glory of the Reformation of Luther. The accounts which we have of them, are derived almost wholly from their adversaries ; as such, of course, we can place but a very qualified confidence in their statements ; but it is clear, even from these alone, that it was the opposition they offered to the corruptions of doctrine and practice prevailing in the Church and clergy of that age, which formed the distinguishing character of the sects in

question. Among the specific objects of their reprobation, are to be found almost all the superstitions and mummeries which, during the last six centuries, had overgrown the fabric of the Romish Church. On the other hand, it may easily be believed that in their war against these abuses, they should in some instances, have extended their hostility to parts of the existing system which were better warranted, either by scripture or sound tradition ; such excess being nothing more than the ordinary result of human impetuosity under similar circumstances of excitement and zeal.

The principle of separation on the part of these sectaries, as we have before had occasion to observe, was a strict and literal interpretation of the doctrine and precepts of the gospel. Upon this ground they were early and readily led to reject the greater portion of the rites and practices of the Romish Church ; together with the invocation of saints, the worshipping of relics, and the doctrines of commutable penance, transubstantiation and purgatory. Together with these,—however, they are accused of annulling all the sacraments, including even baptism and the eucharist ; but this imputation is hardly supported on sufficient grounds. There seems, indeed, reason to believe that they objected to *infant* baptism ; and in the Lord's supper, they held that the consecration might be effected by any one of clean heart and hands, as well as by a priest ; but, however erroneous might be their tenets on these points, the inference from them is not a necessary one, that they deemed lightly or irreverently of the sacramental rites themselves. A more serious error, is that of which they are accused, and apparently with foundation, of rejecting the necessity of any established succession of priesthood at all ; an error into which they were evidently misled, by the spectacle of the irregularities and disorders into which the abuse of the true doctrine had impelled the clergy of that age. Some of them even denounced all worldly possessions in the hands of ministers ; and contended, that since the time of Sylvester, when “the poison of temporalities” first entered the hierarchy, the Church of Rome had ceased to be the Church of Christ, and therefore was wholly destitute of proper authority over His followers.

It is easily conceivable that the court of Rome would lose no time, and omit no means, in effecting the extirpation of opinions like these. Among the very first acts of Pope Innocent III. (1198,) was the mission of two legates to the south of France, armed with authority to use every means, whether spiritual or fleshly, for the speedy suppression of them. This mission was shortly followed by the declaration of a formal crusade against their partisans, and more particularly Raymond, Count of Toulouse, who had made himself remarkable, if not as the follower of the new teachers, at least as their protector and friend. Of the progress and events of this war, a more particular account will be found under our head of French history. After a long and obstinate struggle, the Papal cause, backed as it was by the arms of the King of France, obtained a complete triumph; Raymond VII., Earl of Toulouse, was compelled to purchase peace by giving his daughter, and the reversion of his states, to the French King's brother; and by authorizing the formal establishment of the tribunal of inquisition throughout his territories.

It is from that period that we are to date the regular establishment of this formidable tribunal. Originally the term of inquisitors was ascribed to certain missionaries, despatched by the holy see to the districts reported to be infected with heresy, for the purpose of preaching to the people, and recalling them to the faith by the ordinary methods of exhortation; upon the failure of which however, they were not merely empowered to resort to the artillery of anathema and excommunication, but had further authority to call upon the secular arm to assist in carrying such sentence into execution. This is obvious from several letters, which Innocent III., in the first year of his pontificate (1198), addressed to the bishops of Languedoc and of Gascony. In one of these, he especially recommends to their care the two Cistercian brothers, Guy and Rayner, whom he begs them to assist in their *labours* for the conversion of the heretics, and to observe inviolably whatsoever they should ordain for the punishment of the obstinate and refractory. His words are, "We command all the princes, counts, and noblemen, of your province, to assist them strenuously

in the same cause, so that after brother Rayner shall have pronounced sentence of excommunication against them, the lords should confiscate their lands, banish them from their territories, and punish severely such as should dare to remain." And Rayner was authorized to call upon them to do this under penalty of excommunication and interdict to be levelled against themselves.

It is upon the ground of his having instituted these missions of research, and of the power with which he armed them, by the 3rd canon of the Lateran Council, of calling upon the secular force to execute any sentence they might pronounce, that Innocent III. is generally considered as the founder of the Inquisition. We must observe however, that it was not until somewhat later that the *tribunal*, properly so called, was regularly and permanently established. This part of the institution dates strictly from the time of Gregory IX., who in the year, 1233, discharged the bishops of France from the task of detecting and punishing heresy, and intrusted the duty to the Dominican Friars alone. * * * * *

The most remarkable circumstance in the internal history of the Church, in the 13th century, is the foundation of the mendicant orders. Although at no period was the ascendancy of the clergy more complete, or more undisputed than at the present one, yet that very circumstance, naturally tended to relax all the nerves of ecclesiastical discipline. In proportion as the wealth, power, and immunities of the clergy increased, in the same degree were all the motives and habits by which they were attached and restricted to the performance of their specific duties, in danger of corruption and disturbance. This was peculiarly the case with the regular clergy: an institution vicious in its principle; and the several communities of which, by the acquisition of great riches and privileges, almost necessarily and immediately, degenerated into the merest hot-beds of sloth and luxury. The popes in general appear to have been fully awakened to the fact of this general dissolution of order and discipline on the part of the clerical body; and wherever their own interests or power, were not immediately interested in the abuses, they commonly manifested a sufficient

zeal for the correction of them. The enforcement of some reformation on these points formed, indeed, the principal object of most of the canons decreed by the councils, whether general or provincial, which were assembled in the course of the present century. But the evil was one which it was difficult either to remedy or to check by the effect of laws and regulations, however severe or searching. It resulted in a great degree, from the very position itself of the clergy ; and the natural consequences of the disorder, could be averted or palliated only by the introduction into the body politic of the Church, of a new principle of life and action, which might invigorate or revive its languid constitution.

That succour was seasonably found in the establishment of the mendicant, or begging orders. The Catholic writers themselves appear to admit, that the original hint of these institutions was derived from the practices and professions of the very heretics, whom they made it their first business to counteract and suppress. The Waldensian and Albigensian sects, as we have seen, had adopted as their rule of life, a strict and literal adherence to the precepts of the gospel. With this view they professed to abandon all worldly possessions, and to lead a life of poverty, mortification, and incessant devotion. The impression which was in this way made upon the multitude, and the contrast which the heretical leaders thus exhibited to the manners of that hierarchy, whose corruption and luxury they impugned, was soon felt by the Catholics themselves ; and whether from the contagion of example, from an ambition of similar distinction, or from the suggestion and contrivance of the higher powers, an order of men soon came forward in the Church, pretending to exemplify the perfection of the Christian life, on the strength of nearly the same austerities with those which were practiced by the obnoxious sectaries themselves. It was, as might be expected, on the same scene, the borders of France and Spain, that these new performers first made their appearance."

The chapter from which the last extract is taken, is stated in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, to have been written by the editor, the Rev. Edward Smedley, M.A. late Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.

RETRANSLATIONS OF SOME PASSAGES IN THE EPISTLES.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 362. VOL. IV.

THE true force of the word “*ανταναπληρωω*” in this passage, has, I conceive, been overlooked by the translators, who have rendered it as though it were simply *αναπληρωω*.* It is said indeed (and it may be so), that the preposition *αντι*, has sometimes no force in composition. The mere fact however, that it is compounded with this verb in this place only in the New Testament, and never in the LXX., is of itself sufficient to indicate that it has some value here, and that this very uncommon compound word is not used in this passage, and in it alone, without design. The actual value then of this preposition in composition here is, I believe, the same as it has when used simply, in John i. 16, “*χαρις αντι χαριτος*” “Grace answering to grace.”

The verse should therefore be translated thus : “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and *correspondingly fill up* that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, in *my* flesh (compare ‘in the body of *his* flesh,’ verse 22), for His body’s sake, which is the Church.” The meaning being this : that Paul was ready for the sake of Christ’s mystical body—the Church, to fill up in *his* flesh, pain for pain, suffering for suffering, what was yet lacking in his own afflictions† of the full measure of those of Christ (see 2 Cor. i. 5, 6, iv. 10, 15).

* The ambiguity of this passage, as it stands at present, has given rise to an opinion, no where, that I know, authorised by scripture; namely, that there is a certain, specific amount of sufferings predetermined for the mystical body,—the head and members; of which each member must endure exactly his allotted portion. According to this idea, “the sufferings of Christ” must here mean those of the body under that title, and yet the body is then spoken of as distinct, “For His body’s sake, which is the Church.”

† The word translated “afflictions” in this passage is, I believe, never applied to the strictly vicarious sufferings of Christ.

I need hardly say, that I speak not of those *mental* sufferings of our blessed Lord, which were peculiar to Himself,—the result of the contact of His holy, righteous, perfect soul, with the pollution of death—a sinner's death—the wages and the curse of sin; nor of the agony in Gethsemane, caused by His keen and perfect apprehension of all its fearful meaning; nor of the hiding of the Father's face, at the crisis of His dreadful suffering,—the bitterest ingredient in the terrible cup. The difference between the servant and his Lord in this, may be seen by a comparison of Ps. xxii. lxix., and Matt. xxvi. 38, 39, with 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

And as to *bodily* suffering.—The Church derives her very existence from those of Jesus in the flesh,—the body mystical, its life from *His* death; while those of Paul in *his* flesh, were merely in service to the Church. The sufferings of Christ alone were, or could be, *vicarious*; for He alone was the Son of God, and He only was “without blemish and without spot.” The sufferings of Paul were simply *ministerial*, and could be nothing more; for he was a poor blemished, but redeemed sinner (1 Tim. i. 13—15). And yet, as to their amount during his ministry, see 1 Cor. iv. 2 Cor. iv. vi. xi. and as to his end, he was a martyr.

COLOSSIANS ii. 23.

This verse, as it at present stands, is very obscure; indeed I might say unintelligible. This has arisen, first, from connecting the words “*εστι εχοντα*,” and rendering them into the indicative “have;” which if not without authority is, I believe, at least, a very uncommon mode of expression. And secondly, which is the result of this, from its not being observed that the central part of the verse is parenthetical. The passage should, I conceive, be thus translated, “Which things, having indeed a show of wisdom, in will-worship and humility, and the not sparing the body in any honour, are (or tend) unto* the satisfying of the flesh.”

As the Apostle had just before reasoned against these “bodily exercises,” to which the Colossians were subjecting themselves, on the ground of their standing in Christ (see verses 20, 21)—

* For this sense of *προς*, see 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

“Wherefore if ye have died (*απεθανετε*) with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances? Touch not, taste not, handle not, &c.”—so he now places the matter upon a moral footing, drawn from the tendency of such things to satisfy and puff up the flesh. He elsewhere teaches (1 Tim. iv. 8), that “bodily exercise profiteth little;” he here shows that it may be far worse than unprofitable, and that its tendency so far from being, as they were taught by some, really to subdue and mortify the flesh, was on the contrary, to satisfy and exalt it (comp. ver. 18, “vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind”). He then goes on in chap. iii. to declare in what true mortification of the flesh consisted.—“If ye be risen with Christ,” &c.* “mortify your members,” &c. (ver. 5.)

We are here taught a most important truth; namely, the difference between the *body* and the *flesh*. We learn that the very neglecting and afflicting of the former, and not yielding it any honour or respect (see 1 Cor. xii. 23, 24), may contribute to the inflation of the latter. The body may be sanctified to God,—may be nourished and used for God,†—may glorify God (Rom. vi. 13, 1 Cor. vi. 20, 1 Thess. v. 24); the *flesh* never. The body may be the servant of the Spirit; the flesh never, for it is *essentially* opposed to God (Rom. viii. 7, 8). But it may be, and will if allowed, the master of the body. The overlooking of this distinction, has led many, even of the children of God, to pursue a course of bodily austerities, which have materially hindered their usefulness in service during life, and which they have seen reason to condemn and lament before their death.

HEBREWS xii. 2.

In this passage, the words, “looking unto Jesus,” have been most

* Fellowship with Jesus in death and resurrection, is at once our deliverance from ordinances and elements of the world; for “we have died away from them with Him (chap. ii. 20, Gr.); and our motive and strength in mortifying the flesh; for we are risen with Him in the power of a new and heavenly life (chap. iii. 1, &c. Rom. vi. 4, &c. 2 Cor. v. 14, 17, Gal. ii. 19, 20, Eph. ii. 5, 6).

† It may be right, therefore, under certain circumstances, to pray for the healing and strengthening of the body. As regards the flesh, however, we can only pray for power to resist and keep it in subjection.

commonly referred to His propitiatory work ; and the expression, “author and finisher of *our* faith,” to the work commenced and perfected by His Spirit in the believer’s soul. A correct rendering of the verse, however, would show the inaccuracy of this view of the passage.

The faultiness of the present translation, consists in the rendering of “*αρχηγος*,” by the term “author,” thus giving to that word a sense which I believe it never strictly has, at least, in scripture ; and also the introduction of the pronoun “*our*,” which is not found in the original text.

The true force of the term *αρχηγος* here, is the same as in chap. ii. 10, of this epistle ; namely, captain or leader ; and the passage should be rendered thus :—* “looking unto Jesus, the Captain (or Leader) and perfecter of faith.” It is not, as in chap. x., Jesus the sin offering, “perfecting for ever them that are sanctified,” but Jesus *the martyr* (or witness) that is here presented to us. Thus, as in chap. ii., He is set forth, in the way of *doctrine*, as the “Captain of *salvation*” through sufferings perfected ; so He is here presented, in the way of *exhortation*, as the “Captain and perfecter of *faith*,” the great example for the Church’s imitation ; that is, as leading the way in the walk of faith (which, in an unbelieving and apostate world, is ever a walk of suffering—suffering in proportion to the measure of faith, or the testimony of faith, which is *faithfulness*), and going onward still, till at the end of the narrow path He perfected faith, when bowing His head on the accursed tree, He said,—“it is finished.”

The whole connection here, requires that this passage should be thus viewed. In the previous chapter, we find a long and brilliant train of eminently faithful witnesses, undaunted in suffering, faithful unto death ; while here, Jesus, pre-eminently the faithful man, and therefore pre-eminent in suffering, though mentioned last,

* This word expresses more than that into which it has been here rendered ; namely, looking *off* from other objects, and looking *unto* Jesus. These other objects cannot be the cloud of witnesses, for they also have been brought before the Hebrews for their encouragement ; but such things as would hinder them in their race. They were not to indulge in the “lust of other things,” they were to be blind to the pleasant sights, and deaf to the pleasant sounds, and disengaged from the anxious and distracting cares of an evil world,

yet chief of all, is presented to the Church as the perfect pattern of the persevering obedience of faith,—obedience unto death : in reference to which the Apostle in the following context, says, “ ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (ver. 3, 4, comp. chap. v. 8, 9.—See also John xv. 20, 21, xvi. 2, 32, Rev. iii. 21).

HEBREWS xiii. 7, 8.

This passage should, I conceive, be rendered as follows:—
“Remember your rulers who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith imitate, considering the issue (or event) of their conversation. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever ; be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.”

The term *εκβασις* which I have translated “issue,” occurs in but one other place in the New Testament (1 Cor. x. 13), where it is rendered “way of escape.” It cannot be referred to “Jesus Christ” (*Ἰησοῦς χριστός*), the latter being in the nominative, the former in the accusative case.

From a consideration of verses 5 and 6, this expression, “issue of their conversation,” would seem to point to the Lord’s faithfulness in delivering these rulers from the trials and persecutions, to which their faithful walk had exposed them (comp. 1 Cor. x. 13, 1 Pet. iv. 19,—iii. 13, 2 Pet. ii. 9) ; if, indeed, it do not denote their final release from all trial and suffering by a triumphant death. This latter view would be favoured by the word “remember,” and also by the verb “have spoken” being in the past time.

The words “Jesus Christ” are then the commencement of a new sentence and a new subject, and the verb *ἐστι* must be supplied. The unchangeableness of Christ is here urged, as a reason for their not being “carried about with divers and strange doctrines,” which would imply variableness in Him whose disciples they were. A somewhat similar use is made of this unchangeableness in 2 Cor. i. 17—20.

GALATIANS v. 17.

This verse as it at present stands is commonly, and with some

show of reason, referred to as excusing, or, at least, in some measure, palliating the less aggravated forms of the workings of the flesh ; for example, “emulations, wrath, strife, envyings,” &c. This however, is very far from being the spirit or design of the passage, which is actually to shew that *all* the works of the flesh are alike inexcusable.

The context alone (see especially ver. 16) sufficiently indicates this, and an accurate version of the text confirms it. It should, I have no doubt, stand thus, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, but (ὁ) the Spirit against the flesh : and these stand opposed* the one to the other, *in order that ye may not do the things that ye would.*”

The true force of the terms “*ὅνα μὴ*” with a subjunctive, which they always require, and with which they stand connected here, is in order that, or to the end that you (or he, they, &c. as the case may be) may not, or should not. The subjunctive “*ποιητε*,” is however in the present version, incorrectly expressed by the indicative, and the clause rendered “so that ye cannot.” The sense of the passage is thus completely inverted ; and “the things that ye would,” are erroneously supposed to be the desires of the renewed mind, and to be equivalent to “the good that I would,” in Rom. vii. 19.

In Rom. vii. we see the experience of a soul which, though quickened and enlightened to the extent of being able to judge the flesh, and to discover that in it dwelt “no good thing,” is nevertheless still in bondage,—“O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me ?” &c.—a soul desirous indeed to do good, “the good that I would” &c. “but finding evil present.”

Those who are addressed in Gal. v. were quickened too, and thus enabled to discern the power and evil of the flesh, and to feel its pressure. But they were also “called unto liberty,” and were exposed to the dangerous temptation of using this liberty, “as an occasion to the flesh ;” and not only so, but of pleading the flesh itself as an excuse for yielding to its motions, and *fulfilling* its lusts. But this may not be ; for they are here told that though

* “*ἀντικειται*.” See Parkhurst, edited by Rose, on this word.

it be true that the flesh in its unmixed and unchangeable evil dwelleth in them, and "lusteth against the Spirit," yet it is equally true that the Spirit also "lusteth against the flesh;" and that thus a counteracting power and energy is planted in them, so that they *need not*, and in order that they *may not* do its will.*

Do we feel to our heart's sorrow that sin dwelleth in us? Blessed be God for the power to discern this. But surely this cannot be at once a cause of grief and consolation, a ground of self-condemnation and excuse. We cannot plead our sin in extenuation of itself or of its works. There is but one place of comfort under the knowledge of it, and that is the cross and priesthood of Him who knew no sin. This meets both transgression and sin, for Jesus has not only "suffered for our *offences*," and been "bruised for our *transgressions*," but God has by Him, as an offering for *sin*, "condemned *sin in the flesh*" (Rom. iv. 25, viii. 3).

HEBREWS viii. 5.

The impression which this verse, as it at present stands, leaves upon the mind, is that the priests who offered gifts according to the law (see verse 4), *served the purpose* of an "exemplar and shadow of heavenly things." The word "λατρευουσι" however, here translated "serve unto" never has this sense, but that of *performing religious service or worship*, as in chap. xiii. 10, "Which *serve* (λατρευουσι) the tabernacle,"

The passage therefore, should be rendered thus: "Who serve (or perform service) in the exemplar and shadow of heavenly things." The priesthood of the earthly order served or ministered in a "worldly sanctuary," an earthly tabernacle pitched by man, the pattern of things in the heavens; but Jesus the "High-priest of *our* profession," the priest of the heavenly order, ministers in the *heavenly* sanctuary, "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man" (ver. 2). "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true,

* If the verse were designed to convey the sense given by our present version, *δυναμαι* or some equivalent term would, probably, have been used; as thus, *ωστε μη δυνασθαι α αν θελητε ταυτα ποιειν*.

but *into heaven itself*, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (chap. ix. 24, compare ver. 1—11). The present rendering of the first clause of the verse we have been considering, deprives the second clause both of force and meaning. That clause which runs thus,—“For see, saith he, that thou make *all things* according to the pattern showed thee in the mount,” proves that it is the tabernacle and its furniture, and not the priesthood, that are here declared to be “the example and shadow of heavenly things.”

HEBREWS ix. 16, 17.

The term *διαθηκη*, here and in some other places in the New Testament* translated “testament,” should I believe, never be so rendered in scripture. It is expressed by the word “covenant” five times in the previous chapter, in which and in chap. ix. 1, the translators have also supplied the word three times. It is so rendered in chap. xii. 24, where Jesus is called “the Mediator of the new covenant;” in chap. xiii. 20, where we read of the blood of “the everlasting covenant” (see also Gal. iii. 15—17, &c.); and twice in ver. 4, in this very chapter (ix). Wherever, too, the translators have expressed it by the word testament, it would appear that they intended it in the sense of covenant, from their frequent application of the latter term to the same thing.† I, of course, except the passage under consideration, the entire force and beauty of which is marred by the present rendering, which involves it indeed in extreme confusion.

As therefore the term *διαθηκη*, can by no means signify a testa-

* I need hardly say here, that the titles “Old Testament” and “New Testament,” given to the two great divisions of the sacred scriptures, are merely human. In the scriptures of the Old Testament, the word “testament” never once occurs in the English version, though the term *διαθηκη*, is frequently found in the LXX.

† It may perhaps be argued, that one might say on the same grounds that they used the term covenant in the sense of testament. This however may be readily ascertained by substituting the word testament or will for covenant, where the latter occurs. For example: “I will make a new *will* with the house of Israel, &c. not according to the *will* which I made with their fathers,” &c. Again: “Jesus the Mediator of the new *will*,” and “the blood of the everlasting *will*,” and “wherefore, neither the first *will* was dedicated without blood.” The incongruity of this rendering in these instances is manifest; while in every case the word “covenant” might be used with perfect fitness.

ment or will in this place, so neither can *διαθεμενον* mean a testator. The true import of the word here, is "that which confirms the covenant;" namely, the sacrifice appointed by God for its ratification (see Gen. xv. 9, Jer. xxxiv. 18, Ps. l. 5).

The passage should therefore, I conceive, be rendered thus: "For where a covenant is, there must also be of necessity, the death of that which confirms it. For a covenant is of force over the dead (*επι νεκροις*), since it never has force while that which confirms it (the covenant sacrifice) lives." The term *διαθηκη* must of course be similarly rendered in ver. 15.

The context evidently requires this rendering, and is much cleared up by it. The Apostle proceeds to say,—“whence not even (*οθεν ουδε*) the first *covenant* was dedicated without blood,” &c. The translators have here supplied the word “testament” in accordance with their view and rendering of the passage. But, to say nothing of the manifest inaccuracy of styling the legal covenant a testament or will, let it be remembered that the argument in the present version is, that the testator must die, in order to give force to the testament. Who, then, it may be asked, was the testator? Not Moses certainly, for he was the mediator; and besides, whether regarded as a testament or covenant, it was both binding and broken *before he died*. If therefore there were any testator there, it was Jehovah, who could not die. Moreover in tracing the analogy between the testaments (if testaments), the only death spoken of under the former, is that of the sacrifices—i.e. “calves and goats.”

But besides, it was never customary to appoint either a mediator or sacrifices in the case of wills; though it was so in the case of solemn covenants between God and man.* Thus in the first cove-

* There was a most important reason for this in such covenants. These sacrifices were a testimony to man, and an acknowledgment on his part, that were God to deal with him according to his desert, it could only be in the way of judgment and death. They were needful to guard the truth of the holiness of God—needful as witnesses of the moral distance between him and man, which is the distance between pollution and defilement, and perfect holiness; between death and corruption, and essential life.

Without this testimony, God would not treat with man at all, even in the way of law (to deal even thus with Him was, in one sense, grace), and therefore it was kept up, both in covenants and worship, amongst that portion of

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nant, to which Jehovah and Israel were parties, there was both a mediator and confirming sacrifices. The mediator was Moses, the sacrifices, calves and goats (ver. 19). In the new covenant, these offices, still in themselves distinct, centre in the person of Jesus: as it is written,—“And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel.” These offices may co-exist in the same person, there being no incompatibility in them; but those of testator and Mediator, which our version assigns to Jesus, are utterly incompatible.

I would now briefly notice two or three objections which are advanced against the rendering here proposed of this passage. And first it is said, that it assigns a passive sense to the middle voice of the verb *διαριθμηται*, and that this is contrary to the *usus loquendi*. “That which confirms,” or the *confirming* sacrifice is however, by no means a passive sense but the contrary; though the victim which confirms, does so by suffering. But even were it so, it is admitted on all hands that this would not be etymologi-

mankind with which God dealt of old. These sacrifices, too, were not only witnesses of man's distance from God as a sinner, but types of that which alone could bring Him nigh (Ephes. ii. 13), even the blood of Jesus who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” But Jesus being manifested, and *His* blood shed, God will no longer limit His dealings with man to a single nation. His blood is too costly to admit of this. When “God is in Christ,” it is “reconciling *the world* to Himself.” Moses, indeed, was the mediator between Jehovah and *Israel*, but Jesus is the “Mediator between God and *man*.” (1 Tim. ii.) The blood of bulls and goats, &c. was the oft repeated propitiation for Israel (of course only sanctifying to the purifying of the flesh), Jesus is the propitiation “for the whole world.” (1 John ii.) Such is the aspect of His mediation and propitiation; though surely in order to enter into or obtain the blessings of this covenant, the eye of faith must look to the blessed Mediator, and the hand of faith must rest on the head of the holy victim.

The cross of Jesus is now the perfect and abiding witness to the world—to all men, of the holiness and grace of God. It so guards the former, as to enable the latter to flow out without let or hinderance, even to the extent of God's entreating defiled sinners to be reconciled to Himself (2 Cor. v. 19—21), according to the terms of that new and better covenant, of which it is at once the basis and ratification. I would add that this custom of sacrificing was sometimes, but most unintelligently, adopted by men, in making covenants amongst themselves; this was altogether unmeaning as between man and man, there being neither reason nor necessity for it in such a case. It serves, however, more fully to illustrate this passage, though none but divine covenants are here spoken of. In Gal. iii. 15, confirmation generally without any reference to the mode is alone spoken of. From the above custom it is supposed that the expression “*Ferire pactum*” (i.e. to strike a covenant or bargain), came to be of common use amongst men.

cally inaccurate, but merely contrary to usage ; and it may on the other hand be alleged with equal force, that the present rendering of the term *διαθηκη* into “testament,” is quite as much opposed to the use of that word, at least, in scripture, and what is of much importance, especially throughout this epistle ; with this additional disadvantage, that it is altogether unsuitable to the previous and following context, and throws the entire passage into confusion and obscurity.

Another objection is, that according to the view of the passage here suggested, the word *διαθεμενος* should be in the neuter. This however may be removed by considering, that the great confirming sacrifice before the mind of the Apostle, is the Lord Jesus ; and indeed all the sacrifices here mentioned (ver. 19), are in the masculine.

Objections merely critical may be advanced equally on both sides, thus leaving us, in this respect, only a choice of difficulties. In adopting, therefore, the rendering which I have here endeavoured to maintain, I simply give the preference to one which, while it does not involve greater verbal difficulties than the other, is free from self-contradiction, and coincides with the context and the scope of the argument throughout.

THE NAZARITE.—NUMBERS VI.

WHAT misery it would be to read the scriptures, if we could not see the testimony to Christ in them. All that describes the perfectness of God, and the corresponding perfectness which His holiness seeks in man, would shut us up into hopeless despair, if we were not able to see all that belongs to God, and all that should belong to man, concentrated in Christ, and concentrated there for us. But when we discern Him, we read our own blessing ; we see a power of life in Him which has adequately met all the

circumstances of trial in which God has been pleased to prove it,—a life which is ours in Him.... possessed in earnest through the Spirit now—and soon to be revealed in perfectness of manifestation for ever, when He who is our life shall return.

The character of this life, as to its separateness from evil, is given typically in this chapter concerning the Nazarite. An Israelite was allowed to vow the vow of a Nazarite. He might, if he pleased, thus peculiarly separate himself unto the Lord; and since the service of the Lord Jesus, was the service not of constraint, but of willing love, this Nazarite relation to the Lord was sure to be assumed by Him, who was essentially the “separate one, and who said, “I delight to do thy will, O my God.” We can trace therefore in this chapter, the past, present, and future history of the Lord Jesus, in His Nazarite relation to the God of Israel.

The first direction is, that the Nazarite should taste no wine,—“He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.” This is the picture of what the Lord Jesus *morally*,* ever was. Wine is, in scripture, natural joy—joy springing from the earth, for the vine is peculiarly that plant *of the earth* whose “wine cheereth” (Judges ix. 13). Of such joy the Lord Jesus never drank. Sin and the curse He saw resting upon every thing of earthly growth, and therefore they were not in a condition to minister any satisfying joy to Him; for even if they were beautiful or glorious, yet it was beauty and glory fast hastening to decay, and that on account of sin—human sin. The lily of the field was beautiful, and its

* I say *morally*, for we do not read that the Lord ever assumed before His nation, the *outward* characteristics of Nazarite separation. If He had assumed any of the outward characteristics, He doubtless would have assumed all, and suffered His hair to grow.

When it is said that wine is the emblem of earthly joy, and that the Lord Jesus drew no joy from natural things, I of course mean natural things regarded simply as such, not as He took them up in the service of God.

In this sense He had joy in His earthly associations; but the source of this joy was not earthly.

beauty was from God ; but sin had made it to be numbered among the grass which groweth up : in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ; in the evening, it is cut down and withered. It might be beautiful, but “Cursed be the ground for man’s sake,” was written on it ; and redemption was not yet made manifest. Nature, in all its forms, was ruined, both morally and outwardly ; and He whose joys were according to God, sought not from thence the wine “which maketh glad the heart of man.” *We* often are tempted, even when we have rejected the full cup of earthly joy, lest we should lose ourselves in it, yet to crave after a little in some mingled or hidden form. We reject perhaps the ripened cluster, but we take a little of the kernel or the husk. But it was not so with Jesus ; for this was the law of the Nazarite,—“All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernel even unto the husk.”

Next it was required of the Nazarite, that he should allow the locks of his hair to grow, and that no razor should come upon his head. Hair is, in scripture, the sign of natural grace and comeliness. The leper, when being cleansed, was commanded to shave it off ; but the Nazarite was instructed to cherish and cause it to grow. Here was the great moral characteristic of the Lord Jesus as man. If our natural character is allowed to unfold itself, all that is developed, however lovely and attractive in the eyes of men, is leprous and defiled in the estimation of God. But Jesus “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man :” this marked Him as being what He was, God’s Son—the new thing in the earth—one whose natural characteristic was that He possessed as man, all the perfectness that was suited to God. The more His understanding, and affections, and desires, unfolded themselves, the more was there shown to be of that which was becoming to man, and of favour in the eyes of God.

Again the Nazarite was not to defile himself by contact with the dead.—“All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because the consecration of his God is upon his

head." Death, as chief in the class of human sorrows, stands as the great representative of human sufferings introduced by sin. Wine is the representative of earthly joy—death, of earthly sorrow. But the Nazarite was not to be beneath the power of circumstances, whether of sorrow or of joy, because the consecration of his God was upon his head. He had dedicated his energies—his feelings; all that pertained to him as man, he had consecrated every thing unto the Lord; and therefore he could no longer be the servant of circumstances, so as to be called away from his separated service unto the Lord, either by the sorrow or by the joy of earth. "Who are my mother and my brethren?" "Let the dead bury their dead." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." These were the words of the one faithful Nazarite, and such was His perfect moral separation in His past earthly service.

But it was possible for the Nazarite to defile the head of his consecration, and yet not to cease from being a Nazarite—though the days of his previous separation would be lost, and their counting be commenced anew. This defilement could not be from voluntary transgression. That would have despoiled him of his Nazarite character hopelessly and entirely; for then he would have departed from the way of his appointed service, and consequently been personally a transgressor. If he had made himself unclean by disobediently connecting himself with circumstances of death, then there would have been transgression and personal guilt; but if whilst obediently pursuing the path of his separated service, he was led into circumstances which brought the taint of death upon him, then there would indeed be "defilement" and "uncleaness," but no moral guilt. The Nazarite in the course of his obedient service might enter into a tent, and in it some one might suddenly die, and then defilement would reach even to him. Such was the defilement that reached the one separate Nazarite, because of the children whom He was sent to bring unto God. Their life had by the promise of God been connected with the Son before the world began; and the Son whilst working the will of Him that sent Him, became connected with their defilement and sin. Hence His Nazarite separation was defiled, and therefore we read

not of days of separation, but of days of cleansing, in which He had to shave His head (just as had been directed to the leper), and thus formally to resign the token of Nazarite separateness, before God and before men. This was peculiarly the place—the openly assumed place of the Lord Jesus. He closed His* seven-day, or perfect period of connection with earthly things, not by standing in the excellency and joy of acknowledged Nazarite separateness—but bearing sin.

Yet His Nazarite character was not destroyed, only it was resumed in different circumstances, and on a different ground. It was resumed on the ground of offered sacrifice. He entered in not without blood. It is from this point therefore—from the eighth day, i.e. the day of resurrection and entrance into the order of the new creation, that the new Nazarite separation commences, and that grounded on sacrifice. Thus He is again able to consecrate unto the Lord days of separation, in which defilement can never come, for circumstances of natural joy, or natural sorrow, can never pass the blood and penetrate into the peace and holiness of the eighth day. It is not then on the ground of His own individual perfectness, but on redemption, that the great Head of the Church now takes His stand in Nazarite separateness before God.

Thus far then the chapter has been fulfilled, for Christ has risen above the taint of all our defilements, and has entered in and resumed His separateness, through the power of His own blood. The rest of the chapter, like all others of similar character, is stayed as to *manifested* fulfilment, because of Israel's blindness and unbelief. But a time is coming when He who is the great Nazarite of Israel, shall appear in the sight of all the congregation of Israel; and, surrounded by the fully developed power of His own sacrifice, stand in acknowledged Nazarite separateness before the God of Israel.—Then we no longer read of His hair, the token of His

* Seven is both the number of perfection, and when, as in the present case, contrasted with eight, denotes the period of connection with the old creation—in contrast with eight, which represents the new in resurrection. The Lord Jesus closed the period during which He was “known after the flesh,” by laying aside all title to Nazarite standing. On the eighth day—the day of His ostensible connection with the new things in resurrection, He commences His Nazarite separation afresh.

separateness, being laid aside, but it is offered with the sacrifice of thanksgiving upon the altar, and the days of separation are concluded, and the Nazarite may drink wine. How much do these words reveal? He may drink wine. The spring of earthly joy is no longer polluted. It became so when man was first manifested as the defiled one; it ceases to be so when man shall again be *manifested* as the undefiled one. The creation shall be freed from the bondage of corruption, and all the trees of the wood shall clap their hands. The land of the Nazarite, will be a land of Nazarites, whom He as the great High-priest, and His household the Church, shall together bless, "saying unto them, the Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

But we may consider this chapter in application to the Church likewise; for as He is, so are we. The effectual means whereby their Nazarite separation is wrought, is found in the working of that mighty power, whereby God raised Christ from the dead, and gave to the Church life in Him; and consequently the standard and character of their separation can only be seen above, where He is. It is altogether heavenly, founded on the perfectness of His own individual obedience, and on the power of His blood to put away the stain which their corruptibility and corruption brought on Him. It is founded therefore on righteousness and on redemption, and its place is heaven—even the very presence of God. Such as known to faith, is the sure separation of the Church of God. But as to their place on earth, it is not exactly that which the Lord Jesus held during His earthly service, for He was under the law,—redemption was not made manifest, death also was before Him in all its bitterness, and hence the strength of expression in the Psalms, which describe His service and His suffering.—"See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." (Lam.) But we have been delivered from these things because He suffered, and consequently our circumstances of service are not identical with His; neither are we personally where He now is, in the glory,

and abstracted from all surrounding circumstances of defilement and sin ; neither are we so related to surrounding things, as He will be on His return to earth again, when He will not only Himself stand, as we now personally do, in the fulness of redemption, but when surrounding circumstances also shall be brought beneath its power—the creation itself being delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and all things manifestly brought into subjection under Him as Son of man.

The place of the Church is not yet this ; but, having the Spirit, it stands renewed in knowledge,—redeemed and heavenly in the midst of the unredeemed and groaning creature, Satan being still the prince of this world. Its service is to stand heavenly and redeemed, in the midst of circumstances which bear no traces of redemption, but are stamped with sin and Satan and the curse. The tide of human things runs counter now to God, and to redemption ; and therefore they on whom, and in whom the power of redemption is, suffer, and the Spirit groaneth in them. Soon when the perfected Nazarite returns, the place of the blessed Spirit on earth will be like His,—the place of joy and happy communion with the things around. The very grass of the field will witness to the power of redemption ; and earth will be a place of righteousness and peace and joy. These things, whilst we are suffering, faith may anticipate ; and thus indeed a source of joy is opened unknown to the dispensation under which the disciples before the resurrection walked. We too can use in the intelligent knowledge of redemption, many a blessing, and say, “the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof.” Yet still as new creatures, we cannot drink of the wine of earth, for earth is not as yet a purified source of joy,—redemption not being yet applied to it nor the things therein. But when it shall be—when the lion and the lamb shall feed together ; when truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven ; the earth shall afford to the saints a very different character of joy, to any it has yet afforded to them whilst suffering and waiting in the patience of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Till then the Nazarite in Spirit will drink no wine ; nevertheless our place has not merely the negative character of

separation, for being made partakers of the divine nature, we too can "allow the hair of our head to grow." The new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, can develop its thoughts and affections and desires; and it is thus that we wear in God's sight, the true grace and comeliness of man, even of Christ Jesus, and are marked as bearing the consecration of our God. In the power of our new nature, too, we are above the sorrows as well as the joys of this world; nor can our Nazarite separation ever be destroyed, because it is secured through the blood and resurrection of Him from whom it flows. To us it begins in redemption and resurrection; and it is so far as, through the Spirit, we take up, in the power of resurrection and redemption, the principles and ways of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, that we know the joy of our calling, and really sow seed to the Spirit. If we break and continue to break the law of our Nazarite calling, there must be chastisement and sorrow; but if the fruits of the Spirit be in us and abound, we shall remember with joy that coming day, when the perfected Nazarite shall see these things accepted in the acceptance of the peace-offering upon the altar of the Lord. Faith indeed may see them in this acceptance now, but then it will be manifested in fulness of joy and thanksgiving for ever in the sight of all the congregation of Israel, whom Christ and His Nazarite household will together bless; and God's name will be put upon Israel, and He will bless them, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of God.

THE END OF VOL. VI.

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