

PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 11, 1860

by G.V. Wigram

A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 11, 1860, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

48 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Present Testimony Volume 11, 1860
1. 1 Timothy
2. 2 Chronicles 18
3. A Few Thoughts on 2 Peter
4. 2 Timothy
5. Abraham's Consistency in Arming His Servants for the Rescue of Lot
6. Difference Between Christ's Coming to Receive Saints and Appearing in Glory With...
7. The Conscience in the Light of God's Presence
8. Discipleship in an Evil Day
9. I
10. 2
11. 3
12. Dying to Death
13. Notes on Ephesians 6:10-20
14. The Fear of Death
15. Fellowship With Christ: 9. Glorified and Reigning Together With Him
16. 2. If We Suffer, We Shall Also Reign With Him. 2 Tim. 2:12
17. Fragment: Bengel and Dying
18. Fragment: Death
19. Fragment: Expectations of the Apostles and the Intentions of God
20. Fragment: John 1:10; 12-13
21. Fragment: Journey in the Wilderness
22. Fragment: Life and Death
23. Fragment: Revelation 22:10-15
24. Fragment: Sinners of Whom I Am Chief
25. Fragment: Understanding
26. Fragments
27. Heaven
28. 1. Contrast of Heaven and Earth
29. 2. the Unity of Heaven's Ways, Etc
30. 3. Heaven As It Was, Is, Will Be
31. Heaven As It Is: so Far As Manifested by the Setting up of the Church
32. Hebrews
33. The House of God, the Body of Christ, and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost
34. I Bow Me to Thy Will, O God
35. Let Us Hold Fast Our Profession
36. Life
37. Manifestation of God
38. Luke 15:8-10

39. Philemon
40. Position As Christians and Prayer in Relation to the Holy Spirit
41. The Sovereign Rights of God Respected; the Well-Being of Man Secured
42. 1.-the Volume of the Book. Exodus 21:5,6; and Psalm 40:6-8
43. 2.-Wrath and Doubting
44. 3.- the Paschal Evening Anticipated
45. 4.-the Greater Sin
46. Titus
47. The Work of Grace for and in Man

Present Testimony Volume 11, 1860

1 Timothy

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus have naturally a peculiar bearing and character, being addressed to persons deputed by the apostle to act in his name, or to care for the Churches during his absence. Their application to us is none the less direct on this account, because they not only instruct us with regard to the state of the Church and the pastoral care which the apostle bestowed on it, but the line of conduct in which Timothy is charged to lead the faithful, is that which the faithful ought always themselves to follow. Nevertheless, to confound the directions given to Timothy and Titus, with the words addressed immediately to the faithful, would be to cast confusion upon ministry in its best sense.

A great part of this first epistle to Timothy requires but little development; not because it is without importance, but because it contains directions so plain and simple, that explanation would be superfluous, - and practical exhortations which would only be obscured, and their force and point taken away, by attempting to enlarge upon them.

On the other hand, some general principles of great importance for the position of the Church in general, are contained in this epistle.

God assumes here, in a peculiar way, the character of a Savior God, with regard to the world; a principle of great importance in all that concerns our conversation in the world, and our intercourse with men. We represent, in our religious character, a God of love. This was not the case in Judaism. He was, indeed, the same God; but there He took the character of Law-giver. All were, indeed, to come to His temple, according to the declaration of the prophets, and His temple was open to them-but He did not characterize Himself as a Savior God for all. In Titus, we find the same expression.

In these confidential communications to his dear children in the faith and companions in the work, we can understand that the apostle would clearly establish the great principles on which the administration committed to him rested. That all men were the objects of God's dealings in grace, was the general basis on which this administration was founded; that the character of God towards the world was that of a Savior (compare 2 Cor. 5) The law had its place; it still has it, as the apostle shows. But the sovereign mercy of God was the starting point of all that the apostle had to declare. This thought, this spirit, was to govern the worship even of believers. Details follow. Notwithstanding this love to the world, there was, upon the earth, a Church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth, and the witness to it on earth. The person of Christ, and all that concerns Him, is the subject of its testimony, the foundation of its existence, and the object of its faith. This faith would be assailed in the last days by the enemy, who, under the pretense of sanctity, would set himself up against God the Creator and Preserver of all men, and of believers in particular. Directions for the walk of the Church compose the remainder of the epistle. Conduct suitable to all is set before Timothy, to make him, as well as ourselves, understand that which befits the Church of God. We will now look more closely into the contents of this epistle.

From its commencement, the apostle designates God as the Savior God. Paul is the apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ is the confidence and the hope of the soul.

We observe, also, that the apostle's wish differs from that which he expresses when addressing a Church; "Grace, mercy," he says, "and peace." He does not say "mercy" to the churches, which stand before God as such, in consequence of the mercy shown them, and which (however low their condition might be) are viewed, as churches, according to the nature in which they live by the Spirit, in which there is no question of mercy, because it is of God. Grace and peace are that which they are to enjoy on the part of God. But when an individual is in question, whatever his piety or faith-fullness may be, he is both flesh and spirit, his career has yet, in part at least, to be provided for, having always need of mercy. Therefore the apostle wishes it to Timothy as well as to Titus. In the case of Philemon, he adds, "the Church in thy house," and his wish has, therefore, no longer the personal form. But with Timothy and Titus, it is the apostle's intimacy with his beloved fellow-laborers. He knew how much they needed mercy. It was his own resource, that which he had experienced for the comfort of his own soul.

The special object for which Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus when he went into Macedonia, was that he might watch over the doctrine which was taught; but being there, he gives him directions for the interior order of the Church. The evil which the enemy sought to introduce, with regard to doctrine, had a twofold character: fables of human imagination and the introduction of the law into Christianity. As to the former, it was pure evil, and edified no one. The apostle does not here say much about it: he forewarned them of the evil; and the faith of the Church at Ephesus was sound enough to allow him to treat the whole system as mere fables and genealogies. The Spirit gave warning, that in later times it would have more disastrous consequences; but at present there was only need to guard the faithful from it, as that which was worthless. Timothy was charged by the apostle to attend to this.

But that which is committed to us in Christianity, as service, is always-both in its object and its character - at the height of the eternal principles of God, and belongs to the foundation of our moral relations with Him.

The object of Paul's mandate, is the love of a pure heart, and faith unfeigned; and never the subtleties of argument or of human imagination. This is a sure token for souls that are sound in the faith, and guided by the Spirit of God. Some had forsaken these great land-marks of Christianity, turning aside to vain discussions. And here we again find those same corrupters of Christianity, who (after having rejected the Savior) sowed the apostle's path with thorns-Judaizing teachers. They desired to inculcate the law. The human mind is adequate to this.

Now we see here, the way in which one who is at the height of the truth of God can 'ant everything in its true place; Paul treats the produce of human imagination as mere fables; but the law was of God, and could be made useful if rightly employed. It was of great service to condemn, to judge evil, to slay, to show the judgment of God against every wrong thing forbidden by the gospel, which revealed the glory of the blessed God-a glory which tolerated no evil, and which had been committed to the apostle. It could be used to act upon the conscience in this way, but it did not build up the righteous; and if any were under the law they were under the curse. As a sword for the conscience, it may be used. But grace alone, is the source of our preaching and the stay of our

souls.

These two systems and their respective places are presented in vers. 5-17, which form a kind of parenthesis, the apostle resuming his address to Timothy in ver. 18. The use of the law is explained, vers. 8-10. The apostle, in a certain sense, lowers it here, while acknowledging its utility in its place, as the weapon of righteousness for condemnation; and contrasts it with the gospel, which is connected with the glory of God Himself, which this gospel proclaims, as the law is connected with the wickedness which it condemns.

Having spoken of the Gospel of the Glory which had been committed to him, the apostle turns to the sovereign grace that had brought him into the knowledge of this glory, which is the testimony to the accomplishment of the work of grace.

"I give thanks," he says, "to Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious." This, indeed, was grace.

The apostle speaks of two things in his conversion: the one, how God could have compassion on him in such a state-he was in ignorance; the other, the purpose of God, that the apostle should be a pattern of grace to all. That he was in ignorance and unbelief, although a condition which made mercy possible (for had he been an enemy, knowing and willing it, while acquainted with the grace of the gospel, it would have been impossible), yet that condition was no excuse for his sin; he puts pure and perfect grace forward, as having abounded in his case-he was the chief of sinners. This, indeed, was true. The high priests had resisted the Holy Ghost to the uttermost. Paul had joined them in it; but he was not satisfied with that. He desired to be the active enemy of the faith, wherever it existed; and to destroy the name of Jesus. He had done much at Jerusalem, but he wished to satiate his hatred even in foreign cities. We know his history in the Acts. The living expression of Jewish resistance to grace, he was also, among men, the expression of human enmity to Him whom God would glorify. Grace was greater than the sin; the patience of God more perfect than the perseverance of man's hostility. The latter was limited by man's impotence, the former has no limit in the nature of God, but that of His own sovereign will. Guilty as man may be, his sin cannot so reach God as to disturb the independent action of His nature or change His purposes. He was pleased to show forth in Paul a pattern of the sovereignty of that grace and perfect goodness-to the Jews hereafter, who, as a nation, will be in Saul's condition;- to all men, as the enemies of God and by nature children of wrath. The chief, the most active, the most inveterate of enemies was the best and most powerful of witnesses that the grace of God abounded over sin, and that the work of Christ was perfect to put it away.

"Unto God"-being such in His nature, and having the development of all the ages in His counsels-"unto the only God, invisible, incorruptible," he ascribes all praise and all glory. Such was the foundation of Paul's ministry, in contrast with the law. It was founded on the revelation of grace; but it was a revelation connected with the experience of its application to his own case. Peter-guilty of denying a living Savior-could speak to the Jews of grace that met their case, which was his own; Paul formerly the enemy of a glorified Savior, and the resister of the Holy Ghost-could proclaim grace that rose above even that state of sinfulness, above all that could flow from human nature; grace-that opened the door to the Gentiles according to God's own counsels, when the Jews had rejected everything, substituting the heavenly Church for them; grace -that sufficed for

the admission of that guilty nation to better privileges than those which they had forfeited.

Such was the call of this apostle, such his ministry. Having shown the opposition between that which was committed to him and the law (while confirming the latter), he resumes his address to Timothy, in that which refers to the details of his mission among the Ephesians.

At the end of chap. 1, he commits the charge to him, sends him his mandate. The term he employs, relates to verses 3 and 5. He had left Timothy at Ephesus, in order to command some persons there not to teach other doctrines than the truths of the gospel. Now, the end of the command, of this evangelical commission, was love, flowing from a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. For the gospel, while revealing the marvelous counsels of God, maintains the great eternal principles of His nature. It is this which distinguishes truth from the lofty pretensions of heretical imaginations, it requires that man should be in relationship with God really in heart and in truth, according to those principles. And this commission the apostle now entrusted to Timothy, his own son in the faith. He was to maintain it with an authority that had its basis in divine power, but which he held formally from the apostle, who appointed him to it; not merely of his own accord, but according to prophecies which had pointed him out for this purpose, and which were a means of strength to him in the conflict he was thus brought into. The conditions of victory were in accordance with the nature of the commission. He was to keep the faith and a good conscience. Now, faith, here, is the doctrine of Christianity; yet, not merely as doctrine, but as that which the soul held between itself and God, as coming from Him. He had to maintain the truth, the Christian doctrine; but to hold it, as so revealed by God Himself, to the soul, that it should be the truth. The light should possess, with well-defined outlines, the authority of God.

It was the faith, that which God had revealed, received with certainty as such, as the truth.

But, to be in communion with God, the conscience must be good, must be pure; and, if we are not in communion with God, we cannot have the strength that would maintain us in the faith, that would enable us to persevere in the profession of the truth, as God gives it to us. Satan has, then, a hold upon us, and if the intellect of one in this state is active, he falls into heresy. The loss of a good conscience, opens the door to Satan, because it deprives us of communion with God; and the active mind, under Satan's influence, invents ideas, instead of confessing the truth of God. The apostle treats the fruit of this state as "blasphemies;" the will of man is at work, and the higher the subject, the more an unbridled will, possessed by the enemy, goes astray, and exalts itself against God, and against the subjection of the whole mind to the obedience of Christ, to the authority of the revelation of God.

The apostle had delivered up two persons of this character to Satan,-that is to say, outwardly. Though already deceived by him, they were not under his dominion, as having power to torment and make them suffer. For, in the Church (when in its normal state), Satan has no power of that kind. It is guarded from it, being the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, and protected by God, and by the power of Christ. Satan can tempt us individually; but he has no right over the members of the Church, as such. They are within, and, weak as they may be, Satan cannot enter there. They may be delivered to him for their good. This may take place at all times - witness the history of Job. But the Church ought to have the knowledge of, and be the guardian and instrument of, the accomplishment of the dealings of God with His own. Within the Church, is the Holy Ghost; God dwells in it, as His House, by the Spirit. Without, is the world, of which Satan is the Prince. The

apostle, by the power bestowed on him, delivered these two men into the power of the enemy, deprived them of the shelter they had enjoyed. They had listened to the enemy, had been his instruments. It was not in the Church, with members of Christ, that this should have taken place. They must be made to feel what he was, to whom they had given ear. God thus made use of Satan himself as a rod for the good of His rebellious children. Satan should instruct them, through the pains he would make them suffer, of whatever kind it might be, whether anguish of soul, or of body, in order that their will might be broken, and brought into subjection to God. Solemn discipline! Marvelous power in the hands of a man! but a proof that the love of God, can order all things for the purpose of delivering a soul, and bringing it to Himself.

The apostle proceeds to give instructions, founded on the great principles which he had established. On grace. The Jewish spirit might look on Gentile kings as enemies, and on Gentiles in general, as unworthy of divine favor. The persecution of which Christians were the object, gave the flesh occasion to nourish these dispositions, and to enter into the spirit of the law. Grace rises above all these thoughts - all these feelings of the heart. It teaches us to think of all men with love. We belong to a Savior-God who acts in the gospel towards all men with love. Especially were they to pray for kings, and those who had high places in the world, that God would dispose their hearts to allow us to live in peace and quietness in all honesty. This was well pleasing to a Savior-God, who was willing that all men should be saved, and be brought to know the truth. The subject here is not the counsels of God, but His dealings with men under the gospel. He acts in grace. It is the acceptable time - the day of salvation. He opens the door through the blood of Christ, and proclaims peace, and a sure reception to all who come. The work is done; His character fully glorified with regard to sin. If they refuse to come, that is the will of man. That God will fulfill His counsels after all, makes no change in His dealings, nor in the responsibility of men. We have love to proclaim to all - in the spirit of love in our ways towards them. The distinction between Jew and Gentile, totally disappears here. There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, a Man, Christ Jesus. These are the two great truths, which form the basis of all true religion. Judaism had already been the revelation and testimony in the world of the first: there was one only God. This remains eternally true, but did not suffice to bring men into relationship with God. With regard to men, He abode within the veil, in the darkness of His majesty. Christianity, while fully revealing the one God, presents the second truth: there is one Mediator between God and men. There is one, and there is but one. It is as true that there is but one Mediator, as that there is but one God. This is the great and distinctive truth of Christianity.

Two things here characterize this Mediator. He is a man; He gave Himself a ransom for all. The time for this testimony was ordered of God.

Precious truth! We are in weakness, we are guilty-we could not bring ourselves near to God. We needed a Mediator, who, while maintaining the glory of God, should put us into such a position, that He could present us to God in righteousness, according to that glory. Christ gave Himself as a ransom. But he must be a man, in order to suffer for men, and to represent men. And this He was. But this is not all.-We are weak - here, where we are- to receive the revelation of God; and, weak, with regard to our resource in God and our communion with Him, even when our guilt is blotted out. And in our weakness to receive the revelation of God, Christ has revealed God, and all that He is, in His own person, in all the circumstances wherein man could have need, either in body or in soul. He came down into the lowest depths, in order that there should be none even of the most

wretched, who could not feel that God, in His goodness, was near him, and was entirely accessible to him-come down to him-His love finding its occasion in misery; and that there was no need to which He was not present, which He could not meet.

It is thus that He made Himself known on earth, and now that He is on high, He is still the same. He does not forget His human experiences; they are perpetuated by His divine power, in the sympathizing feelings of His humanity, according to the energy of that divine love, which was their source and their motive power. He is still a man in glory and in divine perfection. His divinity imparts the strength of its love to His humanity, but does not set aside the latter. Nothing could resemble such a Mediator as this; nothing could equal the tenderness, the knowledge of the human heart, the sympathy, the experience of need. In the measure which divinity could give to what He did, and in the strength of its love, He came down, took part in all the sorrows of humanity, and entered into all the circumstances in which the human heart could be, and was wounded, oppressed, and discouraged, bowing down under the evil. No tenderness, no power of sympathy, no humanity, like His; no human heart that can so understand, so feel with us, whatever the burden may be that oppresses the heart of man. It is the man, the Christ Jesus, who is our Mediator; none so near, none who has come down so low, and entered with divine power into the need, and all the need of man. The conscience is purified by His work, the heart relieved by that which He was, and which He is forever.

There is but One: to think of another would be to snatch from Him His glory, and from us our perfect consolation. His coming from on high, His divine nature, His death, His life as man in Heaven, all point Him out as the one, and only Mediator.

But there is another aspect of this truth, and of the fact that He is a man. It is, that He is not merely a Mediator, as a Priest upon His throne, between Israel and the Lord -not simply the Messiah, in order to place Israel in relationship with their God - but a Man between God and men. It is according to the eternal nature of God Himself, and to the need of men in His presence. It was of these truths, eternal and of universal bearing, that Paul was the herald and the apostle. Possessing a character that belongs to all ages, and that goes beyond them, all these acts had their time to be revealed.

Every limited and particular means dependent on man's use of them had been tried with men; and now the necessary foundations of their relationship with God had to be set forth, and the Gentiles were to hear the testimony of grace; and such was the apostle's testimony, " a teacher of the Gentiles in the faith and in the truth."

Paul has plainly now laid the foundations; and he proceeds, therefore, to details. Men were to pray everywhere, lifting up pure hands without wrath, and without vain human reasonings. Women were to walk in modesty, adorned with good works, and to learn in silence. A woman was forbidden to teach, or to exercise authority over men. She was to abide in quietness and silence.

The reason given for this is remarkable, and shows how, in our relations with God, everything depends on the original starting point. In innocence, Adam had the first place; in sin, Eve. It was Eve who, being deceived, brought in transgression. Adam was not deceived - guilty as he was of disobeying God. United to his wife, he followed her, not deceived by the enemy, but weak through his affection. Without the weakness, it was this which the second Adam did in grace. He followed

His deceived and guilty bride; but in order to redeem and deliver her, by taking her faults upon Himself. Eve suffered on earth the penalty of her fault, in a way which is a mark of the judgment of God- but, walking in modesty, with faith and love and holiness, she shall be delivered in the hour of her trial; and that which bears the stamp of judgment shall be an occasion of the mercy and succor of God.

The apostle next points out to Timothy the qualities necessary for a bishop or a deacon, as well as for the wife of the latter. He supposes here that there were some who desired to undertake this work. It was a good work. To care for souls, and have a vigilant eye upon the walk of believers; to watch over them, in order that the members of Christ should answer to His love, and lose no Christian privilege; to do this by maintaining that happy order and that precious unity which were realized at that time, and to protect the flock of the Lord against the ravaging wolves that were seeking to invade it: this, indeed, was valuable work, and he on whose heart tile Lord had thus laid the souls of His people, might well desire to undertake it. The apostle felt this: it was a true and faithful saying - but certain qualities were needed to make any one fit for such a charge. Gifts are not included among them, unless the being "apt to teach" might be so considered; but even this is presented as a quality the man must have aptness for it - not as a gift. Power to use truth with others was very useful in fulfilling his charge, without saying at all that he taught publicly in the assembly. The essential thing was that which gave moral weight.

Timothy was not left at Ephesus to appoint elders; but these were the qualities necessary to a bishop, and Paul exhorts him to be watchful on this point.

It is not needful to enter into the detail of these qualities; they are plain enough, as well as those required for a deacon.

We see what was the subject of the condemnation of the devil: he exalted himself at the thought of his own importance (comp. Ezek. 28). The snare of the devil is another thing; if a man is not of good report, he will yield somewhere to the enemy, because he will not dare to withstand him boldly.

It will be noticed, that the apostle speaks of the wives of deacons, and not those of bishops (except to say, that these must be the husbands of one wife only). Bishops had a charge in which they were occupied with souls, and exercised authority in the Church, in which women were not to act. Deacons were necessarily occupied with family details and circumstances. In these, women might well be concerned, and often very useful. In the spiritual cares of elders they had nothing to do. It was requisite, therefore, that the wives of deacons should possess qualities which would cause their husbands to be respected, and, at the same time, guard themselves from becoming busy-bodies and tale-bearers.

Faithfulness in the charge of a deacon- the exercise of which, in fact, is a matter of the greatest delicacy, and requires much Christian love and patience - was a means of acquiring strength in the work of God. Stephen and Philip are examples of this: their spiritual powers soon carried them beyond their service as deacons.

What was the Church in those happy days? - that which, moreover, it always is in the sight of God; but then, in fact, when love displayed itself in an order maintained by the energy of the Holy Ghost, and when the oneness of the entire body developed itself in the action of all its members: it was

the house of God. Thank God, it is so always. Yet what a difference since then in its practical condition!

But let us here examine the character which the apostle gives to the Church on earth. He wrote, hoping soon to come; but in order that, in case he might tarry long Timothy should know how to conduct himself. He then tells us what the Church is.

In the first place it is the house of God. God dwells in it upon the earth (compare Eph. 2:22). We understand that it is here viewed as on the earth, because the apostle is speaking of how to behave in it. But this truth is important. It gives a character to the Church of the highest importance for us, with regard to our responsibility. It is not a vague thing, composed of the dead, of the living - a thing which we know not where to find, because one part of it is alive on the earth, and another part consists of souls in heaven. It is the house of God here below, in which we have to behave (whatever other position we may hold) in a manner that becomes the house of God. God dwells in the Church upon earth. We cannot too earnestly remember this fact. Whatever would bring confusion into the presentation of this truth, through the idea that some are dead, and that the whole Church is not here, comes from the enemy, and is in opposition to the Word. The Church viewed as subsisting on earth, is the house of God.

In the second place: it is the assembly of the living God. God, in whom is the power of life, in contrast with men and with dead idols, has an assembly outside the world, having set it apart for Himself. It is not a nation, like Israel. That people were the assembly of God in the wilderness. The Church is now the assembly of the living God.

In the third place: it is the pillar and support of the truth. Christ on earth was the Truth (He is so always-but He was so on earth). He is now hidden in God. The Church is not the truth: the Word of God is the truth. His Word is truth. Truth exists before the Church; it is faith in the truth which gathers the Church together. But the Church is that which maintains the truth on earth. When the Church is gone, men will be given up to a strong delusion.

It may be, that there is only a little remnant of those that call themselves Christians who maintain the word of truth; but it is none the less true, that the Church -as lotto as it remains here below is the only witness for the truth upon the earth. It is God's witness, to present the truth before men. At the ends that which God owns as such will be the feeble flock at Philadelphia; and then, that which is in the responsible position of being the Church (Laodicea), will be spued out of the mouth of Christ, who Himself takes the character of the Amen, the faithful and true Witness. But the Church, as planted by God on the earth, is the pillar and support of the truth. Authority is not the question here, but the maintenance and presentation of the truth. That which does not maintain and present the truth, is not the Church as God understands it.

The presence, then, of the living God, and the profession of the truth, are the characteristics of the house of God. Wherever this assembly of the living God is wherever the truth is, there is this house.

The mystery of piety, which the Church maintains before the world, is great, and relates essentially to the person of Christ. The apostle, naturally, does not here develop all the different parts of the truth, but that which is the living center of the whole - that which is essential in the relations between God and men.

God has been manifested in the flesh. Marvelous truth, in fact! There, where all is confusion and sin -in the nature of him in whom all this sin and all this confusion are introduced.

The Center of all blessing-He who is Light itself, He who as the Light puts everything morally in its place, and who by the fact of His presence shows that love is above everything - God, who is love, has been manifested in the flesh. Where sin was, there was love above the sin. Man, who is the slave of evil, sees here, in his own nature, the source and the power of all good. In the center of evil and of weakness, in human nature, God Himself has been manifested. Was there then evil in Him who was such? Did He undergo the lot of the common bondage? By no means. Truly, in the same circumstances, in the same nature, He proved superior to all evil, perfect in all respects. The absence of all sin was made evident by the power of the Holy Ghost during His whole life (if men had been able to discern it; and, in fact, it was manifest to the conscience of every man, for He was pure light shining upon all), and with power by the resurrection (comp. Rom. 1.4).

Thus God was made visible to the angels, was preached to the Gentiles (not merely the God of the Jews), became the object of faith in the world (it was not the manifestation of visible power, claiming His rights and His glory), and at last took a place on high in the glory whence He had descended. It is thus that God is known in the Church, according to the truth. There is no truth outside this revelation of the person of Christ.

It is worthy of notice, that in this epistle, and even in the second, the apostle speaks nowhere of the relationship of Christians with God as His children, of the privileges of children, or of that which is known within in the intimacy of the family. He speaks of truths that are essential as testimony before the world; that which the Church is externally, that which it is as the witness of God towards men. It is the house of God, the assembly of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth: that which it is as responsible in the world, and in order that all should learn what God is. The mystery of piety, of which the Church is the vessel for testimony, answers to this. It is the grand essential truth on which all relation between God and men is founded, by means of which God has to do with men. Therefore, also, he says previously, " There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus, the Christ."

We have not here the privileges of children, nor the heavenly bride of Christ; but the foundation of God's relations with all men. Thus the Father is not named, nor even the Spirit, except here, in connection with the Lord's person, as the justification of His testimony. It is God - the Mediator and man; and the Church, as the vessel and depositary of this truth of the testimony of God; or else, evil spirits, turning men away from the faith. This deserves all attention.

Not only, as we have seen elsewhere, the testimony of the grace of the Gospel maintains the great eternal principles of the nature and glory of God, and His relations, according to that glory, with men; but even in the pains the apostle takes that the Church may be cared for and guarded, during his absence, from the assaults of the enemy, and from disorders and improprieties within; it is not of its internal privileges that he speaks. God is set before us, and the Lord Jesus Christ. God, in the majesty of His immutable truth, in His relations with men as such, and in the revelation of Himself in the flesh. God was in Christ, reconciling the world; dwelling in the Church, in order that it should present and maintain the truth before the world; the truth (as we have seen) with regard to Christ, of the revelation of God in Him. God desires to be in relationship with men: it is thus that He accomplishes it. The Church maintains the rights of the Creator and Savior God on

the earth. The Church must itself be maintained in moral order, that it may confront the enemy who is in the world, and be able to sustain this testimony.

But there would be some who departed from the faith, from this knowledge of the one Creator and Savior-God - He who was manifested in the flesh. They would attack precisely these points which we have named. It might be, that they would pretend to carry the idea of Christian privileges further than all others had done, as well as that of profound knowledge of God; but they would sin against first principles, against the faith which connected the Savior-God revealed in Christianity with the one only Creator-God. According to Christianity, the eternal God had not only created the world, but had revealed Himself in Christ. These apostates, bringing in doctrines of devils, would seek to deny that it was this one and only God of nature who had manifested Himself in grace. Seduced by demons, and their consciences being seared, they forbade that which God had established in creation, that which He had given to man in full right after the flood; as though the superior holiness which they preached, and relationship with a more exalted God, were not consistent with such customs. Forsaking the real and practical holiness of communion with God, and of His commandments by Christ, they created a false sanctity for themselves, which denied that which God had ordained from the beginning, and thus exalted themselves against the authority of Him who had ordained it, as though He were an imperfect or perhaps evil Being.

Thus the restraint of the fear of God was lost, and the door opened to license and dissoluteness. The Spirit of God warned the Church of this, and the faithful apostle communicates it to Timothy, and through him puts the faithful on their guard. He does not, therefore, speak of privilege: faithful to the glory of God, he returns to the first principles of His glory, and maintains the incontestable rights of the one and only God; faithful to God, not making boast of his knowledge, but seeking, in love, to guard the Church from all departure from God.

We must not confound the few here who forsake the faith with the general apostasy of 2 Thessalonians. Here, a few depart from the truth, seduced by demons; and the Church still subsists to be guarded from the invasion of these hurtful principles. Quite another thing is the general apostasy, and the manifestation of the man of sin, which is not mentioned here at all.

Here, we have the faithfulness which repels error by truth, reminding the brethren of the latter, in order that they may not be seduced. There, it is the manifestation of the one who sits in the temple of God, and who is destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's presence. Here, all that had to be done was to recall in simplicity the goodness of the Creator, and that His gifts, received with thanksgiving, were always good, and not to be refused: not, assuredly, that they were to use them for the gratification of their lusts, but as sanctified by the word of God, which revealed this, and by prayer, which connects us with God in using them. They were to be received as from Him, as the gift of His hand; and they were sanctified, as is the case with everything that comes from Him, and bears the stamp of His will and His goodness. Here (although in other circumstances it has gone much farther), the monastic principle, in the heart and in form, is fully judged: however sincere any individual may be who seeks to follow it in order to honor God.

This, in fact, the apostle shows, in that which follows. By teaching thus, Timothy should be a good servant of Jesus Christ, nourished in the truth; bodily exercises profited little, but godliness much, both here below and for eternity. It is for this doctrine of God,-true and worthy of all acceptance,-that the apostle labored and suffered reproach; because he had faith in the living

God, who, by His providence and by His supreme power, governed, preserved, and took care of all men, and especially of those that believed. It was this same only God, Creator and Savior, in whom he trusted -while laboring for the Lord. Timothy was to teach this and enforce it with authority.

Afterward, in connection with this authoritative instruction, the apostle speaks of the person and position of Timothy himself. He was young, but he was to maintain his place, and gain by his conduct that weight which years did not yet give him. He was to be an example to the believers, and occupy himself, till Paul came, with reading, exhortation, and instruction. Moreover, in his case, God had given a special preparation for his work; he was not to forget or neglect it. A gift had been imparted to him. God had pointed him out to this end, by prophecy; and this immediate testimony from God, to which the operation of his power was united, had been accompanied by the seal of testimony from man, i.e., that of the elders among the Christians, (compare Acts 13:1-3).

Thus all things concurred to strengthen Timothy in his service, and in the authority that he exercised at that moment in place of the apostle. He should always pre-sent the weight of an irreproachable conduct, which would have its influence over hearts and con-sciences; but he was inwardly strengthened by the consciousness of having been formally set apart by God for the work; the gift of God had been imparted to him, and the sanction of all that had weight in the Church had been laid, as a seal, upon him. Thus strengthened, he was to devote himself to the things of the Lord in such a manner, that his progress should be evident to all men -a demonstration of his communion with the Lord. At the same time he was to take heed to himself and to the doctrine, and that continually, which should be the means of salvation both to himself and to those who heard him.

Having thus considered the laborer, the apostle returns to the details of the work, in which Timothy was to display his diligence and watchful care. Everywhere here, the subject is that which is suitable outwardly to an upright walk, that which is seemly, whether with regard to the position of individuals, or with respect to the world. The apostle speaks of elders; of widows, of that which is becoming for younger widows of the honor due to faithful elders, those among them especially who were teachers also. There is nothing inward, nothing of the soul's relationships to God, but everything refers to the public testimony which suited the position of men in this world before God. It is important to remark this, that although our joy lies in our heavenly privileges, in our communion, yet we can never, with impunity, neglect ordinary duties or moral proprieties; we must take knowledge of the practical dangers that would beset us, owing to that which the flesh is.

We may notice, that provision was made for all widows who had no relatives able to maintain them; and also that there were elders who did not teach.

Against an elder, Timothy was not to receive an accusation, unless there were two or three witnesses.

All this bears testimony to the fact, that the apostle gives these directions with a view to outward order; for the maintenance of that which is respectable in the eyes of all, and of respect for all that ought to be respected. At the same time, Timothy was to be careful not to give his sanction to any one by the laying on of hands, who did not offer moral guarantees that in the position he had

taken, he deserved this mark of respect from others. It would be, on Timothy's part, to become a partaker in the sins of which such a one might be guilty. He was not to lay hands hastily on any one.

Some men's sins were open, and proclaimed before-hand the judgment that awaited them. The sins of others were hidden-they would find them again at the great day. But this was a reason why he should do nothing in his charge with precipitation; he was also to keep himself pure.

Timothy's habitual temperance is here seen; weak in body, the apostle recommends him to use his liberty by taking a little wine. A pleasing instance of grace. We have here a proof of the habits of this faithful servant. The Spirit shows us how carefully he kept himself from exciting or satisfying his passions in the least thing; at the same time that there is perfect liberty to use every-thing that is good when there is a true reason for it; and also the apostle's tender interest in his fellow-laborer in the Gospel. It is a little parenthesis attached to the expression, " be not a partaker of other men's sins," but it has great beauty. This affectionate watchfulness be-came the apostle; he desired holiness in his representative, but he well knew how to respect Timothy, and to maintain the decorum which he had enjoined, and to exhibit his heartfelt tenderness.

The 24th verse is connected with the 22nd.

The apostle then goes equally into detail with regard to servants. They were to respect their masters, in order that the doctrine of the Lord should not be blasphemed.

When the masters were believers, there was naturally more familiarity, for they were one in Christ, and thence the danger (for the flesh is crafty) that the servants might not treat their masters with the respect due to them. The apostle guards against this abuse of Christian love, and of the just intimacy and confidence which ought to exist between brethren; but which, on the contrary, was a motive for the servant to render double honor to his master, by treating him with more love and with the same respect.

It was necessary that the apostle should be firm; all other instruction, all refusal to receive the wholesome words of Christian doctrine, the words of Christ and the doctrine which is according to practical godliness, proceeded from the flesh, from human pride in those who wished to take advantage of godliness, and make it a means of gain. From such persons Timothy was to turn away. Godliness was indeed gain, if they were contented with what they had; and the Christian, who does not belong to this world, if he has food and raiment, ought to be content therewith. He brought nothing into this world, and will certainly carry nothing out of it. And the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. Seduced by this covetousness, some had wandered away from Christian faith, and had pierced their hearts with sorrow. The desire to be rich was the path of snares and temptation, of foolish and hurtful lusts. Timothy was to flee these things, as a man of God. This is always the thought here: he was in the world on the part of God; he represented Him, for his part, in the work. He was, therefore, to follow after other things than earthly riches-the character of a man of God, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; these were the things which, in man, presented God to the world and glorified Him.

Meantime there was conflict; he must fight the good fight of faith. If any one represents God in the world, there must be warfare, because the enemy is there. The energy of faith was also necessary, in order to lay hold of eternal life in the midst of the seductions and difficulties which

the " things that are seen " presented. God, moreover, had called Timothy to this, and he had made a good confession before many witnesses.

Finally, the apostle charges him most solemnly in the presence of God, the source of life for all things, and of Christ Jesus, who had himself borne witness without wavering before the powers of this world, placing him under the responsibility of keeping the commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It will be noticed here, that as Paul had not spoken in the Epistle of the privilege of the Church, but of its responsibility, so neither does he here speak of its being caught up but of its manifestation, when the fruits of faithfulness (or of failure in it) will be gathered, and every one be in his place in the visible glory, according to his work. All are like Christ, all enter into His joy; but to sit at His right and left hand in His kingdom is the portion of those for whom it is prepared by His Father, who bestows it according to the work which He has granted each to perform, giving him power to accomplish it; although in grace he reckons it as our own.

Christ Himself is here viewed as the faithful man (ver. 13), whom God will manifest in glory before all creatures, at the time ordained in His counsels.

All here is responsibility before the world, or glory as the result of that responsibility. The supreme invisible God is maintained in His majesty, and He presents the Lord Jesus Christ in the creation as their center and repository of all His glory,-He who dwells in light inaccessible, who in His divine essence, man has not seen and cannot see.

This character of the Epistle is very remarkable. No where else is the inaccessible majesty of God, as God, thus presented. His character is often the subject of instruction and manifestation. Here He alone has essential immortality. He dwells in inaccessible light, He is ever invisible to the eyes of men. He alone has power. He has dominion over all who reign. It is God in the abstraction of His essence, in the proper immutability of His being, in the rights of His majesty, veiled to all men.

Now Christ will be the center of the visible glory. Having part in the divine glory before the world was, He displays, in the human nature in which He took part, this glory, which is rendered visible in Him: causing His own to participate in His joy and in all that He has in this character; but here, He is manifested by God, and in order that all should acknowledge Him. And it is our responsibility, faithfulness to which will be manifested in that day, which is here set before us. However small may be our share of responsibility, it is of such a God as this that we are the representatives on earth. Such is the God before whom we are to walk, and whose majesty we are to respect immediately in our conduct, and also in our relations to all that He has made.

The apostle concludes his exhortation to Timothy, by engaging him to warn the rich not to rest on the un-certainty of riches, but on the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. It is still the supreme and Creator God who is before our eyes. Moreover, they were to be rich in good works, and ready to give: to be rich in those dispositions which would be of value, which would lay up a store (this is but a figure) against the time to come; and to lay hold of eternal life. The apostle repeats his urgent exhortation to Timothy to keep that which had been committed to him, to avoid profane and vain babblings, holding fast the sound and sanctifying truth, and to have nothing to do with oppositions of human science, which pretended to penetrate into divine things as though they were subject to its knowledge. This was the origin of the fall of many, with regard to Christian faith.

I do not doubt that in-the manner in which the apostle here sets God before us, he refers to the foolish imaginations to which, under the influence of the enemy, men were abandoning themselves. Thus he speaks of these with relation to the majesty of His Being as the one only God in whom is all fullness, and with regard to the sobriety of practical morality, which keeps the heart under the influence of that truth, and apart from the false and vain speculations in which the pride of man indulged itself. He maintained souls by, the majesty of the only God, in the practical sobriety in which peace dwells.

Soon will the veil be drawn aside by the appearing of Jesus, whom the Almighty God will display to the world.

2 Chronicles 18

In the declining days of the house of David, as we see in 2 Chron., the spirit of God occasionally visits. The Lord sends His prophets, " rising up early and sending them; " and those Prophets warned, and threatened, and counseled, " till there was no remedy," and Judah went into captivity.

The like thing, to a certain measure, is seen in the history of the Ten Tribes, or in the kingdom of Israel, as the two Books of Kings show us. Prophets warned the people again and again, till Israel was carried into Assyria.

But these visits or energies of the Spirit in Israel, distinguished themselves, I judge, from what they were in Judah. They never, I believe it will be found, brought comfort or encouragement. For Israel, at the very outset, revolted from God as well as from David - and what the house of Jeroboam began, every other house that reigned in Israel, whether of Baasha, Omri, or Jehu, continued. And the Spirit seems always to act as a stranger, when acting in Israel. Thus at the very beginning, the man of God, sent against tile altar at Bethel, was commanded not to eat or to drink, or to tarry, or even to return by the way that he went. And much in the same way was the young man, who was sent to anoint Jehu, instructed to carry himself: And Elijah and Elisha, raised up by the Spirit in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, appear as strangers there, all through their ministries. Their walk is desultory and informal. They own no house of God in the land-and each of them furnishes the Lord Jesus, in His teaching, in Luke 4, with instances of God going outside the bounds of the elect people. I mean when He alludes, as He does there, to the widow of Sarepta, and to Naaman, the Syrian.

In Judah, on the contrary, the Spirit was at home, and had various work to do. To the end of the declining days of Judah, the Lord recognizes his house among them (see 2 Chron. 36) And though His voice in His Prophets be generally that of warning and rebuke, yet still, at times, He counsels, and comforts, and encourages.

Thus, Rehoboam is warned not to go against the revolted Tribes, with the hope of bringing them back, because that revolt had been God's judgment on the house of David. This warning was, therefore, gracious counsel.

In the times of Jehoshaphat and Amaziah, the Spirit, in different Prophets, warned the kings of the house of Judah, to keep themselves from all alliance with the house of Israel. This was gracious.

Asa and Hezekiah, and the days of Joash, in the person of Jehoiada, witness how mightily and blessedly the Spirit could help Judah at times.

And there is a peculiar form and acting of the grace of God, by His Spirit, in the days of Josiah. The Book of God is found; and then the Spirit in Huldah, the Prophetess, interprets present things in the light of the Book.

Now, all this various energy of the Spirit of God, in the declining days of the kingdom of Judah, has a voice in our ears, in this our day. But among all these instances of the acting and energy of the

Spirit then, our chapter (2 Chron. 18) affords us one of the most solemn and affecting.

The whole scene is very weighty and serious. The two spirits are there, the unclean spirit, and the Spirit of God, the spirit from the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord.

The world, or the apostate, is there, in the person of Ahab.

The involved, defiled saint is there also, in the person of Jehoshaphat.

The separated man, the witness of Christ, is seen in Micaiah.

And, beside, we get the various fate, so to speak, or the history of the different actors, in this solemn scene; at the end of it all, the king of Judah, and the king of Israel.

The spirit of delusion, the unclean spirit, is here, doing the work of dementation in the apostate Ahab, ere his destruction comes-for his measure of iniquity was now full. But the Spirit of God is here also, in the Prophet Micaiah, faithful, and, therefore, grieved and suffering- grieved, doubtless, by the evil, impure connection between the saints and the world, which that moment exhibited Jehoshaphat sitting with Ahab; suffering, even to bonds and imprisonment as from the world, by the hand of Ahab.

Striking, indeed, are the energies which are seen at work here. The spirit of error encourages the king of Israel to go on with all his projects; for he promises him, that there is only victory and prosperity before him. Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, goes so far as to make horns of iron, symbols of the strength with which Ahab was to push his enemies, till he had destroyed them. Zedekiah did not take into account the moral condition of things at that moment with Ahab, and his kingdom. This was nothing to him. It can be nothing to a false Prophet. But Zedekiah says all he can, and does all he can, to urge Ahab on his way, and carry out all the purposes and expectations of his heart, assuring him of all the honor and wealth that would attend him.

And, surely, I may say, we see much of this same thing now a days. The moral state of the world, its character under God's eye, is not appreciated. It encourages itself to go forward. "Progress," is the writing on its standard now. "Excelsior," is its motto; higher and higher still in the attempts and attainments of human skill and capability. A rejected Lord is over-looked or forgotten. The blood of Jesus may have once stained the earth, but the earth is still fruitful. Man has departed from God, but he has skill and resources to build a city and a tower. If ever there was a time when man was encouraged to go on, it is the present. Character or condition before God is not estimated. These are days, when many a Zedekiah is making horns of iron; many a deceived heart, and practiced hand is prophesying and sketching the world's sure progress.

And much of the religion of the day speaks flattering words in the ear of the world, as to all this its purpose and its expectation, not knowing its character before God. But in Micaiah, the true language is heard-vessel of the Spirit of God as he was.

He lets the king of Israel know, that Ramoth-Gilead shall witness his fall, and the scattering of that flock, which he, as a shepherd in Israel, was now gathering there. He speaks not of progress and of triumph, but of judgment.

Surely this is a word for us. Christendom presents all this. This chapter is a fruitful witness of what is now around us in larger characters. A grieved, and, in some places, a suffering, faithful election-saints defiled by evil alliances-the world in its hopes and projects of growing importance-and an unclean false spirit encouraging the world, thoroughly careless or indifferent as to its character before God. Can we not read these things in this chapter, and can we not as clearly read them in the day through which we are passing?

And, let me observe, there is something of all this to be seen in Luke 19.

The multitude are watching the Lord on his way to Jerusalem; and they think that the kingdom of God is immediately to appear. They judge that nothing is needed but a little "progress!" The Lord was on His way to the royal city; and He had but to reach it, as they seem to have imagined, and the glory would be there, and the day of the power of the kingdom. They did not weigh present things in Israel, in God's balances-they did not appreciate them in their relationship to Him, which is the real character of everything.

The parable of the nobleman who went into the far country, is there delivered by the Lord, to correct this thought of the multitude-and after a little while, He makes His formal entry into the city, but only to expose such a condition of things there, such a moral condition, as would surely hinder God from displaying His glory there; and Jesus, therefore, instead of letting the kingdom immediately appear, retires in judgment. For the glory must have a clean vessel.

This is full of meaning - and like our chapter, has a voice for this our day. For, if there be a warning needed by the present generation in Christendom, it is this -that things must be estimated in God's light, in the face of the great wide-world fact, that Jesus, God's Christ, has been rejected here. No other estimation is divine. But this generation are not carrying that secret with them - as the multitude, in Luke 19 did not consider the moral condition of Jerusalem then, but looked for an immediate kingdom; and, as the Prophets in Israel made promise to the king in Israel, of progress, and prosperity, and triumph, in spite of all the apostate condition of things then in Israel.

Let the saints of God remember, again, I would say, that the glory must have a clean vessel: The Spirit of burning and of judgment must do its work in the cloud by day, ere the shining of the flaming fire, by night, can rest on the dwellings and assemblies of Zion, as says the Prophet (Isa. 4:4,5). The angels of the Son of Man must take out of His kingdom all that offend and do iniquity, ere the righteous can shine forth in the kingdom, as the Lord of the Prophets Himself says (Matt. 13:41-43).

And surely do the ministers of judgment find out the subject for judgment. At the end, Jehoshaphat is preserved, and Ahab falls - though all was tending to the contrary. Ahab had sheltered himself; and the word of the king of Syria had marked such a one as Jehoshaphat appeared to be, for the sword. But God was Judge. The issue of the day was in His hand; and the eagles that He sends out know whose the carcass is (Luke 17). "Where, Lord?" asked the wondering disciples. "Wheresoever the body is," said their Master, "thither will the eagles be gathered together." Again, I say, the ministers of judgment find out the subject for judgment. The Judge of all the earth will do right. The arrow of the Almighty will surely reach its mark, as it does here, and Ahab, the apostate, the representative of the revolted world, falls.

A Few Thoughts on 2 Peter

In this epistle, the apostle, under the Holy Ghost, anticipates the moral corruption which was to overspread Christendom. Language and figures are largely employed to set forth this awful anticipation or prophecy; and surely our observations may well and fully vindicate the Spirit's forebodings. For what we know of such corruptions may lead us to say, that language or figures borrowed from Balaam, or from Sodom, or from the fallen angels, from the dog, or from the sow, are not too awful for the reality.

But pollution suggests judgment. In a divine sense, in the reckoning of God, in righteousness or holiness, there is a necessary connection between them. Accordingly, this same epistle contemplates judgment as well as moral corruption. This we see in chap. 3, following, as of course it does, chap. 2.

These are the apostle's materials, or principal objects, in these chapters- moral corruption in chap. 2, judgment in chap. 3. Glory, or the dwelling-place of righteousness, is seen only in the distance; and I may, there-fore, speak thus: moral pollution occupies the foreground, divine judgments the mean or middle place, and glory shines faintly afar off.

But this being so, the apostle has a practical purpose. It is this, I doubt not - to set the saints to that cultivation of holiness, that living exercise of their souls in the power of godliness, which will keep them apart from this evil condition which he is foreboding. This is seen in chap. 1.

He tells them, at the very beginning, that full provision was made to this end - full provision for this husbandry, to which he is about to set them.

He tells them, that divine power had given and secured to them all that pertained to, or was needful for, not only life, but godliness, and that the promises, exceeding great and precious as they were, had a purifying virtue in them; that by them the saints would be made partakers of divine nature, as a people who had escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. All this he tells them at the outset, and this at once bespeaks his practical purpose in writing to them, setting forth their provisions in God, and His power and His promises, not for salvation or joy (though that be true, as we know), but for godliness.

The promises are looked at in their cleansing virtue. It is, as I may say, the washing of water by the word that Peter here contemplates and speaks of, as Paul does in another place (Eph. 5:26).

And having thus declared our provisions in God and His word for the ends of godliness, he puts us upon the husbandry of godliness. He tells us of fruitfulness -fruitfulness which will be known in the cultivation and production of those graces and virtues which give real, intrinsic character to the saints, those habits, and tempers, and properties of the soul, the inner man, which we know with God are of great price.

And there is a difference, we may observe, between service and fruitfulness. Service is something more manifested, fruitfulness may be very hidden. The hand, or the foot, or the tongue may serve;

and so they should. Tipped with the blood and the oil, they are to be instruments in the hand of the divine Master of the house, and to be as servants there; but it is in the deeper places of the affections, the secrets of the soul, that the husbandry of the saints, in the power of the Spirit and the truth, is to be yielding fruit to God. Herbs, meet for Him by whom the soul is dressed, are to spring and grow there, fragrant, and beautiful, such as bespeak the virtue of that rain that has visited it from heaven (Heb. 6:7).

But still further-in proof how Peter is keeping practical godliness in view - he not only gives the promises, as we have seen, in connection with that, but other things and objects also. Thus, looking at the distant glory, he sees it under this character, the dwelling-place of righteousness (3:13). It is not its brightness or its joy he anticipates, but its purity. He calls the Mount of Transfiguration the holy hill (1:18). And this being so, the place to which the saints are tending being holy -being the dwelling of righteousness, he tells them, that if they be, as he exhorts them, cultivating godliness - if their husbandry be spent on virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, charity, and the like, then they will have an abundant entrance into that kingdom. And this is a very simple and sure thought. If the place we are to enter, when the journey is over, be a clean place, a holy hill, a dwelling of righteousness; and if, while we are on the road, we be cherishing the holy, the clean, the righteous mind, surely our entrance will be the more easy and natural, and thus abundant. This will be so, because we have been already (in the spirit of our minds, or in character) in the place we are approaching. We know it already, in the great moral sense. We may not have had one ray of its brightness or glory along the road that has led us to it, but we have been exercised in its virtue-we have been in moral consistency with it. We have not had its scenery yet, but we have already breathed its atmosphere; and that ensures an easy, a natural, or an abundant entrance.

And I may add this, that as we see, in chaps. 2 and 3, corruption ending in judgment, so in chap. 1 we see the path of the saints of those who walk in the practical power of their holy calling ending in a happy, abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

Yes; and this moral we may draw from this. How should the path savor of the place it leads to! Are we on our way to One who was rejected here? How fit that we should not refuse to be rejected with Him. Are we on our way to join the Conqueror of the world? How fit that we should cherish that faith that overcometh the world. Are we soon to see Him who loved us so as to die for us? How right that we should cultivate love one to another. And, according to the suggestions of this epistle, are we tending to the dwelling of righteousness? How does it become us to grow in grace, and to be adding to faith virtue, and to virtue know-ledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and the like. Thus and thus we may speak to ourselves; but if one may speak for others, we have to say, " My leanness! my leanness!"

"Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14:19.)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20.)

"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. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the

earth." (Col. 3:3-5.)

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11,12.)

"One spirit with the Lord;"

O blessed, wondrous word!

What heavenly light, what power divine,

Doth that sweet word afford!

"One spirit with the Lord;"

The Father's smile of love

Rests ever on the members here

As on the Head above.

"One spirit with the Lord;"

Jesus, the glorified,

Esteems the Church for which He bled,

His body and His bride.

And though by storms assail'd,

And though by trials perst,

Himself our Life, He bears us up

Right onward to the rest.

2 Timothy

The second Epistle to Timothy has a very peculiar character. It is the expression of his heart who, outside Palestine, had, under God, founded and built the Church of God on earth, and it was written in sight of its failure, and its departure from the principles on which he had established it. God remained faithful; His foundation was sure and immovable; but the work committed into the hands of men, was already enfeebled and decaying. The consciousness of this state of things, which moreover betrayed itself in the way in which the apostle himself was then forsaken, oppressed his heart, and he pours it out into the bosom of his faithful Timothy. By this means, the Spirit instructs us in the solemn truth, that the Church has not kept its first estate, and sets before us the ways of safety for those who seek God, and desire to please Him, in such a state of things as this.

The apostle John gives the history of the fall of the Church here below, and of its judgment, and that of the world likewise. He also sets before us a life, which, apart from all question of the Church's condition, abides ever the same, which renders us capable of enjoying God, and makes us resemble Him in His nature and character.

As a witness, John was to remain until the Lord came; but Paul sees for himself the ruin of that which he had built and watched over so faithfully. He had spent himself for the Church, accomplishing that which was left of the sufferings of Christ; and he had to see that which he had so much loved, which he had cared for, even as a mother cherishes her nursing, which he had planted as God's plant on the earth, grow feeble as to its condition and testimony in the world, depart from the source of strength, and become corrupt. What a painful experience! But it is that of the servant of God in all ages, and in all dispensations. He sees, indeed, the power of God acting, to plant the testimony on earth, but he sees that men soon fail in it. The house inhabited by the Holy Ghost becomes dilapidated and in disorder. Nevertheless, and we love to repeat it with the apostle, the sure foundation of the Lord abides forever. Whatever may be the condition of the whole company, the individual is always to depart from all iniquity, and to maintain, by himself, if need be, the true testimony of the name of Christ. This can never fail the faithful soul.

In view of the mixture and confusion which began to show itself in the Church, the apostle's comfort was founded on these two principles, while remembering and joyfully availing himself of the communion and faithfulness of some precious souls. He had such as Timothy and Onesiphorus, amid the afflictions of the Gospel and the sorrow of being forsaken by so many who were seals to his ministry before the Lord.

The apostle begins by taking the ground of grace, and of individual life-which never changes in essential character-outside Church privilege's. Not that these had changed; but he could no longer connect them with the general body on earth. He calls himself here an apostle, according to the promise of eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus. It is not only the Messiah, it is not the Head of the body, it is the eternal life which is in Him.

Paul addresses his dearly beloved son Timothy, whose affection he remembers. He desired greatly to see him, being mindful of his tears, shed, probably, at the time when Paul was made prisoner, or when he was separated from him on that occasion, or when he heard of it. It is the confidence of a friend that is speaking to one whose heart he knew. We see something of this, but in the perfection that was peculiar to Himself, in Jesus on the Cross, in that which He said to John, and to His mother. A similar form would have been unsuitable in Paul. The affections of men show themselves in and by their wants, the wants of their hearts; those of the Lord by his condescension. With Him, all is in itself perfect. With us, it is only by grace that all is in its right place.

Ver. 3. The apostle does not speak any longer of the high character of his work, but of his personal position, rightly felt according to the Spirit. He had served God, following in the steps of his forefathers, with a pure conscience. In every way he was a vessel made unto honor. For more than one generation, his ancestors: were distinguished for a good conscience; and personal piety, founded on the truth, showed itself in the service of God. Paul was not here expressing a judgment as to the inward condition of each generation; it was their character. He calls to mind a similar fact, with regard to Timothy, in whose case, however, Judaism, as to its outward obligations, is totally absent; for the father of Timothy was a Greek, and the marriage of his Jewish mother was unclean according to the law, and would have rendered Timothy also unclean and deprived him of Jewish rights; and, in fact, he had not been circumcised when an infant. Paul did it, which also was not according to the law unless Timothy had become a proselyte. Both heathens and their children were excluded, as we read in Nehemiah. Paul's act was above the law. Here he takes no notice of it; he leaves the Gentile father out of sight, and speaks only of the personal unfeigned faith of Timothy's mother and grand-mother, and that of his beloved disciple himself.

The state of the Church, was only an additional occasion for the exercise of his faith, and for his zealous activity. Difficulties and dangers multiplied on every hand; the unfaithfulness of Christians was added to all the rest. But God is none the less with His people. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, so that the Lord's laborer, the man of God, he who kept himself in communion with God, in order to represent Him on the earth, was to stir up the gift that was in Him and, as the apostle expresses it elsewhere, with admirable and touching force and clearness-to endure the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God. Here, in the case of Timothy, the apostle could make mention of a special gift of the Spirit, which had been conferred upon Timothy, through the laying on of his hands. In the first Epistle, he had spoken of the prophecy which had called him or pointed him out for the possession of this gift, and told us that it had been accompanied by the laying on of the hands of the elders; here he tells us, that the laying on of his own hands was the means of bestowing it upon him.

The apostle reminds him of this proof of power and reality in his ministry (and in that of Paul himself,) in view of this period, when its exercise was more difficult. When all is prosperous, and the progress of the Gospel is remarkable, so that even the world is struck with it, the work is found to be easy, in spite of difficulties and opposition, and,-such is man-even in consequence of this opposition one is bold and persevering. But when others, Christians even, forsake the laborer, when evil, and the deceptions of the enemy come in, when love has grown cold, and, because one is faithful, prudence takes alarm, and desires a less- forward walk; to stand firm in circumstances like these, to persevere in the work, and maintain one's courage is not an easy thing. We must

possess Christianity with God, so that we know why we stand fast; we must be ourselves in communion with Him, in order to have the strength necessary to continue laboring in His name, and the sustainment of His grace at all times.

God, then, has given us the spirit of power, and of love and of a sound mind; the apostle had received such a position from God, that he had been able to bestow this spirit on Timothy, who was not to be ashamed either of the testimony, which was losing outwardly its onward current in the world, nor of Paul, who was now a prisoner. How precious to possess that which is eternal, that which is founded on the power, and on the work of God Himself. There were, indeed, the afflictions of the Gospel, they would be endured according to the power of God. God has saved us, has called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, as though anything depended on man, but according to His own purpose, and His grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. This is the sure and immovable foundation, a rock for our souls, against which the waves of difficulty break in vain, showing a strength which we could not resist for a moment, but showing also, their total powerlessness against the purpose and work of God. The efforts of the enemy only prove, that he is without strength in the presence of that which God is, and of -that which He has done for us.

:That which we have to seek, is the power of the Spirit, in order that we may realize this gift of God by faith, and that we may abide, as to our hearts, as to our practical faith, in the sense of our union with Christ, upon this 'immutable foundation, which is nothing less than - the immutability, and the glory of God Himself: For 'His purpose has been manifested; that purpose, which gave us a place, and a portion in Christ Himself, was now manifested through the appearance of that very Christ.

It is no longer a nation chosen in the world to display in it the principles of the government of God, and of His ways in righteousness, in patience, in kindness, and power, on the earth; however unchangeable His counsels, however sure His calling, as manifested in His dealings with regard to the people whom He called.

It is a counsel of God, formed and established in Christ, before the world existed, which has its place in the ways of God, outside and above the world, in union with the person of His Son, and in order to manifest a people united with Him in glory. Thus it is a grace which has given us in Him, before the world was. Hidden in the counsels of God, this purpose of God was manifested with the manifestation of Him, in whom it had its accomplishment. It was not merely blessings and dealings of God with regard to men, -it was life eternal.

Thus Paul was an apostle, according, to the promise of eternal life. While Christ Himself was alive, although life was in Him, this purpose of God was not accomplished with respect to us. The power of life, divine power in life, was to manifest itself in the destruction of the power of death, brought in by sin; and in which Satan reigned over sinners.

Christ, then, in His resurrection, has annulled death; and., by the gospel, has brought to light both life and incorruptibility, that is to say, that condition of eternal life, which puts the soul and the body beyond death and its power. Thus the glad tidings of this work were addressed to all men. Founded in the eternal counsels of God, established in the person of Christ, the work necessary for its fulfillment being accomplished by Him, possessing a character altogether outside Judaism, and the mere government of God in the earth; Paul's gospel was unto all men. Being the

manifestation of the eternal counsels, and power of God, having to do with man, as lying under the power of death, and with the accomplishment of a victory, that placed man beyond that power, and in an entirely new condition, which depended on the power of God, and His purposes,-it addressed itself to man, to all men, Jews or Gentiles, without distinction. Knowing Adam dead by sin, and Christ alive in the power of divine life, he announced this good news to man -deliverance, and a totally new state of things. It was to proclaim this Gospel, that the apostle had been called as a herald. It was for this he suffered, and, in the sense of what had caused it, was not ashamed to suffer. For he knew whom he had believed; he knew His power. He believed in the Gospel that he preached, and, therefore, in the victorious powers of-Him in whom he believed. He could die; with regard to the life that he had received from the first Adam, he could be dishonored and put to shame in the world and by the world, -life in Christ, the power by which Christ had won a place for man, outside the- condition of the first Adam; life -as Christ now possesses it-was not touched thereby. But this is not all which is here expressed. The apostle does not say "in what I have believed," but "whom." An important difference, which, places us, as to our confidence, in connection with the person of Christ Himself. The apostle had spoken of the truth, but truth is allied to the person of Christ. He is the Truth, and in Him truth has life, has power, is linked with the love-which applies it, which maintains it in the heart, and the heart by it. "I know," says the apostle, "whom I have believed." He had committed his happiness to Christ. In Him, was that life in which the apostle participated; in Him, the power that sustained it, and that preserved in heaven the inheritance of glory, which was his portion where this life was developed.

Encouraged by this hope, and committing himself to Jesus; he had endured all things for Him, and for those who were His; he had accepted all suffering here, he was ready to die daily. His happiness, in the glory of that new life, he had committed to Jesus; he labored, meanwhile, in affliction, sure of finding again, without being deceived, that which he had committed to the Lord, in the day when he should see Him, and all his sorrows be ended. It was in the expectation of that day, in order to find it again at that day, that he had committed to Him his happiness and his joy.

Moreover, his own career would soon be finished; his eyes, therefore, turn towards Timothy, for the welfare of the Church here below. He exhorts him to be steadfast, to hold fast the truth, as He had taught it him (it was the testimony of the Lord), but the truth in its realization by faith in Christ, and according to the power of love, that is found in communion with Him. It is this which, as we have seen, the apostle had realized. The truth, and living grace in Jesus, in faith, and in love, which gave it its power, and its value; these are, as it were, the pivots of strength and faithfulness at all times, and especially for the man of God, when the Church in general is unfaithful.

Truth, as it was taught by the apostles, and expressed by them, the manner in which they presented the truth, "the form of sound words," is the inspired expression of that which God was pleased to reveal; and that, in the relationships in which the truth is linked together, in all its different parts, according to the living nature and power of God, who is necessarily its center, as He is its source. Nothing, except revelation, could be this expression. God expresses everything as it is, and in a living way; and by His word, all exists. He is the source and the center of all things. All flow from Him-are in relation with a living person, namely, Himself, who is their source, from whom all hold their existence. This existence only is, in connection with Him; and the relationship of all things to Him, and between themselves, are found in the expression of his mind; in that measure, at least, in which He puts Himself in relation with man in all these things. If evil comes in,

as regards will, or its consequences in judgment, it is because this relationship is broken; and the relationship that is broken, is the measure of the evil.

Thus, we see the immense importance of the Word of God. It is the expression of the relationship of all things to God; whether as regards their existence-that is, creation-or with respect to His counsels; or even as to His own nature, and the communication of life received from Him, and the maintenance of His true character.

In His nature, as the source of all existence, and the center of all authority and subsistence outside Himself, God is the center of all, and the upholder of all. As to His counsels, Christ is the center, and here man has a peculiar place; all is to be under his feet. In order that the nature and the counsels of God should not be separated (which, indeed, is impossible but) that which was in His counsels, in order that it might not be, God became man. Christ is God, made manifest in flesh, the Word made flesh. Thus the divine nature the expression of that nature, is found in that which is the object of His counsels, that which forms their center. Thus, Christ is the Truth, is the center of all existing relationships; all have reference to Him, we are, through Him, for Him, or we are against Him; all subsist by Him. If we are judged, it is as His enemies. He is the life (spiritually) of all that enjoy the communication of the divine nature; even as He sustains all that exists. His manifestation brings to light the true- position of all things. Thus, He is the Truth. All that He says, being the words of God, are Spirit and Life; quickening, acting according to grace, judging with regard to the responsibility of His creatures.

But there is yet more than this...He is the revelation of love. God is love, and in Jesus love is in action, and is known by the heart that knows Him. The heart that knows Him, lives in love; and knows love in God. But He is also the object in whom God is revealed to us, and has become the object of entire reliance. Faith is born by His manifestation. It existed, indeed, through partial revelations of this same object, by means of which God made Himself known; but these were only partial anticipations of that which has been fully accomplished in the manifestation of Christ, of the Son of God. The object is the same. Formerly, the subject of promise and prophecy; now, the personal revelation of all that God is, the image of the invisible God, the One in whom the Father also is known.

Thus faith and love have their birth, their source, in the object which has created them in the soul; the object in which one has learned what love is, and with regard to which faith is exercised. By Him we believe in God. No one has ever seen God: the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father,-He has revealed Him.

Truth is thus revealed, for Jesus is the Truth, the expression of that which God is, so as to put all things perfectly in their place, in their true relationships with God and with each other. Faith and Love find the occasion of their existence in the revelation of the Son of God: of God as a Savior, in Christ.

But there is another aspect of the accomplishment of the work, and of the counsels of God which we have not yet spoken of: that is, the communication of the truth, and of the knowledge of God, This is the work of the Holy Ghost, in which the truth and the life are United, for we are begotten by the Word. It is divine energy in the Deity, acting in all that connects God with the creature, or the creature with God. Acting in sovereignty as God, in union with the Father and the Son, the Holy

Ghost reveals the counsels of which we have spoken, and makes them effectual in the heart, according to the purpose of the Father, and by the revelation of the person and work of the Son. I have said, divine energy, not as a theological definition-which is not my object here-but as a practical truth, for, while attributing all that regards the creature to the Father (except judgment, which is entirely committed to the Son, because He is the Son of Man) and to the Son, the immediate action upon creation, and in the creature wherever it takes place, is attributed to the Spirit.

The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters when this earth was formed; by His Spirit He garnished the heavens; we are born of the Spirit, sealed with the Spirit, holy men of God spake by the Spirit, gifts were the operation of the Spirit distributing to whom He would; He bears witness with our spirits; He groans in us; we pray by the Holy Ghost, if that grace is bestowed upon us. The Lord Himself, born as man in this world, was conceived by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit bears witness of all things, that is to say, of all truth in the Word. The love of the Father, the nature and the glory of God Himself, His character, person and glory and love of the Son, His work, form the subject of His testimony, -with all that relates to man in connection with these truths. The Spirit's witness to these things is the Word, and-produced by means of men-takes the shape of the truth formally set forth by revelation. Christ is the Truth, as we have seen, the center of all the ways of God; but what we are now speaking of is the divine communication of this truth; and in this way it can be said that the Word is the truth. But, although communicated by means of men, so that it takes a form adapted to man, its source is divine; and He who has communicated it, is divine; He of whom it is said, "He will not speak of Himself," that is to say, apart from the Father and the Son. Consequently, the revelation of the truth has all the depth, the universality of relationship, the inseparable connection with God (without which it would not be truth, for all that is separate from God is falsehood), which truth itself possesses, necessarily possesses, because it is the expression of the relationships which all things have to God in Christ; that is to say, of God's own thoughts, of which all these relationships are but the expression. It is true, that this revelation also judges all that is not in accordance with these relationships, and judges according to the value of the relationship that is broken with regard to God Himself, and the place which this relationship has in His mind. When this Word is received through the quickening work of the Holy Ghost in the heart, it is efficacious: there is life, there is faith, the soul is in real, living, practical, relationship with God, according to that which is expressed in the revelation it has received. The truth-which speaks of the love of God, of holiness, of cleansing from all sin, of eternal life, of the relationship of children-being received into the heart, places us in real, present living relationship with God, according to the force of all these truths, as God conceives them, and as He has revealed them to the soul. Thus are they vital and efficacious by the Holy Ghost; and the consciousness of this revelation of the truth, and of the truth of that which is revealed, and of really hearing the voice of God in His Word, is faith.

But all this is true in the revealed Word before I believe in it, and in order that I may believe in it, may believe in the truth; although the Holy Ghost alone makes us hear the voice of God in it, and so produces faith. And that which is revealed in it, is the divine expression of that which belongs to the infinite on the one side, and is expressed in the finite on the other; of that which has the profoundness of the nature of God from whom all proceeds, with whom and with whose rights all is in relationship, but which is developed -since it is outside God-in creation and in the finite.

The union of God. and man in the person of Christ, is the center-we may say, now that we know it, the necessary center of all this, as we have seen. And the inspired Word is its expression according to the perfection of God, and (we bless God for it, as the Savior is the grand subject of the Scriptures; "for," said He, "they testify of me"), in human forms.

But this Word being divine, being inspired, is the divine expression of the divine nature, persons, and counsels. Nothing that is not inspired in this way can have this place. Nothing else is the divine expression of the divine mind and truth, or is in direct union with the unmixed source; even though it sprang from the same source. The immediate connection is broken, that which is said is no longer divine; it may contain many truths, but the living derivation, the infinite, the union with God, the immediate and uninterrupted derivation from God, are wanting. The infinite is no longer there. The tree grows from its root, and forms one whole; the energy of life pervades it-the sap which flows from the root. We may consider one part, as God has set it there, as a part of the tree; we may see the importance of the trunk, the beauty of the development in its smallest details, the stateliness of the whole, in which the vital energy combines liberty and harmony of form. We see that it is a whole, united in. one by the same life that produced it. The leaves, the flowers, the fruit, all tell us of the warmth of that divine Sun which developed them, of the gushing, inexhaustible spring which nourishes them. But we cannot separate one part, be it ever so beautiful, from the tree, without depriving it of the energy of life and its relationship with the whole.

When the power of the Spirit of God produces the truth, it develops itself in union with its source; whether in revelation, or even in the life and in the service of the individual; although in the two latter cases there is a mixture of other elements, owing to the weakness of the man. When a man's mind apprehends the truth, and he seeks to give it a form, he does it according to the capacity of man, which is not its source: the truth, as he expresses it, even were it pure, is separated in him from its source and. its totality; but, besides this, the shape that a man gives it, always bears the stamp of the man's weakness. He has only apprehended it partially, and he only produces a part of it; accordingly it is no longer the truth. Moreover, when he separates it from the whole circle of truth in which God has placed it, he must necessarily clothe it in a new form, in a garment which proceeds from man,-at once error mixes with it. Thus it is no longer a vital part of the whole, it is partial, and thereby not the truth; and it is, in fact, mixed with error.

In the truth, there is, when God expresses it, love, holiness, authority, as they are in Him, the expression of His own relationships with man, and of the dignity of His person. When man gives it a shape, all this is wanting, and cannot be in it, because it is man who shapes it. It is no longer God speaking. God gives it a, perfect form, that is to say, He expresses the truth in words of certainty. If man gives it a form, it is no longer the truth given of God. Therefore, to hold fast the truth in the form God. has given it, the type, the shape in which He has expressed it, is of all importance; we are in relationship with God in it, according to the certainty of that which He has revealed.. This is the sure resource of the soul when the Church has lost its power and its energy, and is no longer a sustainment to feeble souls, and that that which bears its name no longer answers to the character here given it, " the pillar and support of the truth."

The truth, clear and positive truth, given as a revelation from God, in the words-clothed with His authority -by which He has given the truth a form, communicating the facts and the divine thoughts which are necessary for the salvation of men, and for their participation in divine life,-this it is which

we are to hold fast.

We are only sure of the truth when we retain the very language of God which contains it. By grace, I may speak of the truth in all liberty, I may seek to explain it, to communicate it, according to the measure of light and spiritual power bestowed upon me; I may endeavor to demonstrate its beauty, and the connection between its various parts. Every Christian, and especially those who have a gift from God for the purpose, may do this. But the truth which I explain and purpose, is the truth as God has given it, and in His own words in the revelation He has made. I hold fast the form of sound words, which I have received from a divine source and authority; it gives me certainty in the truth.

And here, it is important to remark the Church's part. She receives, she maintains, the truth, in her own faith; she guards it, she is faithful to it, she is subject to it, as a truth, a revelation, which comes from God Himself.

She is not the source of the truth. As a Church, she does not propagate it, does not teach it. She says, "I believe," not, "Believe." This last is the function of ministry, in which man is always individually in relationship with God, by means of a gift which he holds from God, and for the exercise of which he is responsible to God. This is all-important. Those who possess these gifts are members of the body. The Church exercises her discipline with regard to all that is of the flesh in them, in the exercise or apparent exercise of a gift, as in all else. She preserves her own purity, without respect of persons as to their outward appearance, being guided therein by the Word: for this is her responsibility-but she does not teach, she does not preach.

The Word goes before the Church, for she has been gathered together by the Word. The apostles, a Paul, those who were scattered abroad by the persecution, a thousand faithful souls, have proclaimed the Word, and thus the Church has been gathered out. It has been said that the Church was before the Scriptures. As regards the New Testament, this is true; but the preached Word was before the Church. The Church is its fruit, but is never its source. The edification even of the Church, when it has been gathered together, comes direct from God, through the gifts which He has bestowed; the Holy Ghost distributing to each according to His will.

The Scriptures are the means which God has used to preserve the truth, to give us certainty in it; seeing the fallibility of the instruments by whom it is propagated.

If at the beginning He filled certain persons with His Spirit, in such a way that error was excluded from their preaching; if, besides this, He then gave revelations, in which there was nothing but His own Word; yet, as a general rule, preaching is the fruit of the Holy Ghost in the heart, and its spirituality is only in measure, and there is the possibility of error. Here, whatever may be the power of the Spirit's work, we have to judge (see Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 14:29). We shall see further on, that in forming this judgment, it is the Scriptures which assure those who are led of God.

We have thus in the ways of God respecting this subject, three things closely united, yet different. Ministry, the Church, and the Word of God, i.e., the written Word; when it is not written, it belongs to the order of ministry.

Ministry-as regards the Word, for that is not the only service-preaches to the world, and teaches, exhorts, the members of the Church.

The Church enjoys communion with God, is fed, and grows by means of that with which its different members supply it. It preserves, and, in its confession, bears witness to the truth. It maintains holiness, and, by the grace and presence of the Holy Ghost, enjoys mutual communion; and, in love, cares for the temporal need of all its members.

The written Word is the rule which God has given, containing all that He has revealed. It is complete (Col. 1:25). It can, because it is the truth, be the means of communicating the truth to a soul, the Holy Ghost can use it as a means, but at all events it is the perfect rule, the authoritative communication of the will and the mind of God, for the Church.

The Church is subject, is to be faithful, to have no will. It does not reveal, it maintains by its confession, it watches over that which it has, it does not communicate; it has received, and is faithfully to keep. The man directs,-that is Christ: the woman obeys, and is faithful to her husband's thoughts-at least ought to be so (1 Cor.)-this is the Church. The oracles of God are committed to her. She does not give them; she obeys them.

The minister is bound, individually, to the same faithfulness,-this we understand; and in our epistle we have especially to do with this individual responsibility. That which the Church is in this respect, is revealed in the first epistle (3:15). Here it is the individual who is to hold fast this form of sound words which he has received. from a divine source, for such the apostle was, in his apostolic function, as an instrument. Neither Timothy nor the Church could frame such a form of sound words, their part was to hold it fast, having received it.

And here, as we have said, however unfaithful the Church may be, the individual is bound to be faithful, and always to be so.

This, therefore, is what we have to do: the truth which is set before us in the inspired Word, we are (and I am) to hold fast in the form in which it is presented to us. I am to hold it fast, not merely as a proposition, but in union with the Head, in faith- and love, which are in Christ Jesus. Strength to fulfill comes from above. For here another point is brought before us. The Holy Ghost has been given indeed to the Church; but a period of unfaithfulness is here contemplated (v. 15), He has been given to the man of God, to each Christian, and to each servant with reference to the service appointed him. By the Holy Ghost we are to keep the good thing that has been committed to us. In days like those, this is the duty of the man of God; and in our day, things have gone much farther. Possessing the promise of eternal life, and forsaken by the mass of Christians, he is to hold fast the truth in the words in which it had been expressed by divine authority-(this is what we have in the Word, and not merely doctrine: people may say that they have the doctrine of Peter and Paul, but. they cannot say that they have their words, the form of the truth as Paul and Peter gave it, elsewhere than in their writings)-and he is to hold it fast in faith and love, which are in Christ. Moreover, he is to keep, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the substance of the truth, that which has been given us as a treasure; the deposit of divine truth and riches, which has been given us as our portion here below.

In verses 15-18, we find that the mass had quite turned away from the apostle, so that the affection and faithfulness of one become very precious to him. What a change already, since the beginning of the Gospel! Compare the Thessalonians, the Ephesians; they were the same people (for Ephesus was the capital of what is here called Asia) among whom Paul had preached, so that

all Asia had heard the Gospel; and see how they had all now forsaken him!

We must not, however, suppose that they had all abandoned the profession of Christianity; but their faith had become weak, and they did not like to identify themselves with a man who was in disgrace with the authorities, who was despised and persecuted, a prisoner - a man whose energy brought reproach and personal difficulties upon himself. They withdrew from him, and left him to answer alone for himself. Sad result of spiritual decline! But what sentiments should animate the man of God at such a moment? He must be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Christ was not changed, whatever the case might be with men; and he who suffered from their desertion could, without being discouraged, exhort his beloved Timothy to persevere steadily in the work.

The truth was the especial treasure committed to him; and he was not only to keep it, as we have seen, but to take care that it was propagated, and communicated to others after him, and perhaps still farther. That which he had heard from Paul in the presence of many witnesses (who could confirm Timothy in his convictions respecting the truth, and certify others that it was indeed what he had received from Paul), he was to communicate to faithful men, who were capable of teaching others. This was the ordinary means. It is not the Spirit in the Church, so that the Church was an authority; it is no longer revelation. Timothy - well instructed in the doctrine preached by the apostle, and confirmed in his views by many other witnesses who had likewise learned of Paul - was to take care that it should be communicated to other faithful men. Neither had this anything to do with giving them authority, with consecrating them, as has been said. It is the communication to them of the truth which he had received from Paul.

This procedure shuts out the idea of the Church as the propagator of the truth. It was the business of the faithful son in the faith of the apostle, of the ministry.

Timothy himself was not an authority either. He was an instrument for the communication of the truth, and was to enable others to be so likewise: a very different thing from being the rule of the truth. That which he had heard - and the other witnesses served as a guarantee against the introduction of anything false, or even of his own opinions, if he had been inclined to entertain them - that he was to communicate.

It is thus that, in the ordinary sense, ministry is continued; care is taken by competent persons for the communication, not of authority; but of the truth, to other faithful persons. God can raise up any one whom He chooses, and give him the energy of His Spirit; and where this is found, there is power, and an effectual work: but the passage we are considering, supposes the careful communication of the truth to persons fit for this work. Both principles equally shut out the idea of the Communication of official authority, and the idea of the Church being either an authority with regard to the faith, or the propagator of the truth. If God raised up whom He pleased, in whatever way He pleased, the means which He employed when there was no special operation on His part, was to cause the truth to be, communicated to individuals capable of protecting it. This is a widely different thing from bestowing authority, or 'the exclusive or official right to preach.

The apostle goes on to show the qualities that Timothy ought to possess, in order to carry on the work amid the circumstances that surrounded him, and in which the Church itself was found. He must know how to endure hardships, vexations, difficulties, sorrows, as a, good soldier of Jesus Christ; he must beware of entangling him-self with the affairs of life; a soldier, when in service;

could not do so, but must be free from every hindrance, that he may please the one who had called him to arms. So, also, as in the lists, he must fight according to rule, according to that which became the Lord's servant, and was conformable to the Lord's will. And he must labor first, that he may have a right to enjoy the fruits of his labor. These are the practical conditions of divine service, for whosoever engages in it.

The apostle returns to the elementary but fundamental principles of the truth, and to the sufferings of ministry, which, moreover, were in no wise a hindrance to the operations of the Spirit of God in extending the sphere in which the truth was propagated, and the Word of God made known. Nothing could restrain the power of that instrument of the work of God.

The truth of the Gospel (dogma is not the subject here) was divided in two parts, of which the apostle speaks also in the epistle to the Romans: the fulfillment of the promises; and, the power of God in resurrection. "Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead." These, in fact, are, as it were, the two pivots of the truth: God faithful to His promises-<shown especially in connection with the Jews), and God mighty to produce an entirely new thing by His creative and quickening power, as manifested in the resurrection, which also put the seal of God upon the person and the work of Christ.

The afflictions found in the path of service in the Gospel, assume here a high and peculiar character in the mind of the suffering and blessed apostle. It is participation in the sufferings of Christ, and, in the case of Paul, to a very remarkable degree. The expressions he uses are such as might be employed in speaking of Christ Himself, as regards His love. As to the propitiation, naturally, no other could take part in that; but in devotedness, and in suffering for love and for righteousness, we have the privilege of suffering with Him. And here, what part had the apostle with these sufferings? "I endure," he says, "all things for the elect's sakes." This is truly what the Lord did. The apostle trod closely on His footsteps, and with the same purpose of love -"that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." Here, of course, the apostle has to add, "which is in Christ Jesus"; still, the language, is marvelous in the lips of any other person than the Lord Himself.

Observe, also, here, that the greater the sufferings are (how small are ours on this account) as the fruits of this love for the objects of the counsels of God, the greater is our privilege, and the more do we participate in that which was the glory of Christ here below.

This thought sustains the soul in afflictions of this kind; one has the same object as the Lord Himself. The energy of love, in preaching the Gospel, addresses itself

to the whole world. Perseverance, in the midst of afflictions, and difficulties, and desertion, is sustained by the feeling that one is laboring for the accomplishment of God's counsels. One endures all things for the elect; for God's elect, in order that they may have salvation and eternal glory. This feeling was in Paul's heart; he knew the love of God, and he sought - at the cost of whatever suffering it might be- that they who were the objects of the same love, should enjoy the salvation and the glory which God bestowed. This was a faithful saying, i.e., that which he had just declared; for if we should die with Christ, we should also live with Him; if we should suffer, we should also reign with Him. If any denied Him, He would also deny them; the consequences of such an act remained in all their force, they were linked with the immutability of His nature and His

being, and were displayed in the authority of His judgment; He could not deny Himself because others were unfaithful.

Timothy was strenuously to maintain these great principles, which belonged to the moral nature of the Lord, and not allow himself to be drawn aside by speculations, which only subverted souls and corrupted the faith. He was to show himself a workman approved of God, one who being filled with the truth, and knowing how to unfold it in its various parts, according to the mind and purpose of God, would not be ashamed of his work in the presence of those who might judge it. The profane and useless thoughts of human speculation he was to avoid. They could only go on to produce ungodliness. They might have a great show of depth and height, as in the case of the assertion, that the resurrection had already taken place, which, in a fleshly way, went beyond all bounds with regard to our position in Christ - these doctrines, which eat like a canker. Those of whom the apostle spoke had already overthrown the faith of some, that is to say, their conviction as to the truth, and their profession of the truth. But here the soul of the apostle found its refuge in that which is immutable, be the failure of the Church or the unfaithfulness of man ever so great. The sure foundation of God remained unchangeable. It had this seal: the Lord knew them that were His. This) (was God's side, which nothing could touch. The other side was man's: that he who professed the name of Christ was to depart from all iniquity. This was man's responsibility - but it characterized the work and the fruit of grace wherever that work was genuine.

But here we have distinct evidence of, the state of things which this epistle contemplates; namely, that the outward Church had taken quite a new character, very different from that which it had at the beginning; and that now the individual was thrown upon his personal faithfulness as a resource, and as the means of escape from the general corruption. The sure foundation of God remained. His divine knowledge of those that are His, and individual separation from all evil. But the outward church assumes, in the eyes of the apostle, the character of a great house. All kinds of things are found in it, vessels of honor, and vessels of dishonor, precious and vile. The man of God was to purge himself from the latter, to stand apart, and not defile himself with that which was false and corrupt. This is a principle of all-importance, which the Lord has given us in His word. He allowed the evil to display itself, so far as to give occasion for the establishment of this principle by revelation, as that which was to govern the Christian. The unity of the Church is so precious, it has such authority over the heart of man, that there was danger, when failure had set in, lest the desire for outward unity should induce even the faithful to accept evil, and walk in fellowship with it, rather than break this unity. The principle, therefore, of individual faithfulness, of individual responsibility to God, is established, and set above all other considerations; for it has to do with the nature of God Himself, and has His own authority over the conscience of the individual. God knoweth them that are His; here is the ground of confidence. And let those that name the name of Jesus separate themselves from all evil. To maintain in practice the possibility of union between that name and evil, is to blaspheme it,

The whole of that which calls itself Christian, is looked at here as a great house. The Christian is of it - outwardly, in spite of himself; for he calls himself a Christian, and the great house is all that calls itself Christian. But he cleanses himself personally from every vessel which is not to the Lord's honor. This is the rule of Christian faithfulness; and thus personally cleansed from fellowship with evil, he shall be a vessel unto honor, fit for the Master's use. Whatsoever is contrary to the honor of Christ, in those who bear His name, is that from which he is to separate himself.

Discipline for individual faults, is not the subject here; nor the restoration of souls, in an assembly that has, in part, lost its spirituality; but a line of conduct for the individual Christian, in respect of that which dishonors the Lord in any way.

These instructions are solemn and important. That which makes them needful is sorrowful in its nature; but it all helps to exhibit the faithfulness and grace of God. The direction is plain, and precious when we find ourselves in similar circumstances. Individual responsibility can never cease.

When the Holy Ghost acts energetically, and triumphs over the power of the enemy, these individuals, who are gathered together in the Church, develop their life in it according to God and His presence, and the spiritual power which exists in the whole body acts upon the conscience if needed, and guides the heart of the believer. The Holy Ghost, who is present in the assembly, sustains the individual at the height of God's own presence. Strangers even are obliged to confess that God is there. Love and holiness reign. When the effect of this power is no longer found in the assembly, and by degrees Christianity no longer answers to the character of the Church as God formed it, yet the responsibility of the individual to God has not ceased on that account. It can never either cease or diminish, for the authority and the rights of God Himself over the soul are at stake.

But in a case like this, that which calls itself Christian is no longer a guide, and the individual is bound to conform himself to the will of God, by the power of the Spirit, according to the light he has from God.

God may gather the faithful together. It is grace on His part: it is also His mind. But individual responsibility remains responsibility not to break the unity, feeble as it may be, wherever it is possible according to God; but responsibility to preserve the divine character Of Christianity in our walk, and to respond to the revelation we have received of His nature and of His will.

By purging himself from all those who are unto dishonor, the servant of God shall be unto honor, sanctified and prepared for every good work. For this separation from evil is not merely negative: it is the effect of the realization of the Word of God in the heart. I then understand, what the holiness of God is, His rights over my heart, the incompatibility of His nature with evil; I feel that I dwell in Him and He in me; that Christ must be honored at all costs; that that which is like Him, alone honors Him; that His nature and His rights over me, are the only rule of my life. That which thus separates me unto Him, and according to what He is, separates me thereby from evil. One cannot walk with those who dishonor Him; and, at the same time, honor Him in one's own walk.

That which follows, shows the sanctifying character of this exhortation. The apostle says-" Flee also youthful lust; but seek righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." This is to breathe the pure atmosphere which is found in the Lord's presence; in which the soul enjoys health and strength. All that corrupts is far away.

As we find throughout these epistles, the apostle exhorts to avoid vain questions, in which there is no divine instruction. They only produce barren discussions and strife; and the servant of the Lord is not to strive. He comes, on God's part, to bring the truth in peace and love. He is to maintain this character in the expectation that God, in His grace, will give repentance to those who oppose (for it is the heart and conscience that are in question), that they may acknowledge the truth.

The truth of God is not a thing of human understanding; it is the revelation of that which God is, and of His counsels. Now we cannot have to do with God without the heart and conscience being engaged. It is not the revelation to us of God, if this is not the case. Christians are brought into connection with the divine Being Himself, and in acts which ought to have the most powerful effect on the heart and conscience; if they do not, both the one and the other are in a bad state, and hardened. The Spirit of God, no doubt, acts on the understanding, and by it; but the truth lodged in it, is addressed to the conscience and to the heart, and if these are not reached by the truth, nothing is done. On the other hand, by means of error, by occupying the mind with the error, Satan shuts God out of it, and leads the whole man captive, so that he does the will of that enemy to the soul.

Now this evil influence would too surely be exercised. The power of the holy truth of God would be lost in the Church and among Christians; and those who bore this name would become (under the influence of the enemy) the expression of the will and passions of man, while still maintaining the forms of godliness; a peculiar condition, which betrays, in a remarkable way, the influence and the work of the enemy. This was to be expected; and they are perilous days.

The open opposition of the enemy is, doubtless, a painful thing, but he deceives souls by the specious appearances, of which the apostle here speaks - that which bears the name of Christianity, that which before men has the character of godliness, and which the flesh will accept as such, much more readily than that which, because it is true godliness, is contrary to the flesh. Nevertheless, all the worst features of the human heart are linked with the name of Christianity. What then does the testimony become? It is, so to speak, an individual prophecy, clothed in sackcloth.

There is activity in this perilous evil of the last days: these deceivers would creep into houses, and gain the ear of feeble souls, who, governed by their passions, are ever learning yet never learn. Teachers like these, resist the truth, they are men of corrupt minds, reprobate as to the faith; but they shall proceed no farther, God will make manifest their folly and their falseness, by means even of their own pretensions, which they can no longer maintain.

The man of God is to turn away from such men, while they are yet deceiving and exercising their influence; God will expose them in due time. All will then judge them, and condemn their pretensions - the spiritual man does so while they are deceiving the others in security.

We may remark here, that which evidences the sad and dangerous character of the days which the apostle is speaking of. If we compare the list of sins and abominations, which Paul gives at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, as characterizing heathen life, and the moral degradation of men during those times of darkness and demon-worship, with the catalog of sins that characterize those who have the form of godliness, we shall find that it is nearly the same, and morally quite the same; only that some of the open sins which mark the man who has no outward restraint, are wanting here, the form of godliness precluding them and taking their place.

It is a solemn thought, that the same degradation which existed among heathens, is reproduced under Christianity, covering itself with that name, and even assuming the form of godliness. But, in fact, it is the same nature, the same passions, the same power of the enemy, with but the addition of hypocrisy. It is only the departure from, and corruption of the true doctrine of the Mediator; as

Paganism was that of the true doctrine of the Only God.

Different directions are given for the conduct of the man of God, with regard to the vessels unto dishonor, and the men who act in the spirit of the last days. From the former he is to purge himself: he is to think of faithfulness in his own walk; and by cleansing himself from those vessels which do not honor the name of Christ, which (although in the great house) do not bear the stamp of a pure desire for His glory,-he shall be a vessel unto honor, fit for the Master's use. By keeping apart froth Rich vessels, he is sheltered from the influences that impoverish and degrade the testimony he has to render to Christ; he is pure from that which deteriorates and falsifies that testimony.

In the other case- that of the men who give the character of " perilous" to the last days, the corrupt opposers of the truth, bearing the name of godliness - with regard to these, his testimony is to be distinct and plain. Here lie is not merely to cleanse himself; he testifies his moral abhorrence, his loathing of those who, being the instruments of the enemy, bear this character of formal piety. He turns away from them, and leaves them to the judgment of God.

Timothy had the walk and spirit of the apostle for his pattern. He had been much with him; had seen, in times of trial, his patience and his sufferings, the persecutions he had endured; but the Lord had delivered him out of all. It would be the same with all who sought to live according to godliness, which is in Christ Jesus: they should endure persecution. Evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse, deceiving others, and being, at the same time, deceived themselves.

The character of the last days is strongly marked here, and gives no hope for Christianity as a whole. The progress of evil is described as developing itself in two distinct characters, to which we have already alluded. The great house, in which there are vessels to dishonor, from which we are to purge ourselves; and the positive activity of corruption, and of the instruments who propagate it and resist the truth, although they who corrupt themselves, assume the forms of godliness. Under this last aspect, the wicked will go on growing worse and worse; nevertheless, the hand of God in power, will demonstrate their folly.

We may distinguish, in this second category, the general character of pride and corruptness, in all who submit to this malignant influence, and those who themselves, labor to extend it. Of the latter of this class, the apostle says, are they who creep into houses. The character is that of the mass who are seduced; but there are seducers. These resist the truth, and their folly shall -be manifested. It may be, that God may demonstrate it, wherever there is faithfulness, in order to save His own from it; but, in general, their evil work will go on, and the seduction grow worse and worse, until the end, when God will make manifest the folly of those who have departed from Him, and given themselves up to the errors of the human mind, and labored to maintain and propagate them.

The apostle then tells Timothy of the safeguard on which he may rely to preserve himself, through grace, steadfast in the truth, and in the enjoyment of the salvation of God. Security rests upon the certainty of the immediate origin of the doctrine which he had received; and upon the Scriptures, received as authentic and inspired documents, which announced the will, the acts, and the counsels, and even the nature of God. We abide in that which we have learned, because we know from whom we have learned it. The principle is simple and very important. We advance in divine knowledge, but (so far as we are taught of God), we never give up, for new opinions, that which we

have learned from an immediately divine source, knowing that it is so. By a source immediately divine, I mean, a person to whom God Himself has communicated the truth by revelation, With authority to promulgate it. In this case, I receive what he says (when I know him to be such), as a divine communication. It is true, that the Scriptures always remain as a counter-proof, but when-as in the case of the apostles-a man is proved to be the minister of God, gifted by Him, for the purpose of communicating His mind, I receive what he says, in the exercise of his ministry, as coming from God. It is not the Church that is in question here. We have even seen that its part is to confess the truth when communicated, not to communicate it. But we here speak of a person to whom and by whom God immediately reveals the truth such as the apostles and prophets. God has communicated to them, as elect vessels for this purpose, that which he desired to communicate to the world, and. they have done so. None could do it who has not received it himself from God as a revelation: if this is not the case, the man himself has some part in it. I could not then say, "I know of whom I have learned it," as knowing that it came immediately from God, and by divine revelation.

When God had something to communicate to the Church itself, He did it by means of such persons as Paul, Peter, etc. The Church is composed of individuals; it cannot receive a divine revelation in a mass, as the Church, except by hearing in common a divine voice. The Holy Ghost distributes to every one, severally, as He will. There are prophets,-and the Spirit says, "Separate unto me Barnabas and Paul." Christ has given gifts to men, some apostles, some prophets, etc. Accordingly, the apostle says here, not "where," but, "of whom thou hast learned these things.

Here, then, is the first foundation of certainty, strength, and assurance, for the man of God, with regard to divine truth. It has not been revealed to him immediately. It was Paul, and other instruments, whom God chose for this especial favor. But he knows of whom he has learned it; even of one (here it was Paul) to whom it had been directly made known by inspiration, and who has authority from God to impart it; so that they who learn of him, know that it is divine truth, exactly as God communicated it, and in the form in which He was pleased to communicate it.

There is another means, which has a character of its own: the Scriptures, which are, as such, the foundation of faith to the man of God, and which direct him in all his ways. The Lord Jesus, Himself, said (speaking of Moses) " If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" His words were the words of God; He does not contrast the authority of what He said with that of the written word, but the means of communication. God has been pleased to employ that means, as a permanent authority. Peter says, " No prophecy of Scripture..." There have been many prophecies, which are not written, they had the authority of God for those persons to whom they were addressed. For the Word speaks more than once of prophets-who must there-fore have prophesied - without communicating their prophecies to us. They were instruments for making known the will of God, at the moment, in order to guide His people in their actual circumstances, without its being a revelation necessary to the people of God, at all times, or applicable either to the world, to Israel, or to the Church, in all ages. It was not a general and permanent revelation from God, for the instruction of the soul, at all periods.

A multitude of things, spoken by Jesus Himself, are not re-produced in the Scriptures; so that it is not only a question of from whom we have heard a truth, but also of the character of that which has been cominunicated. When. it is for the permanent profit of the people or the Church of God;

God caused it to be written in the Scriptures, and it abides for the instruction and the food of His children in all ages.

The expression, " knowing of whom thou hast learned them.," establishes us on personal apostolic authority, viewing the apostles as teachers authorized by the Lord. John says, " They who are of God, hear us. It is not necessary that Scripture should be written by apostles. God has made known therein His will and the truth, and has committed the sacred deposit to His people, for the profit of all ages. The Scriptures have authority as such. And it is not that which, as a spiritual man, one 'nay receive from them that by which we have profited:- as to application to one's soul that is, indeed, all-but it is the entire Holy Scripture, such as we possess it, which has this authority.

From his childhood, Timothy had read the holy Scriptures; and these writings, such as he had read them as a child, guarded him - as divine authority - against error, and furnished him with the divine truths needful for his instruction. To use them aright, faith in Christ was requisite; but that which he used was the Scripture, known from his youth. The important thing to observe here, is, that the apostle is speaking of the Scriptures, as they are in themselves such as a child reads them; not even of that which a converted or spiritual man finds in Him, but simply the holy writings themselves.

It may, perhaps, be said that Timothy, as a child, possessed only the Old Testament. Agreed: but this is the character of all that has a right to be called Holy Scripture. As Peter says, " They wrest the writings of Paul as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES." From the moment that we acknowledge the New Testament as having a title to that name, its writings possess the same character, and have the same authority.

The Scriptures are the permanent expression of the mind and the will of God, furnished, as such, with His authority. They are His expression of His own thoughts. They edify, they are profitable; but this is not all - they are inspired. It is not only that the truth is given. in them by inspiration. It is not this which is here stated. They are inspired.

The greater part of the New Testament is comprised in the first source of authority, " knowing of whom thou hast learned them"; namely, all that which the apostles have written; because, in learning the truth therein, I can say I know from whom I have learned it - I have learned it from Paul, or from John, or from Peter, etc. But, besides this, being received as Scriptures, they have the authority of divine writings, to which, as a form of communication, God has given the preference above the spoken Word. They are the permanent rule by which every spoken word is to be judged.

In a word, the Scriptures are inspired. They teach; they judge the heart, they correct, they discipline according to righteousness, in order that the man of God may be perfect, i.e., thoroughly instructed in the will of God, his mind formed after that will, and completely furnished for every good work. The power for performing these, comes from the actings of the Spirit. Safeguard from error, wisdom unto salvation, flow from the Scriptures; they are capable of supplying them. We are to abide in that which we have learned from the apostles, and to be governed by the writings of God.

Does this perfect and supreme authority of the Scriptures set aside ministry? By no means: it is the foundation of ministry. One is a minister of the Word; one proclaims the Word,-resting on the

written Word, which is authority for all; and which is the warrant for all that a minister says, and which imparts to his words the authority of- God-over the conscience of those whom he teaches or exhorts. There is, in addition to this, the activity of love in the heart of him who exercises this ministry (if it be real), and the powerful action of the Spirit, if he be filled with the Holy Ghost; but that which he says silences the believer.

It was thus that the Lord answered Satan, and Satan himself was reduced to silence.

He who does not submit to the words of God, thereby shows himself to be a rebel against God. The rule of God is in the Scriptures, the energetic action of His Spirit is in ministry (although God can equally act upon the heart immediately by the Word itself), nevertheless, ministry, since the revelations of God were completed, could not be an authority, or there would be two authorities, and if two, one must be a needless repetition of the other; or else, if they differed, no authority at all.

If the revelations were not complete, no doubt there might be more. The Old Testament left untold the history of Christ, the mission of the Holy Ghost, the formation of the Church; because these facts not being yet accomplished could not be the subject of its historical and doctrinal instructions-and the Church not even the subject of prophecy. But all is now complete, as Paul tells us that he was a minister of the Church to complete the Word of God (Col. 1:25). The subjects of revelation were then completed.

Observe that the apostle insists, as a matter of responsibility, that Timothy should devote himself to his ministry with so much the more energy that the Church was declining, and self-will in Christians was gaining ascendancy; not that he throws any doubt upon its being a constant duty to do so at all times, whether happy or unhappy. The apostle, as we have seen, has two different periods in view: the decline of the Church, which had already begun, and the still worse condition that was yet future. The special application of the exhortation here is to the first period. " Be diligent," he says, "in the exercise of thy ministry, for the time will come when they will no longer endure sound doctrine, but will turn away unto fables."

In how positive and distinct a way the apostle sets the fall of the Church before us. Its impaired condition in his day, was to him but a point of progress (according to his judgment in the Spirit), towards a yet more entire fall; when, although still calling itself Christian, the mass of those who assumed the name of Christ would no longer endure the sound doctrine of -the Holy Ghost. But, come what might, laboring with patience and diligence and energy as long as they would hearken, he was to be watchful, to endure afflictions, to seek after souls still unconverted (a great proof of faith when the heart is burdened with the unfaithfulness of those within), and fully to exercise his ministry; with this additional motive, that apostolic energy was disappearing from the scene (iv. 6).

But there is yet something to notice at the beginning of this chapter. Fullness of grace, it is apparent, does not here characterize the epistle. His exhortation to Timothy is "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the quick and dead at His appearing and His kingdom." We have already spoken of this: the appearing of Jesus is in connection with responsibility; His coming is with the object of calling us to Himself in connection with our privileges. Here it is the first of these two cases: not the Church, or the Father's house; but God, the appearing, and the Kingdom. All that is in relation to responsibility, government, judgment, is gathered together in one point of

view. The apostle, however, is not speaking of the Church, nor does he throughout the epistle. The Church, moreover, as such, is not judged; she is the Bride of the Lamb. Individuals are judged.

The portion of the Church, and even of its members, as such, is grace and not judgment. She goes to meet the Lord before His appearing. Here the apostle speaks of His appearing and His Kingdom. It is as appearing in glory and clothed with the authority of the Kingdom, that he exercises judgment. The presentation of the Church to Himself completes the work of grace with regard to that Church. When the Lord appears, we shall appear with Him in glory; but it will be the glory of the Kingdom (as we see in the transfiguration), and He will judge the living.

He will maintain the authority of His Kingdom, as a new order of things, for a long period; and judgment will be exercised, if the occasion for it arises, during its whole continuance, for a king shall reign in righteousness; judgment and righteousness will be united. Before giving back this Kingdom to God the Father, He judges the dead; for all judgment is committed to the Son. So that the Kingdom is a new order of things in which judgment is exercised; founded on His appearing. The Kingdom is founded by the exclusion of Satan from heaven. It is established, and its authority put in exercise at the appearing of the Lord.

The consciousness that this judgment is going to be exercised, gives an impulse to love in [the carrying on of] ministry, gives it earnestness, and strengthens the hands by the sense of union with Him who will exercise it, and also by the sense of personal responsibility.

The apostle uses his near departure as a fresh motive to exhort Timothy to the full exercise of his ministry; and his own heart expands at the thought.

The absence, therefore, of apostolic ministry - so serious a fact with regard to the Church's position-makes the duty of the man of God the more urgent. As Paul's absence was a motive for working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, so is it also a motive for him, who is engaged in the work of the Gospel, to devote himself more than ever to his ministry, in order to supply, as far as possible, the lack of apostolic service, by earnest care for souls, and by instructing them in the truth that he has learned.

We cannot be apostles, or lay the foundation of the Church. That is already done; but we may build upon that foundation by the truth which we have received from the apostle, by the Scriptures which God has given us; by an unwearied love in the truth for souls. The foundation is not to be laid a second time. We give its value to the foundation, we give it its place, by building upon it; and by caring for the souls and the Church, to which apostleship has given an ever-abiding place and foundation before God. This is what we have to do in the absence of the gift that lays the foundation.

The character that God appointed has already been stamped on the work: the one foundation has been laid. The Church has its one and sole place according to the counsels of God. The rule of God is given in the Word. We have but to act as the apostle leads, according to the impulse-already given by the Spirit. We cannot have apostolic authority-no one is an apostle in any such sense. That could not be, because we do not lay the foundation: it would be to deny that which has already been done. The foundation has been laid. We can labor according to the measure of our gift; and so much the more devotedly, in proportion as we love the work which the apostle wrought, and because he is no longer here to sustain it.

As to the apostle, he had finished his work; if others were unfaithful, he had been faithful. In the good fight of the Gospel of God he had fought to the end, and successfully resisted all the attacks of the enemy. He had finished his course; it only remained for him to be crowned. He had kept the faith committed to him. The crown of righteousness, that is to say, the one bestowed by the righteous Judge who acknowledged his faithfulness, was laid up and kept for him. It was not till the day of retribution that he would receive it. We see plainly, that it is reward for labor and for faithfulness, that is here meant. This-or its opposite-characterizes the whole Epistle, and not the privileges of grace.

The work of the Spirit in us, is rewarded by the crown of righteousness, and every one will have a reward according to his labor. Christ brings us all, according to the grace of God, into the enjoyment of His own glory-, to be with Him, and like Him. This is our common portion, according to the eternal counsels of God. But a place is prepared by the Father and given by the Son, according to the work wrought by the power of the Spirit in each believer, in his particular position. It is not Paul only who will receive this crown from the Righteous Judge. All who love the Lord's appearing, will appear with Him, in the glory that is personally destined to each, and that is adjudged to him when the Lord appears. Detached from this world, sensible that it is a perverse and rebellious one, feeling how much the dominion of Satan burdens the heart, the faithful long for the appearance of Him who will put an end to that dominion, to rebellion, oppression, and misery, by bringing in-in His goodness, although by judgment, deliverance, peace, and freedom of heart, on the earth.

The Christian will share the Lord's glory when He shall appear; but also this world will be delivered.

We see here, too, that the privileges of the Church, as such, are not the subject, but the public retribution manifested when Jesus shall appear to all; and the public establishment of his glory. The heart loves this appearing.

In that which follows we see what progress the evil had already made, and how the apostle counts upon the individual affection of his dear son in the faith. Probably there were good reasons for the departure of many, certainly for that of some; nevertheless it is true, that the first thing that presents itself to the apostle's mind is the departure of Demas from purely worldly motives. The apostle felt himself isolated. Not only had the mass of Christians abandoned him, but his companions in labor had gone away. In the providence of God, he was to be alone. He begs Timothy to come soon. Demas had forsaken him. The rest, from various motives, had quitted him; some he had sent away in connection with the work. It is not said, that Demas had ceased to be a Christian, had publicly renounced the Lord; but it was not in his heart to bear the cross with the apostle.

In the midst of these sorrows, a ray of grace and light shines through the darkness. The presence of Mark - whose service Paul had formerly refused, because he had shrunk from the perils of laboring among the Gentiles, and had turned back to Jerusalem- is now desired by him, because he was useful for the ministry. It is most interesting to see, and a touching proof of the grace of God, that the afflictions of the apostle, and the work of grace in Mark, combine to set before us, as faithful and useful to Paul, the one who once had failed, and with whom the apostle would then have nothing to do. We also see the affections and confidence displayed in the smallest details of life. Full of power by the Spirit of God, the apostle is gentle, intimate, and confiding, with those who

are upright and devoted. We see, too, that at the close of his life, devoted as he was, the occasion had presented itself for study (in connection assuredly -with his work), and for writing that which he wished carefully to preserve - possibly his epistles.

This has an important place in Scriptural instruction, with regard to the life of the apostle. Paul is lost, so to speak, for the greater part, in the power of the Spirit; but alone and with sober mind, he occupies himself intelligently and carefully about the things of God.

He warns Timothy with regard to a man who had shown his enmity, and puts him on his guard against him. We see that here also the epistle bears the character of righteousness; grace having had its course. "The Lord," he says, "reward him according to his deed." As for those who had not courage to stand by him, when he had to answer, as a prisoner, he only prays for them. He had not been discouraged. His heart, broken by the unfaithfulness of the Church, was strong in confessing the Lord before the world, and he can testify that, if forsaken by men, the Lord Himself stood with him and strengthened him. That he had to answer before the authorities, was but an occasion to proclaim again in public, that for which he was made a prisoner. Glorious power of the gospel where faith is in exercise! All that the enemy can do, becomes a testimony, in order that the great, kings, those who were otherwise inaccessible, should hear the word of truth, the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The faithful witness was also delivered out of the lion's mouth. His strong and simple confidence counted on the Lord to the end. He would preserve him from every evil work unto His heavenly kingdom.

In the time of his departure was at hand, if he had to fall asleep instead of being changed, he had not ceased to be among those who looked for the Lord's appearing. Meanwhile he was going to be with Him, to have a place in the heavenly kingdom.

He salutes the brethren with whom Timothy was connected, and begs him to come before the winter. We also learn here, that the miraculous power granted to the apostles was exercised in the Lord's service, and not for their private interests, nor as their personal affection might suggest; for Paul had left Trophimus sick at Miletus.

It is evident that this epistle was written when the apostle thought his departure near at hand, and when the faith of Christians had grievously declined, which was proved by their having forsaken the apostle. His faith was sustained by grace. He did not hide from himself that all was going wrong, his heart felt it, was broken by it; he saw that it would grow worse and worse. But his own testimony stood firm; he was strong for the Lord through grace. The strength of the Lord was with him to confess Christ, and to exhort Timothy to so much the more diligent and devoted an exercise of his ministry, because the days were evil.

This is very important. If we love the Lord, if we feel what He is to the Church, we feel that in the latter all is in ruins. Personal courage is not weakened, for the Lord remains ever the same, faithful and using His power for us: if not in the Church, which rejects it, it is in those who stand fast that He will exercise His power, according to the individual need created by this state of things.

May we remember this. Insensibility to the state of the Church is not a proof that we are near the Lord, or that we have confidence in Him. But -in the consciousness of this ruin - faith, the sense of

what Christ is, will give confidence in Him amidst the ruin which we mourn. Nevertheless, it will be observed, that the apostle speaks here of the individual, of righteousness, of judgment, and not of the Church. If the latter is spoken of outwardly, as the great house, it contains vessels to dishonor, from which we are to purge ourselves. Yet the apostle foresaw a still worse state of things - which has now set in. But the Lord can never fail in His faithfulness.

Abraham's Consistency in Arming His Servants for the Rescue of Lot

IT has been a question which has been suggested to the writer of these lines, how it came that Abraham, whose course was in faith outside the circumstances around him, should arm his servants for the rescue of Lot? He did this also manifestly with the approval of God.

The difficulty seems to arise from ignorance of the variety in the dispensations of God, which many believing persons remain in; in whose course, therefore, there is far less clearness, than acting in faith and full knowledge would produce. They confine themselves to the question of the peace of their own souls, and are often long before they comprehend, even if ever they do, the difference of dispensations as God successively revealed them. The vacillating nature of their peace, which is a case that too often occurs, does not arise from their not being the objects of God's unfailing grace in Christ Jesus, but from practically failing by their not taking that position which accords with the grace they enjoy.

God revealed Himself in the Garden as Lord God, the Creator of an order that was "very good," with prohibition of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There was an obedience and righteousness in accordance with this revelation of God. Without resting on what was between-when Noah came out of the ark, a new order with government was established, and responsibilities in accordance with it. When the law was promulgated, there was another-when Christ came, another. What David did in regard to the subjection of the laud and surrounding nations, was under God's eye, done on consultation with God, and in accordance with the revelation of God, as God of Israel.

Christ coming from the bosom of the Father, declaring Him and His love and grace; and with right to Jerusalem, to Judea, and the world, does not call for twelve legions of angels; but "when He was reviled, reviled not again, and committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously." He took on Himself the form of a servant, and humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, and did not resist evil, setting us an example as to conduct which had another exaltation in view.

Christ in the coming dispensation will come as David did, overcoming His enemies, and with the saints who have suffered for Him and with Him, in confession of an absent Lord, their Master, take possession of the world, of which they are heirs with Him, because they did not contend.

Now, the question that has arisen as to the consistency of Abraham's rescuing Lot by force of arms with the place he took outside all the circumstances of the land he lived in, will be settled on a nearer examination of the dispensation of God then existing.

What place in the dispensation of God did this act of Abraham take? As to the land of Canaan, he had not so much as a foot in it, bowed himself before the sons of Heth, and bought a burying-place according to the full price of the money of the merchant, and was under no obligation for that which he was to receive at the hand of God alone, four hundred years afterward.

Isaac followed in the same steps. His father had dug wells, but the herdsmen of Abimelech drove his herds-men away from two in succession, and he yielded and went on till he found " room."

Jacob, forgetting his standing and the faith of his father and of Abraham bought land of the sons of Hamor, at Shechem, to his tents in. The sad scenes of Shechem followed in reproof of his not keeping Abraham's faith. In escaping thence, he buries every idol, and goes to Bethel, the place of Abraham's first entrance to the land of promise, and to begin anew. Happy is it to be allowed to begin anew! We see, therefore, clearly the dispensation of strangership in which Abraham moved in the land, and of which God had promised him possession.

The question now remains-Did Abraham act out of the order of dispensation that God placed him in, in arming his servants, and rescuing his nephew Lot by force of arms from the kings that had taken him prisoner? The faith of the Christian in the world is touched upon in this matter.

I can enjoy most exceedingly the type of the delivery of the remnant of a future day by a victorious Christ, and I find even the names of the nations leagued against Christ, in those leagued against Abraham, but that would not satisfy the question as to Abraham's act; but I find one clue in this transaction, that Abraham had not lost sight of his confession,-He rescued Lot, but he would not take anything of the spoils, lest it should be said that the people of the land, with whom he now stood, for it was in an attack made on them that Lot had been made prisoner, had made Abraham rich. Abraham was not guided by circumstances at all, nor did he mix himself with the circumstances of the land in which he was a stranger. He owned Melchizedek, but he was the priest of the Most High God,-the representative of Him who, as Priest and King, shall reign eventually there.

On the occurrence of Lot's captivity, who had, from his having joined the nations, lost his all, as he did finally on the destruction of Sodom, as the consequence of his settlement among them; Abraham comes forward for his deliverance (the righteous but inconsistent Lot) from the hands of the four nations situated outside the land of Canaan, which was the land in which, because of the dispensation and promises of God, he always remained passive (but, yet, ever cared for) in the hands of God, using neither aggression nor self-defense. He walked as a stranger outside all the circumstances of the place he was in. We are in the Canaan of this world, and it is to the faith of Abraham Scripture makes the appeal.

Christ, if I may so speak, followed, and we are called to do so by the same faith, in a place God has not yet made ours by inheritance with Christ, joint heirs with Him, as Heir of God. He shall possess the earth and reign: over it, as Canaan shall under Him be given to Israel... Christ does not take present possession, nor do we contend for our rights, nor for His. It is the faith of Abraham not to do so. It only has a more extended scope. We are strangers in a place to which we are heirs. If you can find a place outside that which Christ shall possess and reign over, and you reign with Him, you may be then warranted to do as Abraham did, if you find a righteous man to be delivered.

With Abraham it was, from faith to faith, as it should be with the believer. His position led him by grace (which was revealed to him by God) to the faith of " a city not built with hands, eternal in the heavens," and thus made him (Christ being of his seed) heir of the world.

For us, we say,-

" Our home is-in heaven, our home is not here;"

not only inheritors of the kingdom, for which it is given to suffer, but having presently a heavenly portion in Christ, blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. Citizens there, strangers and as it were by accident here, where our Lord was rejected, we wait for the Son from heaven.

Now, the faith that brings me to the cross for my peace is so necessary to me, that it seems as easy as possible, for it is of grace. It could not be but alone of God and in God, and outside of me, to bring me to God; and in the Son I have settled peace and life, and a new calling, a heavenly one, and an earthly one by the confession I have to make.

Peace and life and our heavenly place are all so manifestly of grace (though all is of grace-and take care that we hold it thus, that we faint not), and possession so fully assured in the Son, that

"On earth the song begins,"

and faith says, with Miriam, " He hath brought us into His holy habitation" though the wilderness is before us.

Now, there are difficulties and trials in passing through the wilderness, and contests when once we taste what the land is; and opposition and enmity the farther we advance. But what are such contests? The contests are such as the righteous and holy Jesus, confessing His Father, had; they are not three hundred armed servants.

The rule is all the reverse-" He that taketh the sword, shall perish by the sword"; he that clotheth himself with the world, perisheth by the world. Here is the PATIENCE AND FAITH of the saints.

On a late occasion, a brother eloquent in the Scriptures said, that it was a mystery to him that the saints did not suffer-in fact, that they were not persecuted. The answer given was, that it was no mystery at all. As long as they profess but their heavenly privileges, the world can wish them joy in contempt of them. It can say, " Go up; we will stay below." But the word makes known to the saints the earthly confession, acknowledgment, and duty to the Lord, an exclusive Master, to whom all things of right belong. He came to make the claim, and was driven out; but the time shall come, that every knee shall bow in heaven and in earth and in hell-compulsively in the case of the rebels, but with joy to those that glory in the Lord; but all, without exception, shall confess Him to be LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

By grace and mercy we are called to the peace that is by Jesus Christ, and admitted now as to a secret which the world has not, and which distinguishes it as the world, viz., to the knowledge of His claim, and acknowledge Him as LORD. And right needful it is; for it is written, " Whosoever shall confess Jesus- LORD, and shall believe in his heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, shall be saved." Confess with his mouth Jesus -Lord (for so it is). Here begins, the opposition from the world. It will not be an opposition to our behaving righteously, soberly, and justly in an evil age; who shall harm you on that account? but owning openly another LOUD than him the world have as lord (and not only as respects worship). One Jesus, not King, which was either Jewish or a perverted intelligence, but LORD, to the glory of God the Father. It is a question between the world and the saints as to their course and confession, and the great question between God and the world. Though in heavenly relationship by grace, I am on earth; in heaven it is not dangerous to

own Him-LORD. All acclaim Him as such. On earth it is dangerous, because' the world is lying in the power of the wicked one, who is, the rival of the LORD, and will remain so till destroyed by Him when He comes. In hell! Hell without distinction gives its allegiance to Satan.

Christ is as much to me LORD, as if I were already partaker of the inheritance. Thence the reward of it, because I own Him where disowned, and I receive reward for works and duties when in them I am serving Him. Let us keep to the text of the word and to the thoughts of the Rejected One: He that followeth me shall be where I am he that serveth me, him shall my Father honor. If we keep to the text of the word, to the obedient ear, questioning will cease. To be partakers of heaven, or of the glory that shall be revealed, equally point out the path in which Jesus walked perfectly, and Abraham • walked, so as to be an example outside the circumstances and outside the principles in which the world and the nations walk, even if some of the ordinary circumstances of life seem similar.

As Abraham rescuing Lot, and the consistency of this act is what was first the occasion of these remarks, and nothing may stand in the way of his being a very special example of the course of faith, I will conclude with a few words from Rom. 12:12, where he is called -" The father of circumcision [spiritually] to them also who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of our father Abraham, which he had yet being uncircumcised." The God of glory had appeared to Abraham, and taken him from his home, his kindred, and his father's house, to take up an entirely new set of circumstances, and to place his relationships under God, which they had not been.

The Lord of glory has appeared to us. All that men bargain for in this world, and according to this world, is because they disown Christ as the Lord of glory. "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Difference Between Christ's Coming to Receive Saints and Appearing in Glory With Them

IT has been supposed that the word of God affords very little, if any direct, proof in support of the idea of any real difference, and that all that can be offered in its favor is in the way of inference of a rather loose and uncertain character.

The aim of this paper will be to skew, that we have as full and as complete evidence in its behalf as can be produced for almost any Scriptural truth.

This evidence is of three kinds:-

1st. That of direct statement.

2ndly. That of fair and legitimate inference.

3rdly. That of the general consent and harmony of Scripture with it; whilst such systems of interpretation as do not admit of it, are utterly irreconcilable with many of its well-known principles, and involve a violation of the divine order which pervades it.

This being done it will appear that the supposition alluded to above, arises either from this evidence not having been brought into sufficient prominence and stated with sufficient clearness; or its not having received from Christians generally the attention and consideration it deserves, whether from inadvertence, or perhaps, in some cases, from want of proper appreciation of the truth.

This evidence will be adduced, not necessarily in the order above given, but as it presents itself naturally in the Scriptures treated of; and the reader will judge for himself to which head each argument properly belongs.

The inquiry itself is evidently of the utmost importance to the Church of God; as, upon the reply which the Word of God gives to it, depend both the position and duty of the Church whilst here on earth. If her absent Lord may return at any hour or moment, and this is really felt by the soul, fidelity of heart to Him, and, if that is wanting, the fear of being found unprepared will dispose to watchfulness until He comes. Whereas, if a variety of events are revealed as intervening previously, the fulfillment of which renders it impossible the Lord should come for a considerable period of time, He will not be waited for in the same way; His coming will be viewed as at some distance, and the practical effect of that un-certainty upon the mind, which the Lord Himself so often insists upon, will be very much weakened, if not destroyed. No one, if told that seven years or more must elapse before the Lord's return, would feel it to be the same thing, or as necessary to be prepared, as if warned that He might return before the dawn of another day. Hence the power of this expectation to separate from the world, to fix the heart on heavenly things, or to comfort it in sorrow, is certainly greatly enfeebled.

If this consideration is carefully weighed, it will go a long way towards making those who regard with reverence the expressed directions and commands of the Savior, mistrustful of any system of interpretation which of necessity puts his coming at a distance. Nothing can be clearer than His exhortations to His disciples to watch and to be always on the look-out for His return, at whatever time of the night, i.e., of this present period, it might occur. Again and again, He presses on them that they should be "like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately, e.g., Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching.... And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third Watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:36-38; Matt. 25:1-13, etc.) The moment the servant began to say in His heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," he became negligent and unfaithful in the discharge of his duties (Luke 12; Matt. 24), and the whole Church in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, is represented as only recovering its true position, though it had originally set out with the thought of meeting the Bridegroom, when it is re-awakened to this blessed expectation, by the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!" (Matt. 25)

In the Epistles, the saints are invariably presented, in accordance with these directions, as incessantly looking for Jesus to come again. "Ye turned to God from idols," says the Apostle Paul, in writing to the Thessalonians, "to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 9, 10). To those, also, at Philippi he writes, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). Such was their expectation, and such their position, as described by the apostle himself in these and many other passages. Does it seem consistent with this to suppose, that they were anticipating the previous fulfillment of all the scenes of judgment described in the Apocalypse - the return of the Jews to their own land - their establishment there - the manifestation and rule of Antichrist, and the seven years the Jewish nation has to pass through in connection with Him - besides other events, too numerous to be mentioned here? Would that be looking for Him from heaven; and could they be said to be doing so, if they had to wait for the successive unfolding of all these events ere they could possibly see Him again? These are questions which we should ask at the very threshold of this inquiry, before we allow ourselves to entertain any views so subversive of the evident intentions and directions of our blessed Lord and His apostles.

We will proceed to examine some passages which may throw further light upon these points.

When about to leave His disciples to return to the Father, our blessed Lord told them (John 14) that He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house; and gave them the cheering promise, that if He did so, He would come again and receive them to Himself, that where He was they might be also. This was to fix their hopes, and fill their hearts with desire; they were to have a home, but it was to be His own home, prepared also by Himself, and to be enjoyed with Him whose love was about to procure them this blessed place in it. It was not with the display and glory of the kingdom that Jesus here sought to comfort them, but with something far more sweet and attractive to the renewed heart. It was to the Father and the Father's house that Jesus Himself was going, as He says, "whither I go ye know and the way ye know;" and "whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward." And this is the place to which He pledges Himself, to come and take them. There is nothing here about reigning over the earth, though that we know will take place also in its season; but the coming of the Lord for the saints is put in clear

and definite connection with their removal to the Father's house, and His coming is for the accomplishment of that purpose; so that in considering that blessed event we must leave room for the translation of the saints to the Father's house, as the first act which the Lord has given us in connection with His return.

If the fulfillment of their expectation does not take place at once, it must be asked, "When and how can it be accomplished, seeing it is not certainly a momentary thing, is it to be indefinitely postponed, or are we to reign over the earth, and exercise the dignities we possess as sons, before being presented to the Father as the children He has loved - before we enjoy the home which is to be common to us, and to Jesus forever?" What moment can be found so suitable as this with which it is here associated, if, indeed, any other can be found at all before the Millennium is terminated? Certainly the language used by the Lord would naturally lead us to expect, that we shall at once be taken to our home on His return, and that He comes to take us there, and not merely up into the air, and down again to the earth, without going there at all.

The further examination of Scripture will show, that what is here only intimated, is elsewhere expressed with great distinctness. In 1 Thess. 4:15-17, the Lord is said to descend from heaven into the air with a shout; and from thence He summons His saints, the dead and the living to join Him, who, being raised and changed respectively, are caught up together in the clouds; and united as one body, ascend above them to meet Him who has called them, and who awaits them in the air. The words here used "to meet the Lord in the air," do not imply anything more than that the desire and action are mutual. He has descended from heaven for us, and we ascend to Him, attracted by His blessed presence, and quickened by His power. We learn from this, that the Lord remains in the air whilst these things are taking place, and until the whole Church has reached Him.

Here, then, is nothing but what has reference to the saints - nothing that indicates His appearance to the world, or His actings towards it - nothing of His coming with clouds or flaming fire, or even of accompanying angels. There is no trace of any descent to the earth, or that He has anything in view at this moment but His saints and their removal. The Holy Ghost only adds, "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Our future is lost in that of the blessed Savior, who has thus come from heaven to call us up to Himself, that so we might ever be with Him. Where He will be subsequently, we learn from other Scriptures.

This heavenly event having taken place, the Apostle proceeds quite in a different strain, and as if opening quite another subject (ch. 5:1, etc.): "But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." Why not, if these relate to the fulfillment of their hopes? Had not the Lord, when on earth, taught His disciples to pay particular regard to the progress of events on earth; events, moreover, connected with the ushering in the day of the Lord, which is here in question, and making use of the very same language in describing its suddenness, and the judgment that would accompany it? Of the "times and seasons" the Lord then gave full explanation, and called their careful attention to them, that they might watch the successive steps which indicate the near approach of the time of their deliverance. The wars and rumors of wars-the abomination of desolation-the time of unequaled trouble - the signs in the heavens - all these things (as the budding of the fig-tree shows that summer is nigh) are to tell them that the time is drawing near for the manifestation of the Son of man. But here the apostle will not dwell upon such

things, as he would surely have done had they concerned them; he does not engage them to watch the times and seasons, for they are to be satisfied with knowing the general fact of the way in which the day will appear - for this reason, that they are the children of the light and of the day, and belong not to the night, nor to the darkness of this world, which the day comes to judge and disperse. Forming a part of the day which comes from heaven upon the earth, it cannot come without them, still less can it overtake them. So (in Matt. 13) they are said to "shine forth as the sun," which brings the day with it, reflecting the glory of Christ in the kingdom of their Father. How different is this thought from that of slowly and painfully watching the gradual approach, by the progressive fulfillment of the events which precede it. It cannot break upon them as it will upon this world, nor can it appear without them, for they form part and parcel of it; and when it unfolds its brightness, they are seen as part of that light which it displays; and that this may be the case, they "must previously be removed, or it would appear without them, and they would be overtaken by it.

No wonder the apostle should think it sufficient to say, instead of entering upon the times and seasons, "Ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; ye are all the children of the light and the children of the day. He could not have put in a stronger or more striking light the groundlessness of their fears, that they would be overtaken by the day when it came; for all that constitutes the day could not be confounded with the earth and its inhabitants on whom it dawns, nor the light with the darkness, day with night, heaven with the earth, or the sun with what it shines upon. The language he employs is far more forcible than it would have been had he entered into details of events that had transpired previously; nor was that needful after the explanation in the preceding chapter concerning their removal.

He gives only the grand conclusion of the whole in the day of the Lord, and what the place of the saints will be in that day. It is remarkable, that the Lord Himself, in like manner, after His resurrection, refuses to enter into the question of the times and seasons with His disciples (Acts 1:6-11), though He tells them of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the testimony they were to bear upon earth in His behalf. The words to which this refusal is the reply are also very important, as they show us to what these "times and seasons" relate. The disciples ask, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He answers, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power" - thus distinctly connecting the times and seasons with the restoration of the kingdom to

Israel and, at the same time, that He will not enter upon the progress of events on earth which are to bring about the kingdom, they are directed to look forward to the moment when He shall "come in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven." Of this, which relates to themselves, and His return for them, they are informed; whilst their inquiry respecting the setting up of His earthly government in connection with Israel, is left unanswered. Thus distinguishing clearly enough these two events.

How is it, we may ask, that the Lord's instructions after His resurrection differ so widely from those that went before it? and that He says now to His disciples, in words not to be mistaken, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons"? How is it that the apostle Paul pursues the same line of instruction, and, though giving the Thessalonian saints full information about the translation of the Church and its heavenly hopes, considers it superfluous for him to write to them about the times and the seasons? The reason is this: that to be taken to heaven, and to enjoy our blessing

there, we do not need any fulfillment of the times before appointed, and accomplishment of the counsels of God respecting the earth; whilst those whose expectations are connected with the establishment of the kingdom on earth, and the blessing it will be brought into, must wait and watch, till Israel and the earth have gone through all their appointed trials. That kingdom cannot be set up till Antichrist is overthrown, and the entire course of events predicted to happen on earth has run out. Hence, as a result of having earthly hopes (which in the case of those converted after the removal of the Church are quite legitimate), they must go through all the time of the closing sorrows of the earth; nor can their deliverance come before. In consequence of this, whilst all these signs are given for their guidance, and they are directed to look out for them one after the other, and comfort themselves by their progressive fulfillment, there is not one single passage, after the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the Church, from Acts to Revelation inclusive, which directs those who compose it to wait for those signs; but, on the contrary, the only allusions made to them, as we have seen, either say they are not intended for them, or turn their attention from them, as not being the concern of saints, whose hopes are heavenly.

No right-minded Christian would think it strange that the Church should at any time be called upon to suffer for the name of Christ. The word of God everywhere presents such suffering as a privilege - an honorable distinction for those that are called to it. But to have to pass through the trouble which comes upon the world, in consequence of its unbelief and rejection of the Son of God, is quite another thing. The great tribulation foretold is the divine visitation for this very sin. From the beginning of the creation, the word of God tells us there has been nothing like it, nor ever will be (Mark 13:19, 20; Matt. 24:21,22). For the sake of those elect persons who are to enjoy the blessing of the earth under the peaceful rule of Christ, the days are shortened, or no flesh would be saved. In Rev. 12:10, 12, the saints above rejoice that the accuser of their brethren is cast down, and add, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Is it a privilege to pass through this "woe," inflicted on those who have, for the sake of the enjoyment of this world, preferred its prince to Christ, and have voluntarily submitted to be misled by him? Is it not far happier to be with those who are rejoicing in heaven, and anticipating at this moment Satan's final overthrow? Doubtless, the Church has failed in many things, especially in maintaining the glory of the Son of God, and in waiting for His return from heaven. But that she should have to go through the hour of the world's tribulation, because it has rejected, and still continues 'to reject, the Savior, would be, notwithstanding her failure, a thought unworthy of Him with whom she has to do, and to whom she belongs. Weak and erring as she is, she has assuredly believed in Him, loved Him, and owned Him as her Lord; whilst the world has refused either to trust Him or to submit to Him. Besides the deplorable state to which the few saints who survive the dreadful persecution of Antichrist are reduced, would. render it anything but desirable that the Church should be on earth during this period. If the days were not shortened, "no flesh would be saved"; because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold; and, finally, the Lord says Himself, though the saints are to be avenged speedily, yet, "when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" To such a condition, then, are the few remaining saints brought, that faith is almost extinguished. This language seems quite to forbid the thought of her being there, for it would imply that Christ would find spiritual life at the lowest state of depression, and scarcely have any Church to come for; an idea quite at variance with the teaching of other Scriptures, as

Matt. 25.1 -3, and elsewhere, and utterly irreconcilable with the fact of the presence of the Holy Ghost down here in the Church, who continues so long as she is on earth. But the positive promise given in the address to the Church at Philadelphia settles absolutely this point beyond all possibility of question: " Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." This is a specific declaration, that, as the reward of waiting for Him, the Church should be kept from that grievous affliction of the world; and not only from it, but from " the hour" when it comes upon it. This can-not be but by her translation before its infliction. If she is on earth, she would evidently be in " the hour," even if she could be sheltered from the suffering - a thing scarcely possible from the position of the Church while on earth, and the prevalence of the judgment, which is declared to be universal. But the promise is distinctly that the Church shall be kept from " the hour" of its occurrence, which is far more, and involves evidently her removal beforehand.

In the book of the Revelation, we are naturally led to seek for evidence respecting the place and condition of the Church during the period in question-whether she is in heaven or on earth - whether risen and glorified, or still expectant; and also what character is borne by the saints who are alive on the earth at this time.

A well-known division of the contents of the book is given in ch. 1, when the apostle is told to write, 1st, "the things that he has seen"; 2ndly, " the things that are"; 3rdly, " the things that shall be after these things" (μετα ταυτα). " The things that he has seen," refer evidently to the vision of ch. 1; " the things that are," to the seven churches who are addressed by the Lord; and " the things that shall be after these things," to the more distinctly prophetic part of the book, from ch. 4 to the close of it: the warrant for the application of these two last divisions being found in the 1st verse of ch. 4, " Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must be after these things"; for it is obvious, that, since the last head commences with ch. 4 "the things that are" can only apply to the immediate chapters and their contents. If these expressions, and the use the Holy Ghost makes of them, are weighed, some light will be thrown on the divisions of the book to which they are applied, and which they are intended to characterize. " The things that are," expressing the condition of the Church whilst on earth, unfold successive stages of its history during the present period. And though that may not be evident at first sight, yet from the character of the expression, " the things that are," and from that which follows, "things which shall be after these things," its application to the state of the Church on earth can hardly be doubted. Such a designation as "the things that are," including, as it does, in the natural meaning of the words, all that has an important existence in the mind of Christ on earth, would scarcely be used to represent only these few Churches in a small province of Asia Minor; so that it seems needful to give it some wider bearing. Added to this, all futurists, and to such only can this inquiry be useful, apply ch. 4 et seq. to what is yet future, and believe that the fulfillment of the rest of the book, i.e., " the things that are to be after these," has not yet commenced. This requires the signification that has been assigned to " the things that are," as descriptive of the condition of the Church, or "the things that are to be after them" would have no meaning; for the words would be quite inappropriate if the long interval of time which has existed between the original condition of the Seven Churches and the yet future fulfillment of the rest of the book were to intervene. Now, it is clear, that if there is this difference in these two parts of the book, as expressed in "the things that are, and the things that shall be after them," they cannot co-exist. Whilst "the things that are" are going on, "the things that are to be

after them" cannot have begun. It is only when the first state of things has ceased, that the other can be accomplished. "The things that are" must have closed; and the Church can therefore be no longer on earth, when ch. 4 opens. And this we shall find harmonizes with the remaining portion of the book.

In chaps. 4 and 5, before the seals are opened, or any of the subsequent judgments inflicted, the saints are seen in the place for which God has destined them, in the counsels of His grace, under the figure of the twenty-four elders.

They are seated on thrones, around the throne of God, as kings and priests, in white raiment, and wearing crowns of gold on their heads. In chap. 5, they have, in addition, harps and vials full of odors; they sing the praises of Him who has redeemed them out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and they anticipate a reign over the earth, which is yet future. All this marks them out as the Church. They have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and gathered from different parts of this earth. They are clearly not souls, for souls cannot sit on thrones or wear crowns, and when souls are spoken of in this book, they are distinctly specified as such (chap. 6 ver. 9, etc.); they are risen and glorified saints, in the full possession of that glory and those privileges, which Christ, in His love, has purchased for them.

It is, however, supposed by some, that this beautiful scene is anticipative. Of what is it anticipative? we would ask. Of something that will really take place, or not? Without doubt, it will be replied, to be literally fulfilled, as it is here given. If so, how, and where, and when, if not at that point of time, in the order of events, when it is related? How can the saints behold the Lamb take the book, which He is to open, out of the hand of Him that sat on the throne-how can they praise Him when He does so, and as being worthy to open these seals-if they are not in heaven to witness this act, and never get there till all the seals have been opened, and the judgments they occasion have been accomplished? How, again, it may be asked, do they take their place in heaven, on these thrones, and look forward to the reign of the saints over the earth, if they are to be translated after Christ has left heaven, having previously opened all the seals, and instead of returning with Him there, only join Him on His way to the earth, when He descends to reign and judge, when all that is here represented as taking place, is long passed? Where is there room, in such an idea, for the fulfillment of what is here prefigured, in such a way as shall carry out the terms in which it is described?

These considerations will make it sufficiently appear, as it is most simple and natural from the narrative to suppose, and as the only way in which the passage can really be fulfilled, that the Church has been already translated to heaven, and taken her place there, to witness from thence the judgments that are being poured out on the earth, before she accompanies Christ when He comes to reign. Other passages might be adduced from the body of the book, in support of this view, but the most striking will be found in chap. 19. There, upon the overthrow and judgment of the woman, who is the apostate counterfeit of the Church; the marriage of the Lamb is described as taking place in heaven, With the marriage supper, and the blessing of those who are called to it. The Bride, the Lamb's wife, having made herself ready, and being suitably appareled for it. Again, we may ask, How can this be, if she is not in heaven, and has not yet been taken there? It cannot take place whilst she is on earth, and absent from Christ; nor is there any opportunity for the fulfillment of what is here represented, if she only meets Christ after He has commenced his

descent to reign. Besides, we should then have the strange anomaly of a Bride, invested with the public dignities and honors which belong to her as such, and displayed in the exercise of them, before she is in the enjoyment of the relationship from which they all spring; reigning with Christ as His Bride, before she has been united to Him, and taking her place with Him in public glory, before she has tasted those personal joys and rights, which His own love has given her in Himself:

But the verses that follow, afford us most conclusive proof to the contrary, and that the Church is in heaven at this time. The apostle sees "heaven opened," and Christ coming forth in triumph to judge under the figure of the rider on the white horse; and, he adds, " the armies which were in heaven, followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." We know that these are the saints, who thus share in the triumph of Christ, by their being clothed with white linen, which has just before been declared to be the righteousness of the saints, with which it was granted to the Bride to be arrayed previous to the marriage. It is certain that the saints could not follow Christ out of heaven, which is thus opened to make way for their descent, if they were not in it, and had not been before translated to it. So that had we no other passage to bring forward, this is of itself sufficient to establish that an interval of time must exist between the removal of the Church, and its return with Christ to judge and to reign, during which interval it is in heaven. It must be evident to any one who believes in a future fulfillment of the scenes described in Rev. 4--xix., that the present employment of Christ is not that of opening seals, which bring down the judgments of God on those dwelling on the earth, nor are they like it: that action marks a period when there is an entire change in the divine procedure, the grace of God in the Gospel is no longer flowing out as it does now; but all that comes from the throne of God is judgment, or proclamation of judgment. God is about to take possession of the earth, and, before doing so, inflicts all these visitations on those who have despised His grace, accompanied with warnings of the personal Advent of the Son of Man. Hence, the testimony that is borne is no longer to the absolute grace of God towards sinners, but to God's claims upon the earth, which He is about to enforce in the person of Christ, and to which these judgments witness. From this, arises, in great measure, the persecution which the servants of God have to undergo, and which this book relates; for, whilst the gospel, proclaimed whilst the Church is on earth, testifies of God's love to the sinner, and that He is gathering out a people for heaven, leaving in abeyance the title-rights of Christ to this earth, the declaration that God is about to take possession of it, with the accompanying signs of His doing so, arouses all the enmity of the natural heart of man against God; as of old, when Christ was present, they said; "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours." In other words, the dealing of God and of Christ being changed, the moment He takes the book, and begins to open the seals, a corresponding change takes place in the character of the testimony borne, and its effect upon the minds of men who hear it.

So much is this the case, that as the effect of opening one of the seals, men call on the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. At the present moment, it is the grace of the Lamb, and the blood of the Lamb, that Christ is exercising, and His servants are proclaiming, and by no means that which expresses the wrath of the Lamb.

Whilst alluding to this book, it will be useful to examine more particularly, who the saints are which are on earth during the course of its judgments, and what are their distinguishing features.

It should be remarked, that throughout the whole of the more prophetic part of the book, from chap. 6 to 18 inclusive, the Church is never named, nor are the saints on earth ever addressed or alluded to under that designation. On the contrary, those distinctions of Jew and Gentile which are obliterated on our becoming members of the Church, the body of Christ, come again into view.

Those who are sealed in chap. 7 are of the tribes of Israel. There are saints represented in chap. 11, as worshipping in the Temple and at the Altar, which are measured to show that they are, to a certain extent, set apart for God, and He again accepts worship in connection with them, which certainly must be Jewish. The court without the temple is given into the hands of the Gentiles, who tread under foot Jerusalem, now again regarded as "the Holy City," whilst the woman (the Jewish nation), and her seed are the special subjects of prophetic interest and testimony (chap. 12); all this confirming the idea that the Church is gone, and sheaving us that the current of the election and dealings of God, has set in towards His ancient people, who, since God has begun to take them up again, become, in consequence, the objects of Satan's enmity and attack. But the moral characteristics of these persons, yet more clearly define who they are. In chap. 6, they cry for judgment, and that God "avenge their blood" on their persecutors; as it is the utterance which the Holy Ghost puts in their lips, these feelings, and their expression, must be according to the mind of God, or the Spirit of God would never thus indite and record them. It is now the day of grace, "the accepted time, the day of salvation." And in consequence, this prayer would be unfit for us, and as contrary to the will of God now, as it will be suitable then, when "the door is shut" and the time of long-suffering, grace, and patience, passed away. Similar features are expressed in the parable of the unjust judge, where the saints of that period are presented under the figure of a widow, who cries, "Avenge me of mine adversary"; and upon this, the Lord thus comments. "And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them"? The language here used cannot be Christian, as it would be totally unsuitable in the lips of those who are taught to love their enemies, and to pray for those who despitefully use them, and persecute them. The Church has no need to cry for her enemies to be destroyed, in order to enjoy her blessings, for she is to be taken up to heaven out of the reach of all; but those who are to have their portion on the earth, must look for the overthrow of their adversaries, both for their own deliverance, and also in order that the kingdom they wait for may be established.

Again, chap. 11, the testimony of the two witnesses is accompanied by judgments resembling those of Moses and Elijah; fire proceeds out of their mouth and devours their adversaries. They shut heaven, and smite with plagues; whereas the very suggestion of calling fire from heaven upon those who refused to receive Jesus when on earth, drew upon the disciples the rebuke, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9).

The remarkable change which we have noticed, in the spirit and feelings of the saints who are spoken of in this book, and which evidently has the divine sanction and approval, is accounted for, as we have seen, by the alteration which has taken place in the divine dealings. This change appears to be contemporaneous with the removal of the Church, which, as the witness of the grace and long-suffering of God, has been gathered for heaven, and taken there as the four-and-twenty enthroned elders witness to us. Then it is, that God prepares to dispossess those who have so long usurped the government of the earth. The Lamb takes the book, after His title to the inheritance has been declared, and opens the seals. The saints of this period declare God's

right to the earth, which man disowns, the coming judgment (chap. 14:6, 7), and the day of divine vengeance on the ungodly, for which their prayers ascend, reminding us strongly of similar features in the Psalms, where the same rights and kingdom are constantly the subject.

That there are saints who are removed at a different time, and in a way altogether unlike that of the Church, is evident from the description given in chap. 11 of the translation of the two witnesses, more especially if, as seems most probable, we regard them as symbolizing a double character of testimony, borne by two companies of witnesses. There is no descent of the Lord from heaven into the air for them -no meeting other saints in the clouds, and afterward joining the Lord above them, and the whole accomplished in the twinkling of an eye. But when brought to life, they stand on the earth, and are beheld by their enemies. After this, a voice says, "Come up hither;" and they ascend direct to heaven in a cloud. In this ascent, they are unaccompanied by the dead and living saints, though they go into heaven as they have done. A further proof that the idea of Christ's coming from heaven, and the saints meeting Him after He has arrived in the air, and not ascending into heaven at all, but coming at once with Him to the earth is entirely unfounded. These witnesses have been slain, as well as those who were seen as souls under the altar for their active testimony for the truth. Another company, slain for refusing to worship the beast and his image, when all the world adore it, are seen in heaven, in chap. 15, on the sea of glass, which was not before occupied, having been left vacant for them. These parties, having been put to death, cannot have an earthly place or portion, we find them, therefore, in Rev. 20 sharing in the blessings of the first resurrection, contrasted as it is there with the second, which is a resurrection of judgment (John 5:29), whilst the former includes all who are raised previous to the manifestation of Christ in glory.

Some difficulty may, perhaps, be experienced at first, at the apparently undefined position occupied by those who render testimony to the truth after the Church is in heaven, and how it is that the disciples, during our Lord's sojourn on earth, are looked at as their representatives. But just as many of the Old Testament declarations, respecting what is to take place during the millennium, not easily understood at first, afterward became simple enough, so it will be found here, and for very much the same reason. The real solution of the difficulty in both cases being in the change of the dispensation, and in the fact that we find it not easy to place ourselves in circumstances, and under the direction of principles differing so widely from our own.

The present period is altogether peculiar and exceptional; and the action of God, while it lasts, in giving up the earth and in calling out a people for heaven, differs entirely from all that precedes or follows it. After the translation of the Church, there will be a time of transition, just as there was when our blessed Lord was on earth, and with many corresponding features. The Gospel of the Kingdom was preached-, and it will be again (Matt. 24:14; Rev. 14:6,7); one who fills a place answering to that of John the Baptist, as the forerunner of Christ, and announcing His coming, will appear (Matt. 11:14;17.11; Mal. 4:5,6); the Jews will be again in their own land, and for a time under Gentile dominion, and again persecuting the disciples of Christ; whilst God is about to send His Son again into this world.

During the former period, the Lord sent His disciples on a special mission to the Jewish nation, with these directions (Matt. 10.5), "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And, as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." After some further intimations of what they

must expect to meet with He adds, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come." The persons to whom the testimony was confined, the subject of that testimony, as well as the circumstances of it and the directions by which it was to be regulated, all differ entirely from that which God has sent to man since the death and resurrection of Christ. The Gospel is now published far and wide to the Gentiles; it is far from being merely a proclamation of the near approach of the Kingdom on earth; Evangelists are not now commanded to go utterly unprovided (Luke 22:35-37), and certainly it cannot be said, that the calling of the Church is at any time to be going over the cities of Israel, as the disciples, or those who take up this testimony again, will be doing when the Son of Man comes. The continuance of it at the end is especially remarkable; "when the Son of Man comes," those who resume it are engaged in going over "the cities of Israel"; and they are thus addressed, "Ye shall not have gone over," etc.; so that we have the authority of the Lord Himself for identifying the testimony of His disciples to the Jews whilst He was on earth with that which will be rendered by the Jewish remnant immediately previous to His return, and for identifying the disciples themselves with that remnant. Let us examine other passages which refer to this period, in order to ascertain to whom they more properly relate. Matt. 24 contemplates a destruction of Jerusalem yet future: this is evident from v. 29, 30, where the coming of Christ is declared to follow close upon the tribulation (comp. Dan. 12.12), as we also learn to be the case from Zech. 14:1-5, where the appearing of the Lord, with His glorified saints, for the deliverance of the city, takes place immediately after its capture. There are certain saints at this time in special connection with Jerusalem and Judea, with Jewish ideas and in Jewish circumstances; they are warned-that many will come in the name of Christ, each one professing to be Christ, or the Messiah of the Jews, and that they are not to be deceived by them; that false prophets will arise and deceive many; that they are to flee when they see the abomination of desolation set up in the holy place; they are told to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath-day; that unless the days of suffering were shortened, no flesh would be saved; that they are not to listen to those who tell them that Christ is here or there-if they say He is in the desert, they are not to go there; or if in the secret chamber, they are not to believe it. How inconsistent to suppose that such directions could be given or apply to any but Jewish saints. Is the Church likely to be in Judea, so as to have to flee? Can it have begun to regard the temple at Jerusalem as the holy place (Heb. 9:24), and the Jewish Sabbath, or Saturday, as a day that ought to be kept holy? Is it likely to be deceived by impostors who attempt to pass themselves off for Christ, or by others who say that He is to be found concealed in this or that locality, and that it is needful to go there to Him? All this is natural enough, if we view the persons here represented as Jewish believers; the dangers described, and the warnings given, are just suitable to them; they would naturally, as Jews, look for the Messiah in this earthly way, and, therefore, need these instructions to prevent their being deceived; the temple to them will be the holy place, the Jewish Sabbath that which they will observe; having earthly hopes, viz., those of sharing in the blessings of the new earth when Christ comes to reign, it is needful, for that purpose, that their flesh should be saved, or, in other words, that they should live through all these troubles. But does the Church look for this, or is it any consequence to her whether her flesh is preserved, seeing she must be raised and changed to share the glory of Christ? Does she look for Him in a secret chamber; or would she be in any danger of being deluded by such a pretense, when she expects, the moment He comes out of heaven, to be caught up to meet Him in the air, and to be forever with Him?

In Dan. 12, where Daniel's people are said to be delivered, it is added, " Every one that shall be found written in the book," which answers exactly to the term " elect" used here. Moreover, in Luke 17:31, where the same time is in view, and the same circumstances, and where similar directions are given, it is added, " In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him like-wise not return back." Now, is it not perfectly inconceivable, that such language could be addressed to a heavenly saint, who beholds God's Son descending for him, and also finds himself at the same instant changed into His image, and ascending in the clouds to meet Him. He is not to turn back to take his stuff out of his house! of what value could it possibly be to him, or how could a changed and glorified saint be supposed to do such a thing? Now, to one who is to remain on earth, and be blessed there when Christ governs it, such a warning would be quite appropriate; it is well that he should go forth to meet Christ and not regard his earthly possessions, however useful they may be to him subsequently. Christ will take care of all that concerns him, and he ought, though a saint destined only for earthly blessings to be thinking then of Christ alone.

It is not at all surprising, that the apostles should be addressed as the representatives of these persons. We know that, according to the divine purpose, they were afterward to form the nucleus of the Church; and sometimes they are viewed anticipatively, and spoken of by our Lord according to what they would be when the promised Comforter had come. But they were certainly in their proper character-Jewish believers, rather than what we call Christians, a name which was not given till much later, nor was the Church at that time built or formed (Matt. 16.18; Acts 2.47). They could not understand the necessity which there was that Christ should suffer, nor after His death and burial that He would rise again from the dead, though He had expressly foretold both. They trusted that Jesus would have redeemed Israel (Luke 24.21). Even after His resurrection they ask Him, as we have already seen (Acts 1), " Wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom, to Israel?" Their thoughts and hopes, we see by this, were even then connected with, and did not rise beyond, the conditions and prospects of their nation. They clearly did not enter into the counsels of God respecting the Church and their position in it, to which their minds were only opened after the descent of the Holy Ghost, who came to form it, or they could not have made such an inquiry. They were, up to this time, Jewish believers, who owned Jesus as the true Messiah, and trusted in Him as such, yet retaining their thoughts and feelings as Jews, and looking upon Him in His connection with the Jewish nation and themselves as a part of it, and believing the promises of God towards it, which they expected He would now fulfill. This makes them very fit representatives of those who will be in much the same circumstances at a day yet to come, and who will have much the same feelings and hopes, and much the same amount of light and confidence in Christ as the Hope of Israel; and in this way the Lord addresses them, as we have seen in passages such as Matt. 10 and 24, Mark 13, and Luke 17 and 21.

Many of the passages which relate to the return of the Lord to judge this earth, have a character so peculiarly their own, and differ so widely from those that refer to His coming for the Church, that it seems un-accountable how they ever could have been applied to it. For instance, in Rev. 1:7, His advent is thus announced: " Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Again, "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24.30). And, "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the

coming of the Son of Man be " (Matt. 24:27). Here His coming is with clouds; it is like the lightning flash which spreads from one end of heaven to the other; every eye beholds Him, and terror and dismay follow. When He comes for His saints, as related in 1 Thess. 4, He does not come with clouds, which are symbolical of providential power and judicial authority. He is not seen by every eye; nor do we read of any such effects being produced. There is no symptom of anything judicial, He comes purely on a mission of love to accomplish which He descends from heaven, to take to Himself the Bride He has purchased with His own blood, and which He has chosen to be His heavenly companion forever. His concern is with the Church-with His saints, and with them only-to seek and take them to Himself forever; for such is the desire of His heart.

He comes as a Redeemer-a Savior-a Bridegroom; and every idea is excluded but the fulfillment of the purposes and promises of love. To present, in fine, the Church to Himself- "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

How unlike this is to the way in which, as we have seen, His return to the earth is portrayed. It is compared again to the flood, which swept away the ungodly inhabitants of the world-" As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not, until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37-39);- to the fire which God rained from heaven to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah: " Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:28-31). Are the deluge and the fire which God sent from heaven fit emblems of the coming of Christ, when He gathers the Church? Has it that character at all, or are such features exhibited in it as are presented to us in 1 Thess. 4 and similar passages? Observe, it is "the coming" of Christ that is compared to these things, and has these marks: "He comes" with the clouds of heaven; "His coming" is like the lightning, the deluge, and the fire rained from heaven. Will He come for His saints as a flood, or as fire, or as lightning? -for His Bride as a judge, or with a two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth, and a rod of iron in His hand, or clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, as He is represented in Rev. 19, and that, moreover, at the very moment when He comes out of heaven, so that it could not be said, that He changed His aspect after He left heaven, quitting it in one character and assuming another before He reached the earth!

How much the confounding of these two events together must interfere with that joyful and bright expectation, produced by the assurance that the Lord may come for His saints at any moment, and which a verse such as this awakens "unto them that look for Him, He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation;" for it is evident, that the effect on the heart will vary according to the way in which the Lord's return is viewed by the believer. As the once commonly received idea of a general judgment and universal conflagration, connected with the Lord's second advent, operated to hinder its being looked for as an object of desire, and made it almost one of dread, even to His people, in the same way, confusing it with His coming to execute judgment on earth invests it with a character which must necessarily weaken, if not destroy, the sweetness and attractive power of the anticipation and the desire, with which the Bride of Christ should await the coming of her Bridegroom to take her to Himself.

That the statement already above made, that when Christ comes to remove the Church, He is not seen by every eye, is correct, is evident from Col. 3:4, where we are told that "when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." So that when He is seen by the world, the Scripture positively declares that we shall be with Him, and be seen with Him in His glory. We must, therefore, have been previously removed in order to be with Him, so that when He comes with clouds, and every eye sees Him, that cannot be His coming for us, or He would appear without us, instead of our being with Him in glory when He appears; nor can it apply to His coming as the lightning, a figure which is used expressly to show what will be public and apparent to all, in contrast to what is hidden or secret. This also is confirmed by what is stated by the apostle Jude, who says, " Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all" (Jude, 14, 15; Zech. 14:5). In 2 Thess. 2 the apostle Paul himself draws clearly enough the distinction between the rapture of the Church and the day of the Lord.-" 1 beseech you, brethren, by [■π■ρ] the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand," or, rather, "is present," for such is the undoubted meaning of the word ■ν■στηκεν. The Thessalonian saints mistook, it appears, the terrible troubles through which they were passing for the judgments which will accompany the day of the Lord, which, in consequence, they thought had commenced. This idea disquieted their minds and weakened their confidence, and gave occasion to the appeal of the apostle to them by, or for the sake of, the coming of Christ and their gathering to Him, which must first take place, not to suppose that the day had set in. Thus distinguishing these two events, and entreating them, by virtue of one which had relation to themselves, and involved their previous removal, not to be troubled about the other.

Another point of great interest, which is touched on in this epistle, is the power which restrains the progress and development of evil, and the manifestation of Antichrist. " And now ye know," says the apostle, " what withholdeth, that he [Antichrist] might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the midst" [■κ μ■σου]. The apostle does not tell us what this power was, that held the evil in check; we can only, therefore, gather it from the terms used, from analogy, or from other Scripture.

The Church was first formed when the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost for that purpose. Previous to the death of Christ, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile subsisted; and there could be no such thing, consequently, as their union in one body; nor could that body have any existence until its head was in heaven and glorified, and the Holy Ghost was sent down here to dwell in it, and give it its unity. For these two things are evidently necessary, in order that any natural body should have life: first, it must have a head; secondly, there must be a spirit in it, to animate it and give it the unity of life. Now, during the lifetime of Christ, this unity had not commenced, for it was something far more than a unity of faith in His person. He says of Himself, " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit " (John 12:24), so that it is in His resurrection, and by virtue of it, that we have this life in Him, and it could not be before His resurrection (compare also Eph. 2:5,6). Not only, therefore, was it needful that Jesus should become man, but He must die and rise again, before a single believer could be united to Him in the same life that He has (John 14:19), atonement for sin being the basis of everything. It is not, however, life only, but the presence of the Holy Ghost down here that forms the body, who, now that there is a glorified and accepted Man as

its Head in heaven, has come to unite us to Him as such, and incorporate all the living saints into one body, by His presence here on earth; " for," says the apostle, " by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13).

This personal presence of the Holy Ghost on earth is the great characteristic of the present period, and of the existence of the Church whilst here. When leaving His disciples, Jesus promised to them another Comforter, who should " abide with them forever, even the Spirit of Truth." This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and then the Church was established on earth, so that it could be said, " The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved," and the accomplishment of the previous declaration of Christ, " On this rock [His own person] I will build my Church," commenced, Ever since this time, the Holy Ghost has remained on earth in the Church. All operations in it are carried on by His agency (1 Cor. 12:11, Acts 13:2, etc. etc.). He builds the Church together as God's habitation (Eph. 2:22). This presence of God the Holy Ghost in the body of Christ, and His activity displayed in grace, and power, and blessing, are quite distinct from His providential government in the world, which has subsisted from the beginning, and will subsist after this has ceased, as well as the operations of His grace upon the hearts of individuals, which have been carried on in all dispensations. In certain parts of the book of the Revelation, viz., those which precede and follow the visions, we have further evidence of this truth. In the addresses to the Churches, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches," is often repeated; and in chap. 22 the Spirit down here with the Church is represented as looking up to Christ and inviting His return. " The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." In these passages, which apply to the present time, the Church is still on earth; and herein we shall perceive the force of the apostle's assertion, that " He who now letteth will let until He be taken out of the way."

Whilst the Holy Ghost is on earth in the Church, His presence is a restraint upon the full manifestation of evil. If the presence of a man of God will act in this way upon a company of ungodly persons, as we have often seen, we cannot be surprised that the presence of the Spirit of God, as well as the light which He diffuses whilst on earth, should operate in this way. When once the Church is removed, and the Holy Ghost is no longer here, the restraining influence ceases to exist, the evil displays itself without hindrance, and Antichrist appears. Hence the propriety of the expression, " He who now letteth will let until He be taken out of the way," which appropriately describes His sudden removal with the Church. This coincides with what we have already remarked, that it would be inconsistent to suppose that the Holy Ghost could be here when the Son of man comes to take vengeance, and scarcely finds faith on earth. The ancient idea of the Roman Empire being that which stood in the way of the manifestation of Antichrist, would not now meet the requirements of the passage, as that empire has long ceased to exist, and a personal Antichrist has not yet appeared; nor can, it is believed, any other consistent interpretation of it be offered by those who object to that which is given above.

There are, without doubt, many passages which speak of the day of the Lord, in relation to the conduct and service of the saints. For whilst the rapture has reference to their privileges alone, the day of the Lord is the grand terminus of their responsibilities. The reason of it is found in this, that the servants are called to account and rewarded, after their Master has first received His own kingdom; and has, therefore, been invested with the authority by which He punishes or distributes rewards as He sees fit. The Evangelist Luke tells us (chap. 19:15), that " when He was returned,

having received the kingdom, He commanded His servants to be called to Him," and took account of them. The Apostle Paul speaks of a "crown of righteousness" being laid up for him, "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give him at that day, and not to him only, but to all them that love His appearing." It is as the Lord, the righteous Judge, that He bestows this crown, because, as such, He will make the difference between those who have loved and served Him, and those who have not done so. Hence it is not bestowed until that day when He comes and acts publicly in the world in that character. Timothy is told to keep the charge committed to him until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Timothy slept, ages ago, with the departed saints; yet he will not render his account, and receive his reward until that time.

It remains to notice some passages which have occasioned difficulties in some minds. In Matt. 13, after the account given of the progress of Christianity in the world, and its corruption by the enemy, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, the harvest is spoken of which is to make the separation between them. This, however, as is the case in natural things, is a period more or less prolonged, as we learn from the words, "In time of harvest," "the harvest is the end of the age;" and various and successive actions are spoken of as taking place in the course of its duration. Just as is ordinarily the case in the scene from which this illustration is taken; the field is reaped, so that the crop is ready on the field before it is carried. The tares are first gathered and bound in bundles - the wheat is transferred to the garner, afterward the tares are burned in the fire, and still later, it is said, "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father!" These two last particulars, being given in the explanation (ver. 40-43) of the parable, which enlarges, and goes beyond its previous statements, and which clearly makes a distinction between the removal of the Church, and its public exhibition in the glory of Christ.

The term used in this parable, as descriptive of the close, "the time of harvest," may help to remove the difficulty felt by some at the idea of the translation of different bodies of saints at different periods, as the expression seems to intimate that the whole epoch bears the character of an ingathering of saints. But what has chiefly given rise to this difficulty is a mistaken view of Rev. 20-it having been erroneously supposed, that this passage describes the resurrection of the Church; whilst, in reality, it assumes that it has taken place, but gives no account of it. The passage runs thus, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast; neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (ver. 4). The apostle had previously seen the Church in glory, both as the enthroned elders in chap. 4, etc., and as the Bride in chap. 19; and he had also seen it come forth from heaven with Christ just before, when He descended in triumph, as the rider on the white horse, to overthrow the antichristian hosts. He now sees thrones which are occupied by the saints (they sat upon them), and judgment is given to them; but he adds that those who had been martyred, and whom he had before seen as souls, lived and reigned with Christ also. It was unnecessary to speak of the resurrection of the Church, the members of which were long since risen and ascended; and who had been described as enthroned, and often mentioned as in a glorified state, and who had just accompanied Christ from heaven, in order to reign, he, therefore, only says he "saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them," the antecedent to the pronoun "they" being, the saints who descended with Christ, in chap. 19:14. The martyrs, also, he now tells us,

were raised, in order to participate in the blessing of the reign of Christ, they could not share in it as souls; and, therefore, he adds, of them, and of them only, that " they lived," in order to reign " with Christ." " But," he continues, " the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." So that the term, the first resurrection, is applied to all who were raised before the commencement of the Millennium, in contrast with those who were not raised till the end of it. The apostle includes these different bodies in it, whom he now beholds reigning with Christ, and calls it all " the first resurrection." Cavilers may call it two or more resurrections, and the objection may sound somewhat plausible at first; but this will cease to be the case, when it is discovered that the Holy Ghost uses the term " first resurrection," in contrast with that which takes place after the thousand years, and which has a totally different moral character. It is evident, that Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, who were translated long ago, will all be included in what is here called the first resurrection, as well as those saints, who, as Matthew relates (chap. xxvii. 52, 53) arose at the resurrection of our Lord; the two witnesses, whose ascension has been described in chap. xi., must also be partakers in it, so that the attempt to attach the whole of it to one moment of time entirely fails. The different parties named in Rev. 20:4, though sharing in the first resurrection and its glories, do not form a part of the Church, the Bride of Christ, or their resurrection would not be given here after the marriage has taken place. Besides which, we cannot suppose that when Christ returns to present the Church to Himself, she is incomplete. The Spirit and the Bride say, " Come," in reply to the Lord, who presents Himself as " the root and offspring of David - the morning star" in Rev. 22:16; and we cannot think that as she is thus represented as a Bride, inviting her Bridegroom to come for her He only finds part of this Bride when He comes, nor are those saints treated of in the Revelation ever described as sharing in that relationship.

An objection frequently urged, and similar in its nature to that stated above, is, that the views here advocated, make more than one " coming." This argument, when examined, will be found to be of no real force, and very superficial. There would be more truth in saying that the Lord's coming appears to be divided into two parts, which is quite another thing, and quite according to the analogy of Scripture. He comes to remove His saints, as we have seen, and for this purpose He descends, first, to the confines of this earth's atmosphere (1 Thess. 4), and no further, thus the darkness and slumber of the world are left undisturbed; so far as it is in question. He does not then come at all; for the remaining stage of the journey, in which alone it is concerned, is unfulfilled until afterward, when He returns, accompanied by His saints, to this earth. The first act of His παρουσία, " coming " or " presence" is, when He descends for His saints, and so comes to them; the second, when He comes to the world, which He has not done before. It is the latter which is called His επιφάνεια " Epiphany " or " Manifestation," and which is never applied to the rapture, but always to Christ's appearing in glory with His saints, whilst παρουσία is sometimes used in speaking of one, sometimes of the other, as the context or the persons addressed, or the way in which it is brought forward determines, for He may come or be present in different ways to different persons. The same difference may be observed between the birth of Christ, and that which is ordinarily called His Epiphany at His first coming, though this is only adduced as an illustration, and nothing more. The objection, however, which is merely verbal, is not founded on any specific statement, or application of the expression, in the word of God, which uses the term second, in contrast with His first coming; and we all know that His " first coming " embraces a wide range of varied circumstances and appearances, which, both in Scripture and in common parlance, it is

used to include. We have seen how plainly the saints are declared to come forth with Christ out of heaven, for the destruction of anti-Christ and his hosts, Rev. 19, against which, and other distinct passages, which have been cited, a merely human notion about the use of the term "second advent," cannot be maintained.

Some have concluded, from what is said in Rev. 11:15-18, that the public assumption by Christ of His Kingdom, actually takes place then. This, would not be of any great moment to the point we are considering, even if correct; but, upon a closer- examination, it will be found otherwise, and that it is an anticipative expression uttered by the saints, who are in heaven, on the seventh angel's sounding. This will be made clear, by reference to the following chapter, where almost the very same words are used, when Satan is represented as cast out of heaven, ver. 10: " And I heard a loud voice, saying, in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Though there is a distinct intimation in ver. 14, that there are yet three years and a half to expire before Christ actually takes the kingdom. The statement also, in the passage in question, that the time of the dead was come, that they should be judged, makes this more evident, since we know from other Scriptures, that they are not judged till the end of the thousand years. To this we may add, that the last woe has yet to endure, that the temple is opened in heaven, and the third, or final series of judgments, the seven last vials, has yet to be inflicted; to these, the seventh trumpet is introductory, just as the seventh seal was to the trumpets. Chaps. xii.-xiv. being parenthetical. The fact is, that the saints in heaven, who are represented as intelligent in the divine dealings, and able to interpret their meaning, anticipate, both from the sounding of the last trumpet and the overthrow of Satan, the full result upon earth, which will ultimately ensue from what is then taking place in heaven.

In the course of the preceding remarks, many points have been touched upon, which it is not possible to treat fully, within so small a compass, and, to do which, would lead too far away from the subject we have more immediately before us. The object has been, to give a general outline of the testimony of Scripture upon it, and to bring out the principles which are involved in it, rather than to enter into all the details of the fulfillment of prophecy. Hence, many facts predicted have been merely glanced at in their bearing upon the main question, and many Scriptures which throw light upon it, more or less directly, especially in the Old Testament, have been left out.

That these views are comparatively, at least in our day, recent, need not weigh with any one in examining them; for the same may be said of all that has been written upon these subjects. It is not long since all the prophecies in the Old Testament relating to God's earthly people, the Jews, were universally applied to the Church, as descriptive of her future glory, as they are, even to this day, by a large proportion of Christians. Besides this, we know how great is the variety of opinion that exists in matters of prophetic detail, so that, among such uncertain and rival claims, we may feel quite free in following out any prophetic inquiry, which gives a more clear and distinct future, and more in harmony with the word of God generally, than we have known before; relying, as alone of real consequence, on the sanction which that word gives, under the teaching of the Spirit of God.

It will be seen, that it is not for the want of plain, unmistakable evidence in the Scriptures of truth, that the minds of Christians remain in doubt upon these points; but, alas! there are so many

prejudices and preconceived notions, which have to be got rid of; besides which, the heart is slow, as with the disciples of old, to appreciate the height of the love of Christ, and all that He intends to do on behalf of His Bride, the object of His heart's affection. Added to this, Satan has been endeavoring to throw dust in the eyes of those who were inquiring, by bringing forward, by means of opposers passages which, from want of full acquaintance with their real meaning, have created some misapprehension, and been a hindrance to full establishment in the truth.

He knows, full well, that to lower and destroy the heavenly hopes which God has given, will dim the perception of the love of Christ; which acts so powerfully on the heart, when rightly understood, in separating the affections from everything else, and fixing them on Him alone. We have need, therefore, to have the heart set right, as well as to have the mind enlightened, in order to enter into these things, so that our desire should be for Christ alone. For the apostle says, " He that is spiritual, judgeth all things," and he lets us know how great a hindrance the carnality of the Corinthians had been to them, and to his instructing them in these things (1 Cor. 2:6, and 3:1). May God give to us all, by the power of His spirit, to know and to enjoy the full blessing of His counsels and ways toward the Church, and " to Him be glory, by Jesus Christ, in the Church, throughout all ages, world without end!"

The Conscience in the Light of God's Presence

The knowledge of our proper relationship with our gracious God, as Father, and of our calling and standing in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ,-the Heavenly Son of Man at God's right-hand,-necessarily goes far beyond all questions of conscience and exercises of soul in the children of God. Yet because of this, and in order to the full blessing-" fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"-the conscience of the believer must be in the light; the walk in the light; all that is individual judged there-alone with God. For there is no such thing as corporate conscience. May it not be said that the Lord's great purpose, in all His dealings in grace, is to bring the souls of His children-the individual soul-into fellowship with Himself? Does not John so present it in that precious Word (1 John 1:1-7)?

There seems to be a special need at this hour (therefore, a fit subject for the Present Testimony) to speak as to conscience being in His Presence, so that all might be judged according to God. It was always so surely. But this present is a solemn moment. Christendom, spurious, and apostate Christianity enlarges.-Satan is working mischief as an angel of light; flesh or man's nature is active; combinations between the true people of God and mere professors are weakening the former and nullifying their testimony-the mass indeed are sunk down to the level of the earth, alas! Of those who are in some measure separated to God, what urgent need of self-judgment as to the will and ways! What confession may be made! What humiliation is becoming! All this demands that conscience should not only be exercised, but be in the light of the Lord's presence. In fact, this lesson may be learned: that while there may have been activity in God's service, even joy, and the Lord (for faith was there) using the strength of His servant, yet conscience, not having been fully in the light; and self and nature not judged there, -communion with God, and its happy peaceful effects and power, have been unknown or very imperfectly known in the soul.

We read those remarkable words in Ephes. chap. 5, ver. 8. "Now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light." What does the Apostle mean in its practical experimental sense by " light in the Lord "? Surely if the gentle, but strong, hand of the Spirit of God leads the renewed soul,-the new man,-the divine nature in the believer-into immediate contact with its Source (i.e. God Himself)-conscience brought there-all will be seen, all judged (according to the measure given) in that presence "where no flesh can glory." There the flesh is judged, there sin is seen in its exceeding sinfulness-there the will is detected-there it is no longer the fruit only of sin and flesh which is judged, but the roots, deep laid roots, exposed and made bare in that light. The world is there, unmasked; above all, Grace, seen and learned in its proper Divine character; and the soul, by faith. established in. it; there the blessed Source, the God of all grace, bowed to in another and deeper way; reconciliation known more truly; the living glory of the Father's Name connected with the soul; and some ray of the beauty and glory of Jesus, the Son of Man, seen and appreciated, through the power of the present and Eternal Spirit. " Now are ye light in the Lord." The heart may make progress now in the power of its communion, yet the work in conscience go on from time to time, whenever there is something in nature not in obedience to Christ, " Casting down reasonings and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity

every thought to the obedience of Christ " (2 Cor. 10) It may be further stated, that the conscience being in the light, and the affections of the soul drawn out to God, who reveals His glory in the face (Person) of Jesus Christ, the soul learns what " fear and trembling " mean in the Word. Yet that fear is in the very light of the Grace, consciously possessed and in the taste of it. For sure I am, at least I believe the thought to be according to truth, that while tasting the love of God in Christ, and the joy of relationship-while the cry of Abba Father, intelligently understood as giving a place of heavenly Sonship with and in Jesus-while such affections may be higher and deeper blessings through the Spirit-yet there is a blessed, solid, divine satisfaction and joy in discovering and knowing the holiness of God. Oh, the joy when the Spirit sanctions and enforces that truth in the light, that nothing can be suffered in the child as to will-nothing recognized by God which is contrary to His nature and being. All must be judged-the levity and folly of man-the will and way-the mixed motives, all exposed there, that God may impart deeper blessing. Hence chastisement, and the exercises of Heb. 12, " that we might be partakers of His holiness."

The scriptures, in their rich and varied treasures, afford abundant illustrations of the action on conscience and exercises of soul when man is brought into the light of God. We see there the Divine hand at work, illuminating the understanding, quickening and enlightening, as well as purging the conscience; purifying the heart by faith, and drawing out its affections, renewed by grace, to God; to us, the affections gathered round and centered in the Person of the Son. It may be profitable just to glance at a few instances of the Spirit's handy-work, to exemplify and apply what is stated above. The case of Abraham would not be adduced as showing exercise of soul and conscience. Yet as to the general question of God acting on man's soul, it is most important to observe, that if Abraham, called and elected peculiarly as the Lord's witness against an idolatrous world, needed power for difficult requirement, the Holy Ghost teaches us in Acts 7 the secret that, " the God of Glory appeared unto him."-The glory shone into his soul, and he " obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11)

In the account we have of Moses in Ex. 2 and 3, seen in the light of Acts 7, where we get some comment on these chapters, we find exercise of soul. We see his conscience brought into the light, and its effect in power and communion. There is activity in him (in Ex. 2:11-14), and love of his brethren, though expressed with carnal power and wisdom; " he looked this way and that way;" "he supposed his brethren would have understood;" marking the want of calmness and guidance, and he has to flee from the consequences of his act. But when he beholds the glory from the burning bush; when he has to put off his shoes from off his feet, (the rough shoe of nature must come off), for it was holy ground; when sent by Him who calls Himself "I Am, that I Am," what a contrast do we find! Unable to move or speak at first; yet, when the heart of Moses is assured, and faith is there-the rod of power is taken instead of the carnal weapon-boldness now in the presence of Pharaoh, endurance in difficult service, " he endured as seeing Him who is invisible; and of this exercised servant, the Holy Ghost deigns to say, " Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12)

In the history of Job, we have a still more apt illustration of our subject. We see there, in a pointed way, the difference wrought in a man, and he a child of God, when conscience is brought into the light of His presence. It will suffice here (without entering into the details of God's wondrous dealings with his servant Job), to notice the case generally; and it is happy to remember the Holy Ghost's own comment on the cause of Job's trial and great afflictions:-" Behold, we count them

happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5:11) The end of the Lord was to give his servant and precious child, Job, deeper blessing, true communion with Himself; and this He did by bringing his conscience into the light of His

In the Present Testimony, Vol. IV., p. 58, also p. 164, able papers will be found on Job's history. The reader is referred to them. presence. No one would suppose it was mere natural uprightness which Job exhibits at first-that he was religious or pious according to the flesh. God's own words to the Adversary of Job and man (chaps. 1:8, 2:3), would show the contrary. But Job's nature detected grace, and exalted itself. He was occupied with himself - his good works-his prayers-his righteousness (the history of many a soul, and quickened soul too, at the present hour); and God would have all judged according to the light, hence His dealings with Job. We see the terrible process. We hear fearful language before God in the bitterness and trial of his soul; he is sifted; his heart is wrung out. Oh! to those who in their measure have known something of this process-the Spirit of God carrying conscience into the light, where the heart must be wrung out; "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," judged; all passing under His eye who has judged, and has brought this judgment into conscience. The process continues, as we know, till poor (but rich) Job utters the memorable words, " I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Grace now understood in the light, produces self-abhorrence, self-loathing. Grace gives the broken spirit, which we so essentially need at this hour. Grace teaches us. May the reader of this remember (and if the point be urgently pressed, let him bear with the writer a little), that it is only in the Lord's presence that grace can be appreciated in its proper or Divine character. Hence the importance of this subject. Let this thought be well weighed, that communion is before walk, or service, or exercise, or gift. Oh! for the power of true communion! One drop of the love of Jesus in a broken heart and softened spirit! Look for a moment at that word in Titus 2:11,14, and connect it with the Lord's presence. " Grace," the apostle tells us, " teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (in fact, ourselves), we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." The soul, being true, covets to learn thus. It is to be learned of Grace. Where? In the Lord's presence; for outside that we cannot really know grace.

But, further, this precious grace teaches us to look for that blessed hope (the return of Jesus to take us up into the air to Himself), and the appearing of the Glory of the Great God and Our Savior Jesus Christ (the Epiphany, or public manifestation of the Glory of Jesus, when the Saints will be manifested with Him). Blessed be His Holy Name, for such hope!

Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and other prophets, in their day and history, would witness something of the same. We may take a passing notice of Isaiah, and the rather as it furnishes so lovely a picture of grace and light acting on conscience. What cry burst from his lips, as narrated in chap. 6, when he saw the glory of Jehovah Jesus filling the Temple (consult John 12:41, where the Holy Ghost shows us it was Jesus)? " Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips:" and when the grace reaches him-for we see three virtues or powers flowing to him-from the Throne and Person of the Lord; first, full conviction of what he was; secondly, full forgiveness and purging of conscience; thirdly, the heart won, and the dependence of true affection: "Here am I, send me "- The servant and prophet formed, and for difficult service, the message of judgment. These illustrations might suffice, but I would yet briefly notice one or two in the New Testament.

There where the mighty instruments for God's work were prepared, the Holy Ghost, being down here, consequent on the work of the Lord Jesus, there is necessarily a deeper action on conscience—a deeper and brighter glory visits the soul. Not that the deep and bright glory of God did not visit Abraham—but Abraham never could have known the communion which Paul and John enjoyed. The question of righteousness had not been raised, which we know the law did—and, instead of promises, to which Abraham in his wondrous faith looked, Paul and John (the Church's portion) possessed the Accomplisher of the promises, The Lord of Glory, the heavenly Son of Man—all was deeper—"The true light now shone." "It was fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." With what wondrous grace, then, divine tenderness and power, the

Lord Jesus dealt with Peter's conscience after his fall, restoring his soul and putting honor upon His servant (John 21). The Lord had accomplished redemption, and in Resurrection light and power, stands before His poor trembling servant, conscious of having accomplished sin and a terrible fall. The Lord does not take up the sin—the fruit or expression of the sins within—but He deals with the root. The deep laid evil in his nature—the immense self-confidence in Peter; the carnal energy which characterized him. (Alas! if one may speak for others, how much of this have we found in ourselves, and the bitter fruits: how far has it been judged in His presence?) "Peter was grieved, because He said unto Him the third time, lovest thou Me?" Here was conviction of conscience. There is nothing but grace from the Lord, winning the affections of the soul of His servant; but showing him it could no longer be Peter for power of walk, but Christ in Peter. When filled with the Holy Ghost, we have the mighty Apostle of the Circumcision.

In Saul of Tarsus we have that which exceeds: He meets—he sees, in his mad career (the very expression of the Jews' hatred to Messiah), the Lord of Glory, who has accomplished Redemption. Saul beholds the Heavenly Man, from whose face streamed down the Glory of God—a glory too effulgent for man (he is blind for a season). Saul utters these strange words (conscience struck and confounded), "Who art Thou, Lord?" He finds that Jesus the Head in Heaven speaks of all the saints as Himself. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." He preaches the Gospel of the Glory, that Jesus is The Son of God. Peter's testimony was that He was Lord and Christ; but was (servant) rather than this full Divine title: The Son of God. How sweetly this honored servant afterward learns the secret of power, as recorded in 2 Cor. 12, where the Lord shows him that it is dependence in conscious weakness which was the condition of power. "My grace sufficeth for thee, for (the condition) My power is made perfect in weakness." It may be observed here, that Revelation itself, Blessed and glorious as it is, is not power, but communion with God in the Revelation. It produces for Paul, here, the thorn in his flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure. "All power is of God." The creatures - even the Angels who have kept their first estate - only have strength as communicated to them: hence the secret of the blessings of dependence - "dependent supplicants alone prevail."

Further, do we not find, in Rev. 1, the secret of that power which enabled John, the beloved apostle, to have communion with the heavenly scene opened to him, as recorded in chap. 4 - he has title and power to look within the door opened in heaven. He has communion there with the crowned elders, as secure as they are; yea, as The Throne itself. When John's conscience was brought into that living blaze of glory - judicial glory, no doubt around The Person of the Son of Man (chap. 1, when he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day) - he "fell at His feet as dead." The glory was exceeding bright and overpowering. Yet, in fullness of grace and Divine tenderness, Jesus

said, "Fear not."

John never feared anything after that. Seals, trumpets, vials, judgments, all pass before him: he is unmoved in their midst. John is witness to the end, not only of the coming of The Lord Jesus, but of the Kingdom and Glory - of the New Heavens and the New Earth. May each of our hearts taste, in sweet communion, the love of Our Father; and, in personal love to Jesus, Our Lord, bow head and heart in worship, saying, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." Amen.

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." Rev. 1:5, 6.

Discipleship in an Evil Day

The first three chapters of the Book of Daniel furnish a most seasonable and important lesson at a time like the present, in which the disciple is in such danger of yielding to surrounding influences, and of lowering his standard of testimony and his tone of discipleship, in order to meet the existing condition of things.

At the opening of chap. 1 we have a most discouraging picture of the state of things, in reference to the ostensible witness of God on the earth- " In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the house of his god " (chap. i. 1, 2). Here, then, we have an aspect of things quite sufficient, if looked at from nature's point of view, to discourage the heart, to damp the spirit, and paralyze the energies. Jerusalem in ruins, the temple trodden down, the Lord's vessels in the house of a false god, and Judah carried away captive. Surely, the heart would feel disposed to say, there is no use in seeking to hold up the standard of practical discipleship and personal devotedness any longer. The spirit must droop, the heart must faint, and the hands must hang down, when such is the condition of the people of God. It could be naught but the most contemptible presumption for any of Judah's sons to think of taking up a true Nazarite's position at such a time.

Such would be nature's reasoning; but such was not the language of faith. Blessed be God! there is always a wide sphere in which the spirit of genuine devotedness can develop itself-there is always a path along which the true disciple can run, even though he should have to run in solitude. It matters not what the outward condition of things may be, it is faith's privilege to hang as much on God, to feed as much on Christ, and to breathe as much of the air of heaven, as though all were in perfect order and harmony.

This is an unspeakable mercy to the faithful heart. All who desire to walk devotedly, can always find a path to walk in; whereas, on the contrary, the man who draws a plea, from outward circumstances, for relaxing his energy, would not be energetic, though most favorably situated.

If ever there was a time in the which one might be excused for taking a low ground, it was the time of the Babylonish captivity. The entire framework of Judaism was broken up; the kingly power had passed out of the hand of David's successor, and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar; the glory had departed from Israel; and, in one word, all seemed faded and gone, and naught remained for the exiled children of Judah save to hang their harps upon the willows, and sit down by the rivers of Babylon, there to weep over departed glory, faded light, and fallen greatness.

Such would be nature's thought and feeling; but, blessed be God! it is when everything appears sunk to the lowest possible point, that then faith rises in holy triumph; and faith, we know, is the only true basis of effective discipleship. It asks for no proofs from the men and things around it; it finds "all its springs" in God; and hence it is that faith never shines so brightly as when all around is

dark. It is when nature's horizon is overcast with the blackest clouds, that faith basks in the sunshine of the divine favor and faithfulness.

Thus it was, that Daniel and his companions were enabled to overcome the peculiar difficulties of their time. They judged that there was nothing to hinder their enjoying as elevated a Nazariteship in Babylon as ever had been known in Jerusalem; and they judged rightly. Their judgment was the judgment of a pure and well-founded faith. It was the self-same judgment on which the Baraks, the Gideons, the Jephthas, and the Samsons of old had acted. It was the judgment to which Jonathan gave utterance, when he said, "There is no restraint with the Lord to save by many or by few" (1 Sam. 14). It was the judgment of David, in the valley of Elah, when he called the poor trembling host of Israel "the army of the living God" (1 Sam. 17). It was the judgment of Elijah, on Mount Carmel, when he built an altar with "twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob" (1 Kings 18). It was the judgment of Daniel himself when, at a further stage of his history, he opened his window and prayed toward Jerusalem (Dan. 6). It was the judgment of Paul when, in view of the overwhelming tide of apostasy and corruption which was about to set in, he exhorts his son Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13). It was the judgment of Peter when, in prospect of the dissolution of the entire framework of creation, he encourages believers to "be diligent, that they may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14). It was the judgment of John when, amid the actual breaking up of everything ecclesiastical, he exhorts his well-beloved Gaius to "follow not that which is evil, but that which is good" (3 John 2). And it was the judgment of Jude when, in the presence of the most appalling wickedness, he encourages a beloved remnant to "build themselves up in their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, to keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20,21). In one word, it was the judgment of the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, it was the judgment of faith.

Now, all this attaches immense value and interest to Daniel's determination, as expressed in the first chapter of this book - "But Daniel purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (ver. 8). He might, very naturally, have said to himself, "There is no use in one poor feeble captive seeking to maintain a place of separation. Everything is broken up. It is impossible to carry out the true spirit of a Nazarite amid such hopeless ruin and degradation. I may as well accommodate myself to the condition of things around me."

But, no; Daniel was on a higher ground than this. He knew, it was his privilege to live as close to God in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, as within the gates of Jerusalem. He knew, that let the outward condition of the people of God be what it might, there was a path of purity and devotedness opened to the individual saint, which he could pursue independently of everything.

And, may we not say, that the Nazariteship of Babylon possesses charms and attractions fully as powerful as the Nazariteship of Canaan? Unquestionably. It is unspeakably precious and beautiful, to find one of the captives in Babylon, breathing after, and attaining unto so elevated a standard of separation. It teaches a powerful lesson, for every age. It holds up to the view of believers, under every dispensation, a most encouraging and soul-stirring example. It proves, that, amid the darkest shades a devoted heart can enjoy a path of cloudless sunshine.

But, how is this? Because "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever" (Heb. 13) Dispensations change and pass away. Ecclesiastical institutions crumble and moulder into ashes. Human systems totter and fall; but the name of Jehovah endureth forever, and His memorial unto all generations. It is upon this holy elevation that faith plants its foot. It rises above all vicissitude, and enjoys sweet converse with the un-changeable and eternal Source of all real good.

Thus it was, that in the days of the Judges, faith achieved more glorious triumphs than ever were known in the days. of Joshua. Thus it was, that Elijah's altar on mount Carmel was surrounded by a halo, fully as bright as that which crowned the altar of Solomon.

This is truly encouraging. The poor heart is so apt to sink, and be discouraged, by looking at the failure and unfaithfulness of man, instead of at the infallible faith-fullness of God. " The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.

And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19.) What can ever touch this enduring truth? Nothing. And, therefore, nothing can touch the faith which lays hold of it, or the superstructure of practical devotedness which is erected on the foundation of that faith.

And, then, look at the glorious results of Daniel's devotedness and separation. In the three opening chapters, we observe three distinct things, resulting from the position assumed by Daniel and his companions, in reference to "the king's meat." 1. They were let into the secret of "the king's dream." 2. They withstood the seductions of "the king's image." And, 3. they were brought unscathed through "the king's furnace."



"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." This is beautifully exemplified in the case before us. "The magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans," who were breathing the atmosphere of the royal presence, were all in the dark as to the royal dream. "The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter." Very likely; but there was a God in heaven who knew all about it; and who, more-over, could unfold it to those who had faith enough, and devotedness enough, and self-denial enough, to separate themselves from Babylonish pollutions, though involved in the Babylonish captivity. The mazes, the labyrinths, and the enigmas of human things are all plain to God; and He can and does make them plain to those who walk with Him, in the sanctity of His holy presence. God's Nazarites can see further into human affairs than the most profound philosophers of this world. And how is this? How can they so readily un-ravel the world's mysteries? Because they are above the world's mists. They are apart from the world's defilements. They are in the place of separation, the place of dependence, the place of communion. "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions; that they would desire mercies of the Lord of Heaven, concerning this secret" (chap. 2:17, 18.) Here, we have their place of strength and intelligence. They had only to look up to heaven, in order to be endowed with a clear understanding as to all the destinies of earth.

How real and simple is all this! "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" and, hence, if we want light, we can only find it in His presence; and we can only know the power of His presence, as we are practically taking the place of separation from all the moral pollutions of earth.

And, observe, a further result of Daniel's holy separation. "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odors unto him." Here, we have earth's proudest and most powerful monarch at the feet of the captive exile. Magnificent fruit of faithfulness! Precious evidence of the truth, that God will always honor the faith, that can, in any measure, rise to the height of His thoughts! He will not, He cannot dishonor the draft which confidence presents at His exhaustless treasury. Daniel, on this memorable occasion, realized, in his own person, as fully as ever it was realized, God's ancient promise, "And all people of the earth shall see, that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee.... And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath" (Deut. 28:10,13).

Assuredly, Daniel was, in the above scene, "the head," and Nebuchadnezzar, "the tail," as looked at from the divine point of view. Witness, also, the bearing of this holy Nazarite, in the presence of the impious Belshazzar (Dan. 5:17-29.) Have we not, here, as magnificent a testimony to the destined pre-eminence of the seed of Abraham, as when Joshua's victorious captains placed their feet on the necks of the kings of Canaan (Josh. 10:24); or, when "all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart?" (1 Kings 10:24). Unquestionably; and, in a certain sense, it is a more magnificent testimony. It is natural to expect such a scene in the history

of Joshua, or of Solomon; but, to find the haughty king of Babylon, prostrate at the feet of one of his captives, is something far beyond the utmost stretch of nature's expectation.

There it is, however, as a most striking, and soul-stirring proof of the power of faith to triumph over all manner of difficulties, and to produce the most extraordinary results. Faith is the same mighty principle, whether it acts on the plains of Palestine, on the top of Carmel, by the rivers of Babylon, or amid the ruins of the professing Church. No fetters can bind it, no difficulties deter it, no pressure damp it, no changes affect it. It ever rises to its proper object, and that object is God Himself, and His eternal revelation. Dispensations may change, ages may run their course, the wheels of time may roll on, and crush beneath their ponderous weight the fondest hopes of the poor human heart; but, there stands faith, that immortal, divine, eternal reality, drinking at the fountain of pure truth, and finding all its springs in Him, who is "the way, the truth and the life."

By this "precious faith," it was, that Daniel acted, when he "purposed that he would not defile himself with the king's meat." True he could no longer ascend to that holy and beautiful house, where his fathers had worshipped. The rude foot of a foreign foe had trodden down the holy city. The fire no longer burned on the altar of the God of Israel. The golden candlestick no longer enlightened, with its seven lamps, the holy place. But, there was faith in Daniel's heart, and that faith carried him beyond every surrounding influence, and enabled him to appropriate, and act in the power of "all the promises of God," which "are Yea, and Amen in Christ Jesus." Faith is not affected by ruined temples, fallen cities, faded lights, or departed glories. Why not? Because, God is not affected by them. God is always to be found; and faith is always sure to find Him.

But, the same faith which enabled those holy men of old to refuse the king's meat; enabled them, also, to despise the king's image. They had separated themselves from defilement, in order that they might enjoy a more intense communion with the true God; and they could not, therefore, bow down to an image of gold, even though it were ever so high. They knew, that God was not an image. They knew He was a reality. They could only present worship to Him, for He alone was the true object thereof.

Nor did it make any matter to them, that all the world was against them. They had only to live and act for God. It might seem, as if they were setting up to be wiser than their neighbors. It might savor of presumption, to stand against the tide of public opinion. Some might feel disposed to ask, if truth lay only with them? Were, all " the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces" sunk in darkness and error? Could it be possible, that so many men of rank, of intelligence, and of learning, were in the wrong, and only a few strangers of the captivity in the right?

With such questions our Nazarites had nothing to do. Their path lay right onward. Should they bow down, and worship an image, in order to avoid the appearance of condemning other people! Assuredly not. And yet, how often are those, who desire to keep a conscience void of offense in the sight of God, condemned for setting themselves up, and judging others! Doubtless, Luther was condemned by many for setting himself up in opposition to the doctors, the cardinals and the pope. Should he, in order to avoid such condemnation, have lived and died in error? Who would say so?

"Ah! but," some will reply, "Luther had to deal with palpable error." So thought Luther; but thousands of learned and eminent men thought otherwise. So also, in the case of "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego," they had to do with positive idolatry; but the whole world differed from them, What then? "We must obey God rather than man." "Let others do as they will; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. If people were to remain in error, and continue to do what they, at least, feel to be wrong, in order to avoid the appearance of judging others, where should we be?

Ah! no; my beloved reader, do you seek to pursue the steady, onward, upward path of pure and elevated discipleship. And, whether or not you, thereby, condemn others, is no concern of yours. "CEASE TO DO EVIL." This is the first thing for the true disciple to do. When he has yielded obedience to this golden precept, he may expect to "learn to do well," "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." When God speaks, I am not to turn round, to see how my obedience to His voice will affect my neighbors, or, to consider, what they will think about me. When the voice of the risen and glorified Jesus fell upon the ear of the prostrate Saul of Tarsus, he did not begin to inquire, what the chief priest and Pharisees would think of him, were he to obey. Surely not. "Immediately," he says, "I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1:16.) "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19.) This is the true spirit and principle of discipleship. "Give glory to God, before he cause darkness, and your feet stumble

upon the dark mountains." Nothing can be more dangerous, than to hesitate, when divine light shines upon the path. If you do not act upon the light, when you get it, you will, assuredly, be involved in thick darkness., Hence, therefore, as another has said, "Never go before your faith, nor lag behind your conscience."

But, we have said, if our Nazarites refused to bow before the king's image, they had to encounter the king's rage, and the king's furnace. For all this they were, by the grace of God, prepared: their Nazariteship was a real tiling; they were ready to suffer the loss of all things, and even life itself, in defense of the true worship of the God of Israel. "They worshipped and served their own God," not merely beneath the peaceful vine and fig-tree in the land of Canaan, but in the very face of "a burning fiery furnace." They acknowledged Jehovah, not merely in the midst of a congregation of true worshippers, but in the presence of an opposing world. Theirs was a true discipleship in an evil day. They loved the Lord; and, therefore, for His sake, they abstained from the king's luxuries; they withstood the king's rage; and they endured the king's furnace.

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." This was the language of men who knew whose they were, and where they were-of men. who had calmly and deliberately counted the cost-of men to whom the Lord was everything, the world nothing. All that the world could offer, together with life itself, was at stake; but what of that? "They endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Eternal glory lay before them; and they were quite prepared to reach that glory by a fiery pathway. God can take His servants to heaven by a chariot of fire, or by a furnace of fire, as seems good to Him, Whatever be the mode of going, it is well to get there.

But, could not the Lord have preserved. His beloved servants from being cast into the furnace? No doubt. This would have been but a very small matter to Him. He did not, however, do so: it was His will that the faith of His servants should be put to the test-should be tried in the furnace-should be passed through the most searching crucible, in order that it "might be found to praise and honor and glory." Is it because the re-finer sets no value on the wedge of gold, that he puts it into the furnace? No; but because he does. And, as some one has beautifully remarked, "his object is not merely to remove the dross, but to brighten the metal."

It is very evident that, had the Lord, by an act of power, kept His servants out of the furnace, there would have been less glory to Him, and, as a consequence, less blessing to them. It was far better to have His presence and sympathy in the furnace, than His power to keep them out of it. What glory to Him in this! And what unspeakable privilege to them! The Lord went down and walked with His Nazarites in the furnace into which their faithfulness had brought them. They had walked with God in the king's palace; and God walked with them in the king's furnace. This was the most elevated moment in the entire career of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. How little had the king imagined the lofty position in which he was placing the objects of his rage and fury! Every eye was turned from the great image of gold, to gaze, in astonishment, upon the three captives. What could it mean? "Three men bound!" "Four men loose!" Could it be real? Was the furnace real? Alas! "the most mighty men in the king's army" had proved it to be real. And, had

Nebuchadnezzar's image been cast into it, it would have proved its reality also. There was no material for the skeptic or the infidel to work upon. It was a real furnace, and a real flame, and the "three men" were "bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats and their other garments." All was reality.

But there was a deeper reality: God was there. This changed everything: it "changed the king's word"- changed the furnace into a place of high and holy fellow-ship-changed Nebuchadnezzar's bondsmen into God's free men.

God was there! There, in His power, to write contempt upon all man's opposition; there, in His deep and tender sympathy with His tried and faithful servants; there, in His matchless grace, to set the captives free, and to lead the hearts of His Nazarites into that deep fellowship with Himself for which they so ardently thirsted.

And, my beloved reader, is it not worth passing through a fiery furnace to enjoy a little more of the presence of Christ, and the sympathy of His loving heart? Are not fetters, with Christ, better than jewels without Him? Is not a furnace where He is, better than a palace where, He is not? Nature says, "No!" Faith says, "Yes!"

It is well to bear in mind, that this is not the day of Christ's power; but it is the day of His sympathy. When passing through the deep waters of affliction, the heart may, at times feel disposed to ask, "Why does not the Lord display His power, and deliver me?" The answer is, This is not the day of His power. He could avoid that sickness-He could remove that difficulty-He could take off that pressure-He could prevent that catastrophe-He could preserve that beloved and fondly cherished object from the cold grasp of death. But, instead of putting forth His power to deliver, He allows things to run their course, and pours His own sweet sympathy into the oppressed and riven heart, in such a way as to elicit the acknowledgment, that we would not, for worlds, have missed the trial, because of the abundance of the consolation.

Such, my reader, is the manner of our Jesus, just now. By and by, He will display His power; He will come forth as the Rider on the white horse; He will unsheath His sword; He will make bare His arm; He will avenge His people, and right their wrongs forever. But now, His sword is sheathed, His arm covered. This is the time for making known the deep love of His heart, not the power of His arm, nor the sharpness of His sword. Are you satisfied to have it so? Is Christ's sympathy enough for your heart, even amid the keenest sorrow, and the most intense affliction? The restless heart, the impatient spirit, the unmortified will, would lead one to long for escape from the trial, the difficulty, or the pressure; but this would never do. It would involve incalculable loss. We must pass from form to form in the school; but the Master accompanies us, and the light of His countenance, and the tender sympathy of His heart, sustain us under the most severe exercises.

And, then, see what glory redounds to the name of the Lord, when His people are enabled, by His grace, to pass, triumphantly, through a trial! Read Dan. 3:26-28, and say where you could find richer or rarer fruits of a faithful discipleship. The king and all his nobles, who, just before, had been wholly engrossed with the bewitching music and the false worship, are now occupied with the amazing fact, that the fire, which had slain the mighty men, had taken no effect whatever upon the worshippers of the true God, save to consume their fetters and let them walk free, in company with the Son of God. " Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace,

and spake and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, YE SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them."

Here, then, was a noble testimony-such a testimony as would never have been rendered, had the Lord, by a mere act of power, preserved His servants from being cast into the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar was furnished with a striking proof that his furnace was no more to be dreaded than his image was to be worshipped by " the servants of the most high God." In a word, the enemy was confounded; God was glorified; and His dear servants brought forth unscathed from " the burning fiery furnace. Precious fruits, these, of a faithful Nazariteship.

And, observe, further, the honor put upon our Nazarites. " Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego." Their names are intimately associated with the God of Israel. This was a high honor. They had identified themselves with the true God when it was a matter of life and death to do so; and, therefore, the true God identified Himself with them, and led them forth into a large and wealthy place. He set their feet upon a rock, and lifted their heads up above their enemies round about them. How true it is, that, " them that honor me I will honor!" And it is equally true, that, " they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30).

My beloved reader, have you found settled, divine peace for your guilty conscience, in the perfected atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you simply taken God at His word? Have you set to your seal that God is true? If so, you are a Child of God; your sins are all forgiven, and you are accepted as righteous in Christ; heaven, with all its untold glories, is before you; you are as sure of being in the glory as Christ Himself, inasmuch as you are united to Him.

Thus, everything is settled for you, for time and eternity, according to the very utmost desire of your heart. Your need is met-your guilt removed- your peace established-your title sure. You have naught to do for yourself. All is divinely finished.

What remains? Just this: LIVE FOR CHRIST! You are left here, for "a little while," to occupy for Him, and wait for His appearing. Oh I seek to be faithful to your blessed Master. Be not discouraged by the fragmentary state of everything around you. Let the case of Daniel and his honored companions encourage your heart to seek after an elevated course here below. It is your privilege to enjoy as much of companionship with the blessed Lord Jesus, as if you were cast amid the palmy days of apostolic testimony.

May the Holy Ghost enable the writer and the reader of these lines to drink into the spirit-walk in the foot-steps-manifest the graces-and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ! C. H. NI.

Dying to Death

To a believer, death (his own death) is now, in point of fact, "dying to death"-the ceasing to have to do with dying." I am quite aware that this statement may be startling, at first sight, to some-perhaps to many. But is it not Truth?

Though I am a believer, yet have I now, and so shall I have, all through my pilgrim-life, the law of sin and death in my members; I have, therefore, to die daily; again, death, moral death, is reigning in the world all around me, and the only way in which I can give a testimony of life, eternal life, here, will also be found to be inseparable from dying daily: but that which men call death-the last act, of my mortal life-is really the act in which I cease forever from all that is mortal; in which I taste for the first time without contact with death-eternal life.

When a Stephen, when a Paul, died, he (in and by his death) ceased, and forever ceased-1st, from all connection with the law of sin and death in his members; and, 2ndly, from the needs-be of dying daily,-because he ceased from that which, in his body and in the circumstances of the earth, rendered it impossible for eternal life to shine out of him without his dying daily.

As a believer, I am reckoned of God, and reckon myself to have been-and to be-crucified together with the Christ: that is, He in grace bore, in my stead, upon the cross, the whole judgment which was justly due to me as the penalty of my sin and of my sins. "Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Now this new life 'is essentially (that is, in its very self and nature it is) a new thing. It has a world and circumstances proper to it; but the source and center of them, each and all, is the Christ of God; and He is not now in this world. While I am here below, this new life may have communion with Christ who is in God, and it may count upon the presence and guardian care of God the Holy Ghost; and it certainly is cared for by the Christ, and preserved by the Holy Ghost: yet is it in near contact with all that is in the earthen vessel in which it now is, and that earthen vessel is also in a world of iniquity. But the moment at which the tie that binds me (who am a new creature in Christ-one that is born of an incorruptible seed) to the earthen vessel is dissolved, all this connection with weakness, and sin, and sorrow, ceases at once, ceases forever; and, at once, absent from the body I am present with the Lord; and to depart and 'be with the Christ is far better. This divine act, so full of grace, of dissolving the tie which binds one that is a new creature in Christ Jesus, which links him to that which is not alive in him, is it "the wages of sin?" By no means: so far from being the wages of sin and the expression of part of the actions of him that has the power of death, that is the devil, it is an act of Christ; and His power to do it is most emphatically one of the first early fruits of the complete victory of Him who, as the seed of the woman, found death (not as did Adam in the path of disobedience, but) in the path of an unparalleled obedience, and toward the very terminus of that part of the path where humiliation was to cease. To man, it is appointed once to die, and [long] after that the judgment: but in contrast to this, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. After being crucified, He was, indeed, dead and buried: but on the third day He arose again, -showed Himself on earth, and then

ascended up to heaven, and, when once seated there in heaven, then could He show forth to and in His people the fruits of His victory over Satan, and death, and the grave.

Christ ascended, and in glory with God and the Father, was Himself the proof of God's mercy and compassion; of the complete and finished salvation which was in Him: in Him life was found, and from Him the Holy Ghost came down to form and sustain eternal life, and a testimony in and by those that believed in Him; to whom He had given a conscience made perfect from all guilt, through the knowledge of Him alive and on the throne. But more than this, life and immortality having been brought to light by the Gospel, the opening of the heavens upon man down here could take place, and the character of the glory which is hereafter to be shown in the heavens could be presented-and more than this too. For if the humiliation part of the Christ's course was ended, and if He had in heaven, to fill up, in patient trust in God, a period of waiting until the time should be come for His taking His Power and reigning, not only is the believer taught to fill up that which remains behind of the sufferings of Christ for His body's sake,-still looking onward, that if so be we suffer with Him we may also be glorified together-but also much and most blessed truth has been revealed to him, about the blessedness of being absent from the body and present with the Lord.

When death was announced as the wages of sin, there was no eternal incorruptible seed in man: moral death in disobedience; death of the body in the separation of the soul to go into an unseen world, and the body to return to dust; and the second death of the lake of fire and brimstone prepared for the devil and his angels - were all before man. Not understood by man, as they may be now understood; not set forth clearly by God, as they now are set forth; though ever, from the beginning, presented more or less clearly by Him, as a God of righteous judgment and a just Judge. But not until the Son of man was glorified, seated as Son of man in the glory which he had had with the Father ere ever the world was, were life and immortality brought to light. That which makes the essential difference to us in handling our subject was, until then, wrapped up in a thicker cover than covered any part of the most holy of the tabernacle furniture - the curtain that hindered the light shining out, or man's eye looking in or seeing it, was thicker than the veil of the temple which was rent at the death of Christ. Who can be thankful enough for the actual fact of the Son of man being in heaven? He is there - personally; and He makes all sure for us. From Him descends to us the light of knowledge that He is there; all the instruction, too, which we have as to the manner and kind of blessing which is ours in Him, has come down from Him; from Him, too, we have learned about suffering now - the dying daily to self and sin and the world, even as, hereafter, we are to be in the glory which is reserved for Him: from Him, too, has descended to us the knowledge of what we are as new creatures in Christ Jesus, and how it is reserved for Him to change these bodies of humiliation, and to fashion them like unto His own body of glory, by the mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself; and, before that hour come, how it is His, according to the power that pertains to Him alone, to loose and gather up to Himself that new man that He has formed in us, and thus to give us to taste, as then fully freed forever from all that is mortal, to taste in spirit, in His presence, before the mortal body shall have put on immortality, and before this corruptible body shall have put on incorruptibility - to taste, I say, the sweetness of being with the Lord."

I know nothing that shows out more simply the divine and eternal reality of what Christ does for a poor sinner that believes in Him, than that which thus comes out to light when the tabernacle is

thus left. It seems almost as if it were needful for the glory of Christ, that what He has given to us should be thus thrown out in relief. There is something in man, as a believer, which was not in Adam when first created; there is a direct contrast between its nature and the state of all that is in me and around: Satan has not power over it; the corrupter can-not corrupt the incorruptible seed. Liar and destroyer that he is, and having the power of death as the devil may have, yet could he not touch Job's bodily life, nor a hair of his head, without permission. This tabernacle of my body will not drop, nor shall I get away from it one moment before my Lord appoints: but whether it be burnt in the flames in. martyrdom or nailed. to a cross, and there and so the cord that binds me to the body be broken roughly, or whether the bond that ties the bird to the open cage be dissolved in some more gentle way, the dissolution of the tie is not the dissolution of anything immortal, but of that which is mortal. And if it ever take place (and it will never take place if Christ come in my mortal days), then it takes place under the hand and by the act of Christ Himself, who then and there will free me, completely and forever, from all that is now mortal in me and in my circumstances, and He will use me as one of those blessed proofs of the entirely new order of blessing which He, as Redeemer, has introduced. He can sow the body in corruption until the hour of His appearing in glory, and realize to myself in soul and spirit what the power and what the blessedness of being absent from the body and present with the Lord: positive and real and unalloyed blessing with Himself; though not perfected as to measure until the body be raised.

Saul was once dead in trespasses and sins, and had an experience accordingly. When Christ revealed Himself to him, and gave him the new name of Paul, he became alive in Christ Jesus, and had the joy (earthen vessel as he was still in himself) of Christ in him the hope of glory: but then his experience, though gladsome in spirit on the heavenly side, was one of death and resurrection, so far as himself and his service lay in the wilderness. Now he is out of the precincts of death altogether; the death of his body let him go free from death, completely and forever; Christ took him away, gathered him up, to be present with the Lord. And there above with Christ he now waits, until Christ shall rise up, and. shall call up out of the graves the bodies of those that believed in

Him; and then shall Paul, not as now, absent from the body and present with the Lord (a most anomalous state, which nothing can explain but the abnormal state of the Son of man upon the Father's throne - in patient trust, waiting for the time of His manifestation in glory), but clothed upon with a glorified human body, have the full joy and glory to which redeeming love has called him.

Let the reader mark these four states, and four experiences of Paul; and he will certainly see, that in entering upon the third of them, Paul left mortality and all that was mortal (whether death-bearing, or capable of death, be the sense of mortal) far behind him. And is it not clear, that the power to quit the mortal and to enter into the pure regions of divine immortality was not in Paul? and certainly it was not in Satan's hand or heart to give:-and the more so, because the whole being of Paul-body, soul, and spirit - went not into the place destined for it, in the new heavens; but part was left to be sown in corruption, watched over and guarded by Christ; and part taken abnormally into the presence of the Lord Jesus, in His abnormal anomalous position, which, in grace, He holds in the protracted period between the time of His suffering and the time of His reigning.

'Tis a field of pure light: cloud, is there none in it; and no dark spot either is there in this region of light; but 'tis a field which is open to faith alone; naught but faith can visit it; no experience of what was, or is, merely human (as in Eden's garden or in man's nature) can serve or help in the study of this field: faith, and the Word of God alone, can teach us what lies in it.

I need not say, that until the death and resurrection of the blessed Lord, with all the wondrous results thereof, are known, the conscience can never be free as to the fear of death; nor can the power be possessed of entering upon any truth whatever; for our alone power is that of the Spirit of God (imagination of man, and human imaginings have no place in God's school, save to be crucified) by which truth can be viewed and profited from.

But, again, the death and resurrection of Christ may be known, and peace in the conscience be known, and the liberty of the sons of God, individually; and yet the soul may not have its proper joy in the thought of the individual happiness which is near to it all through its pilgrimage, in this vision of the glory and of the communicable blessing which is now already Christ's, as He waits in the Majesty of the Highest for the kingdom, and thence serves His people down here.

The soul has individually to get settled itself, as to the peace and acceptance with God, through Christ crucified and risen from the dead. When Christ rises up from God's right hand, all that are on the earth of His shall rise up together en masse to meet Him: in that meeting there will be individual experience of His presence, of course; but the thought of being one in a collective crowd, brings in thoughts which modify that of one's own self meeting Him; and to a mind little exercised in truth, the communion in glory may have as wrong a place as the communion of saints upon earth has with some. But the intermediate stage is one in which the individuality of each stands out most conspicuously; this is happy, and profitable, and blessed.

Christ alive, and as He now is, and occupied with His people as individuals as well as collectively, and able and ready now to give to me, individually, this blessed taste of being absent from the body and present with Himself, is no more inconsistent with hope in me as to the kingdom and glory, than was His own perfect anticipation of His present position in heaven inconsistent with His own perfect onward bent in mind and action, to the crushing of the head of the serpent, and to the time and act of putting down the last of all enemies under feet. In us, truly, that hope, that purpose, had to be formed. To Him 'twas, from the first, a fixed purpose. In us, too, the beginning of the ending had to be revealed and formed; viz., His forming in the heavens His millennial court, at the beginning and not ending of His reigning. But, while these things give us the all-important placings of the great and grand parts of redemption-glory, they in no way militate or interfere with the flowings of His individual love, as He now is, to us as individuals: nor to a well-taught mind will the blaze of light and glory, that marks the display of the Christ in the heavens and over the earth, veil that love which-till the time of His taking His own in the heaven comes-has made Him mindful of the individual people of His love, who, in succeeding generations, from the time of Stephen onwards, have been housed, one after the other, when their work was done, and made to know the blessedness of that anomalous absent from the body and present with the Lord, which is FAR better."

Some may say, "I wait for the Lord to come and not for death:" so, truly, say I. But that IS NOT the question; nor is the statement thus made the real expression of what is in the mind of the maker, at least, in many cases. That for which Christ waits, the Spirit and the Bride of Christ also wait; and

as the Spirit and the Bride say " Come:" so does He, most surely, say: " Behold, I come quickly." But that is not the least in question. I wait for Christ until He comes. But the question is (that which some overlook). Am I to wait for His coming here in the wilderness; or am I, absent from the body and present with the Lord, there to wait for His coming?

Again, the statement is often the expression of will, human will; and, often, is the cover of the thought of having a right of our own, and of not being, solely and altogether, the right and property of another. Now, blessed be God, we are bought with a price; we are not our own. To the Spirit that leads us, our likings (ac-cording to nature and flesh) are not what regulates in any way, but the work of God and the glory of Christ.

When the work of God and the glory of Christ, in our course here below are answered-the love, divine and human, of Christ wills to have us with Himself. And He is worthy to have His pleasure, in God's appointed pathway for us, made good. We are not our own, but bought with a price-even the costly price of His most precious blood. Blessed be God, that He confers not with our flesh, but takes His own course and way of blessing; yet making us willing in the day of His power I And surely the blessed fullness and freshness of His love to us, individually; who delights in us as His own, as given to Him by His Father - may well quicken our affections and desires to hear His voice calling us, when so He wills, home to Himself.

To conclude; it is Christ, personally, who has loved me and called me, as an individual, that I should form a needed part in that glory which God, in His love, has provided for Him. But let that glory be what it may-an inheritance incorruptible, or the presentation of the church as a glorious church-I am bold to say, " I love my Lord better than the inheritance, better than the glitter of all the glory." Yea, when I think even of the many sons presented in the Father's house, or of the presentation of the Bride-the glory has (if one may so say) no glory to my heart in comparison with the joy of Christ's heart, through the joy of His Father in Himself, at the bringing of the sons to glory; and is not the church's blessing this, that He presents her to Himself a glorious church, &c. I do not want (so to speak) the house without the Father and the Son in it. What would it, or the glory of the city, be to me without them? I love the Father and the Son, in personal presence, anywhere, better than their circumstances. Rather would I have Egypt's cruel bondage with Christ for my comfort under it, than all the brightest scenes in Canaan without Himself. 'Tis Himself which is my joy far above the Glory. Will not every renewed heart say, Amen, and Amen!?

Notes on Ephesians 6:10-20

" Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." Marvelous things had the Apostle Paul been opening up in his epistle to his beloved Ephesians. Rich things in divine counsels (chap. 1); marvelous ways in which those counsels were made good to men upon earth (chap. 2); wonders that had never been shown till then about the Son of God, and the mystery (chap. 3); blessed and precious truths about the Church as to that which is true of it in itself,-as to the walk that became it,-as to the way that, even in its earthly relationship here below, it had blessed connections with Him that is in heaven (chap. 4-6);-but all this leads on to an end, to a present end-to a finally, as here given to us. And this "finally" is, I think, the present end of the revelation to us of all those counsels, ways, wonders, blessings, and privileges which have been spoken of before.

"Be strong in the Lord." The doctrine of "the Lord," as here introduced, leads us naturally back to the first chapter. There we read how the God of our Lord Jesus Christ set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. That is, as I judge, it is the person of the Lord rather than His lordship to which we are turned. The person of the Lord Himself and our association with it-rather than the sphere in which His title of Lordship is now, or at any time here-after, owned and enforced. The reference does not lead me then so much to the doctrine of the Lordship of Jesus as to that of the mystery of the Lord Jesus as Head of the body which is the church.

He is Lord, Lord of all; but we have a special and a most peculiar connection with Himself as such; we are in Him, members of that body of which He is Head:- and we are to be strong in Him, the Lord, and in the power of His might. His lordship is His title to claim all things. He is over all. That we own: He is Lord; and we are His servants. This is fully opened out to us in Phil. 2 But Be who is Lord over all is Jesus, who is Head of the body, the church; and we are in Him, the Christ, and are to be strong in Him. As vitally one with Him, we may use His strength, and the power of His might: this is something more than merely owning that He has right and title to all, and that we are His servants, sustained, sheltered, and guided and honored by Him, in His gracious love, as we may be and are.

Fellowship in life, and in the privileges of the Lord, enables us to be strong in Him, and in the power of His might, which is, as I have said, far more than the privilege of knowing and owning that He is by right, Lord of all; and, in fact, our Lord, and that we are, in practice, His servants. The power of His might is ours,-for it has laid hold of us,-and we are so in Him, whose it is, that we can use it-it is a spring that is full and ever flowing. Next comes the word:-

" Put on the whole armor of God;" that is-the panoply or complete suit of armor of God's providing. The text then proceeds to show, what is the nature of the conflict in which the soldier is here supposed to be engaged:-" that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we

wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to with-stand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore," &c.

From the exhortations to-"put on the panoply of God" (ver. 11); to " take unto you the panoply of God" (ver. 13), (exhortations which are addressed to those only who are already Christians) it is clear that one may be a Christian without having as yet put on,-taken to one-self-the said panoply at all. And the same truth is evidenced by the fact, that, even in Paul's day, there were some in whom that which was the end of this exhortation never was made good. Yes: alas! as now there are many-so then, in Paul's day, there were also some-of whom it would not have been truth to say they have withstood the wiles of the devil-they have withstood and stand fast.

The "wiles of the devil," or the systematic workings of the false accuser (as it might be rendered literally) bring before us cunning deceptions of one who is an unscrupulous accuser. Other characters he has also, and other -ways of working:-but, here, this is the character we have to be guarded against, and these are the ways in which he acts.

When Jehovah gave promise to Israel of a land flowing with milk and honey-that land was possessed by nations strong and mighty-and Israel had, after crossing Jordan, to take possession of that land, and of those cities. They were not to fight in their own strength, nor go their own way to work,-Jehovah was their King and Leader; and the battle against the uncircumcised was His. What they had to do was to keep themselves pure from every accursed thing; and, in the spirit of implicit obedience to their God, always to be strong, and of a good courage. The battle was the Lord's. But they had to fight aggressively; and, at times, sore was the conflict through which Israel had to pass with the nations which had possession of the land before them. Though Israel failed entirely, and so gat not the land in possession,-yet Israel shall eventually, upon the ground of the faithfulness and obedience of their King, yet come into possession of that land.

But the Lord Jesus Christ has sat down in heaven, at the right hand of God, and been owned as Head of His body, the Church. In Him we are possessed of all things. In Him we stand-stand forever before God. The work is done. The light of a risen and of an ascended Christ has shined into our hearts to make this good for us, to assure us of this. Yet, is there a trial of our faith. And, while we are here below, there are, and will be, exercises which cannot be avoided by us. There are on high powers of spiritual wickedness-there is one there that accuseth day and night-and he has those that are his-principalities and powers, (chiefs and authorities)-the order-holders of the darkness of this world,-the spiritual powers of wickedness.

The question here is not as to what makes me a Christian; nor what are the privileges and blessings of being a Christian;-but, this rather, What is the conflict in which the consistent Christian is sure to find himself engaged? I say sure. For as sure as Christ sits in patience at God's right hand on high, waiting-so sure is conflict to them that are His, while they remain outside the veil. He, inside, is faithful to God and faithful to those over whom God has set Him: may we, outside, be faithful to God and to Him whom God has set over us, and then conflict must be ours. It appears, then, that there are on high certain wicked spiritual beings who have the rule over wickedness in this world, and that the Christian soldier cannot escape from the power of the assaults of these without the aid of the armor of God.

This will, upon further consideration, I think, show (what we hardly think of enough, namely), that if there are lusts which we do not judge, the enemy can make any of us Christians to appear like one of his own people, and so find ground for accusing us on high.

It does not require much insight into the false worship of the heathen, to see how their gods were, after all, but deified carnal lusts. The Jupiter and the Juno, the Minerva and the Venus, etc., etc., of the ancients were nothing more than this.

There are testimonies for the one true God the Creator and Provider-the wide world over. But men do not like Him or His testimonies.

" That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, (even) His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified (Him) not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.... who changed the truth of God into a lie, and served and worshipped the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen..... And, even as they did not like to retain God in (their) knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:19-28).

It seems to me to be impossible to read this passage (and such portions as Psa. 19, Matt. 5:45, Acts 17:24-31) without seeing that God has left a testimony for and of Himself upon creation, and in His dealings with man since the deluge, which is enough to condemn man as to all his religiousness, and as to all his self-invented religions. And these testimonies for and of God cannot be obliterated. Alas! neither can the record of the principles and the conduct of those who acted independently of them be effaced.

When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God; they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and, even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.

The gods of mythology were but imbecile personifications of qualities which fallen man admired: patrons of lusts, such as the heart and mind of man, with his back turned upon the God of light, could, in his own heart, imagine, that, if multiplied, they would satisfy himself. The only ground for this, his vain imagining, that can be formed, is the self-love which suggests that that which proceeds from our much-loved selves must be good for us. But God had never made man's belly to be satisfied with the husks which the swine do eat. Man's heart and mind were made by God to find in Himself and in His service their refreshment, aliment, and strength. It was not on that side that God would, or with any moral propriety could, turn from the natural and established order of things. He could not meet lusts, though He could and would meet guilt, misery, and sin.

But these gods of old were none of them pictured as having even a single trait of Deity, as a Christian has been taught it. There was no proper eternity connected with them-no omniscience-no omnipotence-no moral character-no, not so much as is found even in a good man. But abominable passions and lusts in all of them, and all subject to Fate.

The gods of the heathen now-a-days are no better: gods that may be whipped, and gods whose pictures, according to the accounts given by their worshippers, are more like him that was a murderer and a liar from the beginning, than aught else. And how could it be other-wise. When fallen man sets to to make for himself a god, he is out of his own place, and human wisdom and energy can do no more here than they could if man attempted to add new suns and moons to the firmament. What divine glory could there be in the gods which the fathers served that were on the other side of the flood? (Josh. 24:15). What the worthiness of all the strange gods which Jacob hid under the oak in Shechem (Gen. 35:4), in order that God, the living God, might not see them? What the value of all the gods of Egypt (Ex. 12:12), against whom the Lord did execute judgment? And, alas! what a picture of man's folly does the first commandment contain (chap. 20, ver. 4-5)! And the molten calf (chap. 30), with Israel's burst of joy, "These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!" How does it all-as well as their two calves afterward, with their tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god Remphan-how does it all proclaim the utter madness and folly of man as to God, when he acts for and from himself, and is not guided by revelation. When man makes a god for himself, whence can he draw his pattern, save from creation around him; from his own imaginings, or from Satan? God, the true God, cannot be the wisdom or power to aid man thus to dishonor Him, and to degrade himself. In point of fact, man has always drawn base picturings for his gods, from the cravings of his own desires and will; and, I doubt not but that the enemy has been constantly there to aid him in so doing. What suits his purpose better than that man should deify his love of wealth (or covetousness)-his love of power-his love of fleshly gratification, than by making gods for them in the heavens: thus man dishonors the true God, degrades himself by deifying his own lusts and passions, and puts himself, in spirit, under the power of Satan. He has made a religion of his own lusts and passions, and has bound himself with it. The words, " worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed forever " (Rom. 1:25): " and whose god (is their) belly, and (whose) glory (is) in their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 3:19), are remarkable.

That evil spirits have sway over men, there can be no doubt: the words "The rulers of the darkness of this world" (21, 22), and " Ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. (chap. 2 ver. 2), would suffice to prove it; but the truth is proved by passages innumerable besides these.

And the way, too, these enemies act upon man, is shown (chap. 2 ver. 3): " Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others." That is-they act through the lust of the flesh, leading us to fulfill the desires of the flesh and the mind.

It is a great truth that Satan could get no hold of our blessed Lord, because He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and had a will and purpose to be obedient in all things. And when led up to be tempted of Satan in the wilderness, this was fully evidenced. We, on the contrary, have, besides the new nature, the old one too; and we need to be put on our guard, lest the enemy should act upon it in its deceitful lusts and passions, and so lead us off our high and holy ground of being, and being able to show that we are in the Lord, and have the power of His might.

It may be said: " But in Christendom we have no false Gods, which are deifications of evil human passions." Be it so. Yet this same principle may be present, only a little more artfully covered over. It has been said, that the Papal system is so arranged, that you may be and do anything you please in it, if you will but belong to it. I know not how far this is true; but, certainly, in the variety of its orders and classes, as presented, there does seem a path prepared for all the various conceits and fancies of the fallen human mind. In principle, the thing is clearly done in the Papal system: for the poor, fallen, though blessed, Virgin Mary, is set, by, that system, as the person to whose human affections we can appeal-whose human affections and thoughts sway the Lord Jesus and God. In the patron saints, too, and the position in which a devout Romanist finds himself before them, the same may be seen. And have we not, nearer home, all around us, systems of religion so framed as to shut out the free influence of God's truth, and to hinder and to prevent the Spirit. The national system is the sanction of this world in every way. Membership with it, and separation from the world, cannot possibly co-exist. The most that a member of it can do, is to judge his own heart and mind, and see that inwardly he does not love too much that world which, though it crucified Christ, is an integral part of His church. I know that dissent is upon a narrower, more separative, principle; but, practically, it is based upon the world, and shuts out the truth of God's church and of the Spirit, and sanctions this present evil world. I do not speak of what these Protestant systems were at the first, when the fresh energy of the Spirit of God was at work; but what they have now practically become in man's hand.

Again: as to the ruling of the darkness of this world; it is said to be under these wicked spirits who are on high. If I look at nations, as contrasted one with another, and at their chief cities, not in the point of Christlessness and Godlessness, in which, as being of this present evil world, they have a common agreement; but, as contrasted one with the other, I seem to learn something which is in accordance with our subject. There are such things as national peculiarities. A mass of Italians, and a mass of French, and a mass of English, would require very different modes of handling to rouse them up, and to work them. And this, not only because of the present differences of their present respective circumstances, but because also of constitutional difference, and difference of tastes.

If there be an evil spirit that watches over martial glory, one can well suppose it to be the one whom the French speak as (the deification of their own pride) "La gloire." If there be one evil spirit more than another that watches over and cherishes commerce, one can well suppose it to be the one of whom the English speak (embodiment of their love of money), as commercial prosperity. Petersburg, Rome, Paris, London, may each have its own distinctive peculiar trait. Each has one most surely; and how are these connected. On the one hand, with the lust of the flesh and mind of the citizens of these places; and, on the other, with distinctive powers of darkness on high. The darkness of the order of the world in France has been ruled by Glory; and the darkness of the world in England has been ruled by Commercial Prosperity. An idea, or, some one that presented an idea has ruled Russia since the days of Peter the Great, and, perhaps, will rule it still onwards; for He that marked, in prophetic history, a sphere for the King of the North, for Gog and for Magog, for Tubal and Meshech, is above all the powers of darkness; and the Prince of the kingdom of Persia, who withstood Daniel. (chap. 10 ver. 13) has his counterpart in the North; and yet, opposing as he may be, he cannot prevent all things subserving God's counsels.

Now, the exhortation to us is to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." To stand upon the defensive, as being in Christ; and, when attacked, to stand fast, to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

Now, in order to do this the first of all things is to have the affections of my heart, and the thoughts of my mind in the light. That so everything that rises may be measured and judged ere it be accredited. Observe it: the issues from, the heart and mind have to be judged. The entire badness of the flesh in itself has been taken for granted; the world has been stamped as the scene of the adversary's power; the new man has been created, and all its springs are from above. But as standing down here upon earth, the soldiers of the Lord, the issues of our hearts and minds have to be judged.

If I stand fast in the Lord and use the power of his might-I know where, and what, and who I am as so placed, and what manner of life here below it is which becomes such a one. The issues from heart and mind are not to be of the flesh, and according to the world and the spirit of darkness, but of the Holy Spirit and according to the truth. Nothing can guard my heart and mind as a child of God, and a member of Christ, but the indwelling of that truth in my soul, by the Spirit of God, which has made me such.

We see then that we have a conflict -have to wrestle; that there is methodical order in him against whom we have to wrestle; accusation is his mode of work-as well as wrestling. Accusation had to be met against Israel in the days of Balaam (Num. 22-24), against Job in his days-against saints of another class, too (Rev. 12). All that the adversary can find in that which issues from a heavenly member of a risen Christ which is not according to the believer's place in the Lord, and according to the power of His might--becomes the ground of accusation. The effort on the enemy's part is, to stir up the old man in us, to get us occupied with it, to lead us to act upon it; and, to do this, he tries to hide the truth from us, to keep us from it, from living upon it. Our wrestling is to abide in the Lord and in the power of His might. We see, too, that there is a connection between powers of darkness on high and the order-holders of the darkness of this age. But the darkness of this age is but the sanctioned systematized wickedness of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life-systematized by certain principalities and powers, and sanctioned by men.

And who but God can cause Christ to dwell thus in our hearts by faith, the center of all our thoughts and desires, the one from whom we have the Spirit abiding, and hidden in whom we are the subjects of the action of the Spirit who worketh in us.

According to the measure which the saint has of the preciousness of this epistle to the Ephesians, will be his measure of the importance attached to this walk. The glory and honor of God in the Lord Jesus Christ are deeply concerned in our walk down here. It was, if I may so say, the practical obedience of the Ephesians, which was the open window that let all the flood of light about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, shine in. God and the Father in all the bright counsels and plans about His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and the heavenly bride, never so revealed Himself to a disobedient and gainsaying people. For, while the obedience in us Christians is the occasion of receiving fuller light, the goodness of God himself is the alone cause of the revelation of Himself. What a contrast, in this respect, between this epistle, in which the full unhindered play of God's truth and light and love is found, and the first epistle to the Corinthians, where fleshly disorder had to be corrected, or the epistle to the Galatians, in writing which Paul's spirit seems to

have been straitened in him through the darkness among them, which had led them to grope after another foundation than Christ, and another energy than the Holy Ghost. The testimonies for God of the two masses, that at Ephesus and that among the Galatians, how contrasted! And how contrasted, too, (while each was perfect and gracious in its place), the two letters of Paul to the Ephesians, and Paul to the churches which are in Galatia!

Warfare may, as man speaks, be of two kinds;-it may be offensive, or it may be defensive merely. In the case of Israel it was offensive; for they had to be aggressive on the flesh and blood that were in the land, to drive them out of the Lord's inheritance. For us the warfare, as here presented at least (in other places, where the question is of carrying the testimony forward and planting the truth in parts where it was not before, it may be looked at in another aspect, but here the warfare), is defensive; we are to stand fast, to withstand, and having done all, to stand. For it is not for us to take possession by violence of the heavenly places, much less is it for us to think of ejecting thence the wicked spirits: they will be ejected hereafter, as we are told in the twelfth chapter of the Revelations. The Lord, when He has risen up from the right hand of God, where He now sits, and when they have overtly shown out their nature and works more fully and more openly than they have as yet,-the Lord will drive them out and their places shall be found no more in the heavens. But now we are the objects of assaults from them, and we must be prepared to resist and to wrestle. The call to us here is, not to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. That would suit very well other epistles and places, in which man as a sinner is being treated of; but in this epistle 'tis the Christian as partaker of the new nature, enjoying it and acting in it, which is the subject; and, consistently herewith, not the danger of the flesh of itself breaking loose, is treated of, but the danger of assaults upon it, efforts to stir it up, so as to hinder the right and true display of Christ in us,-efforts by spiritual wickedness on high. That there is that which is common between fallen flesh and blood and these wicked powers has been shown, and may be seen in another way, too, viz., in the different ways in which the evil is met in various epistles. If the evil power of the flesh in itself has to be met, then the cross is thrust before us-we are reckoned to be crucified, dead, and buried, together with Him. But if, on the other hand, as here, the question is of that which ever is on the watch to take occasion of the old nature in us, then the evil principalities, the order-rulers of the darkness of this world; whom Christ has overcome (Col. 2:15), though they are now still found antagonistically agonizing against His glory in us, is referred to. The immense importance of seeing this, may be easily realized by the effects of the revelation to us (in Gen. 3) of a master-mind as the one that ruined man: and by such revelations as are found elsewhere (as in Zech. 3:1,2; and in Job 1 and 2; Matt. 4, &c.) The discovery that it is not merely man, set loose from God through sin, that is wandering, he knows not where, but that there are master-spirits who can play with him, and mislead him by his own lusts and passions-this discovery puts man's position in quite another light to him. And to us it is known, that these regulators for the present of wickedness are all conquered-and are under the power of Him that conquered. Such a thought helps one to cease from oneself, and to look on high, where they, that deal contemptuously enough down here, are seen in their true light; seen too, as not so much our enemies as His; and already, though still allowed to show their active opposition to Him and His glory, they are shown there to be already condemned. Oh, that the glory of God and the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ lay a little nearer to our hearts, were a little more visible in our minds, how would it simplify ten thousand difficulties; how would it set our hearts free and happy, yet in care-fullness and watchfulness too,-lest His name, whom we love, should be blasphemed through us!

The whole context (ver. 10 to 20.) is in character exhortative: therefore, it has to do with practical conduct in us, and so it connects us with the government of God exercised over a people whom He has already saved. Now, as to such, there is a judgment exercised by God according as they fulfill their service or not. The judgment upon the service is not stated here, nor entered into the least, because the Spirit is occupied with the armor, as the provision of love divine for the service.

In handling the various parts of the panoply of God, most writers seem (to me at least), to have taken the subject too abstractedly, and to have viewed the various parts of it too much apart from the light peculiar to the epistle itself. Alas! we are, all, and always, too prone to bring our own thoughts into a text, or to find them in it, than to find and deduce from it that which God has put therein. Truth may be looked at as emanating from God, the expression of certain glory which is in Him-full of privilege and blessing to him that meekly receives it, and it may be looked at as connected with the people to whom it comes according to their needs and wants.

So far as I see, the cloth is shown to us on both its sides in this epistle. What truth more glorious as to God than the revelation of "the church-the fullness of Him that filleth all in all?" That is one side. The other is the suitability of this truth (that "the church is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all,") to carry the believer, who walks in the Spirit, right through the wilderness aright. This armor is but the application to the believer, while in the place of conflict, of the precious truth of the earlier chapters. The girdle of truth; the breast-plate of righteousness; the preparation of the gospel of peace (for the feet); the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation• and the sword of the Spirit; are found in a heavenly Isaac's tent, and nowhere else. We must not treat of them abstractedly, as though they were by origin ours and not God's, nor may we think of the panoply otherwise than as God's panoply for that body which is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. It is a complete suit of armor, and is of God's providing. The figure of "girded loins" to express readiness for, and strength in, service is modern as well as ancient, and quite common in scripture. Truth is the girdle. That is truth, the truth. The truth, too, of the glorious revelation contained in this very epistle is to be our readiness and strength in service. When truth sits close in upon the hidden man of the heart, so it always is. When the gracious, glorious heavenly revelations of this epistle are our girdle, they (not only discover all that in one aspect of it is leanness, our leanness, what else have we of our own, but they) are the power of an entirely new judgment of things; we that are thus girded are the members of the heavenly family of God-Christ is to be the first-born among many brethren. Nothing is more complete strength against the enemy, nothing is a more powerful answer to a lust of the flesh or mind, than the present privilege, calling and hope that belongs to us. Should such a man as I flee? (Neh. 6:11.) Darkness is detected by light; error by truth; truly so: but truth is also the girdle of our loins-that which gives us readiness and strength to meet all the assaults of the foe; to stand in patience and endure the conflict, and to be found in peace when the conflict is over.

We have thoughts and affections, and that, too, as good men, which sometimes need the girdle, that is, we are not always abiding in the light of divine counsel and love (see Paul, 2 Cor. 12). But in the measure in which I act upon the truth of my being a heavenly man, a member of that body of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the glorious Head, a Son of God-in that measure I get a new canon, a new rule of walk; and we have power to walk in it. A perfect rule of walk is quite separable from perfect keeping of that rule of walk in all details. The believer has, and it is a marvelous statement, no less a principle, motive, rule, or end of walk, than had the blessed perfect Son of Man when He

was in the world. This is proved most abundantly by Scripture: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." (See also chap. 17) The Lord's walk was perfect in every detail,-no failure; all perfection. Paul could exhort us to follow him as he followed Christ-but while no other path, or principle, or kind of walk than Christ's was Paul's, or is ours-we do fail; and, practically, our own walk is not perfect. The blessed Lord came forth in His own perfect strength-- though, in servant-character,-obedient unto death, the death of the cross-our standing is in Him who has been crucified, dead, and buried, but is now alive again from the dead. Thus our life is a life of dependence upon Him, but a life which is not other than His own-for He is our life-and it is a life which knows, here below on the earth, no other principle or rule of walk than was His when here below, of complete perfect subjection and obedience. It is clear that the same principle may regulate two minds whose duties and actions will differ, because their positions are different. Implicit obedience is the principle, as much of a lieutenant as of the least sailor-boy in a ship. But the actions and duties of the two differ, because their positions differ. The Son of God was, as Son of man, obedient unto death, the death of the cross, and that too a most peculiar cross; for there He bore our sins in His own body on the tree., I have to stand in the effects of the work which He wrought and accomplished; and to be obedient to God in the path wherein He leads me, as thus saved by grace. Lo! I come to do Thy will oh God-the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it. "If truth is the rule of a heart: error has no power against it; simply because that heart is under the rule of truth, and error is not truth."

The reference to preparedness for service and preparedness to use all the strength which we possess comes naturally before the mention of all armor. "If any man will do His will he shall know, etc." And "thou has a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" teach us, in principle, this. What use is armor to him who does not mean to fight, has no purpose of heart to do the best he can? The girdle, therefore, is named rightly before the rest. With armor or without armor, the girdle has its place and its value.

Clothed with the breastplate of righteousness. If, in the human body, the head be most exposed in conflict (as, indeed, it is); yet, in a soldier, the body is the more likely part to be wounded. For this (as also for the head) there is the suited weapon of defense: the breastplate of righteousness. Upon the force of this righteousness, I would remark, that man-placed upright and able to meet every just claim-in the garden of Eden-has so acted as to betray his inheritance to Satan; he took place under Satan to share his fortunes and lot. But God saw, in the riches of His grace, an alternative open to Him, and that was, that His own Son should redeem the inheritance, and identify the believer with Himself. So the gospel now sets forth.

But, in the wonders of the Way in which God has wrought, His righteousness comes out most marvelously; a righteousness which is the expression of God's just appreciation of, as He counts it, the person and work of the Lord Jesus. His Son came forth as Son of Man, and was rejected by man, by all men, as under Satan. As sin-bearer, He was allowed to bear sin in His own body on the tree. God would show forth what Heavenly mercy and grace could do; and the Son willingly took His part in the work. But it was justice not only to judge the Sin-bearer, but also to honor the Servant (who, though Son had done such service). Now in the expression of that part of the divine justice, Christ not only got a place in heavenly glory, as Son of Man,-but a glory attached to Him in it which identified, divinely and inseparably, with Himself, those that believe in Him. It is most just. For if He bare the penalty of my sins, I should never bear it myself. Yea, and more than this; for, one with Him, I am necessarily accepted in the Beloved. This is my righteousness-divine righteousness. I have a connection, through faith as the means, but in the Spirit, with Christ the Head, which connection demands and secures blessing on me from a righteous God. I am in Him, and am so blessed: graced in the beloved: looked at by God as a member of Christ, as one of that family circle in which He is the First-born among many brethren. Vast is this privilege. But not only is it thus, but further: He is by the Spirit in me. Not two, but one. So that there is a practical consequence attendant upon the blessing, even righteousness and true holiness. The righteousness of the breastplate, what is it, here, but that marvelous blessing of recognized fellowship with Christ the Head, referred to at the close of the first chapter. But if I know that God has made me to be a member of His family, an individual item in the body of which Christ is Head-and that God owns it in heaven (as in chap. 1), and presents it to our faith and intelligence, then, most surely, must I, down here, count myself so too, and practically endure the present consequences of the blessing. I can thus sanction nothing in my walk which would be unworthy of fellowship with Christ in the Spirit.

3. As an effect of this, the feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Christ is my peace before God. He speaks peace to my soul. His word is peace I peace to him that is nigh, and to him that is afar off, too. God is the God of peace. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all."

Faith in a heavenly Christ, glorified on high, gives a peace that passeth all understanding to the soul in the presence of God and man; and a heavenly, spirit-led, Nazarite passes through a desert world with foot unhurt, unweary,-he is withdrawn from minding earthly things by possession of a better portion, he can yield to the worldly that which they seek; and if there is contention, it is for the truth. But I would ask, how far does want of peace, as one passes through the earth, argue and prove the soul to be out of communion with its heavenly stores?

Next comes, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked [one]."

The expression "above all" might, in English, mean either "over all these" (forenamed parts of the armor), or "above all things." In the Greek, it does not mean the latter. It is an expression marking accumulation, addition, besides or in addition to; it might also be rendered with a view to all these, or dependent upon all these. I may remark that there seems to be more of individual energy

marked in, the expression "taking the shield"- in order to meet the fiery darts, than at first sight may appear. Being girt, or having girded oneself, about with truth, and being clothed, or having clothed oneself, with the breastplate, and been shod, or having shod oneself, with the preparation of the gospel of peace-then we have to take up, or take into our own hands, the shield of faith. The expression, "take into your own hands," is correct, because the idea which is sought to be communicated is that of appropriation for personal use; even in order individually to resist the fiery darts, etc. Of shields, there were two, the thureos, or large oblong shield, here referred to; and the aspis, or round shield.

The shield of a faith, which comes in, in addition to girded loins, cuirassed bosom, and shod feet, marks with emphasis [just as does, indeed, the use to which the shield is put] that it is faith exercised during the life of the believer, which is the subject. From the hour that we know that God has given to us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son; from that hour, we know that we live by faith, and that all our life here below is one of death and resurrection: for we have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead. The practical power to do this develops itself as we go on. The babe in Christ has less of it than the young man, and the young man less of it than the father in Christ. Father is not more saved, or more safe, than babe, 'tis clear; but in the practical power of walking by faith, there is growth; and yet all have the power in principle: for other life of Christ is there none other than this life of dependence. Readiness and purpose to serve-full instruction in the fellowship which we have in the righteousness of God in Christ-in principle and in practice-peace of heart, leading to peace of ways, expose us to assaults from the foes of Christ. But he that knows himself to be indeed one with Christ, sees a father's heart glowing in the Father of the Lord Jesus towards himself, he has the secret of shelter for his joy. All divine counsel rolls around Christ. Christ's glory is the end which God proposes. The believer is inseparable from it, and knowing this, has power to receive and ward off the fiery darts of the wicked one. Man's flesh, when at work, is like dough-air rising, ere it is fully leavened. Bubble of paste rises after bubble of paste, and swells and bursts, pouring forth its air. But a believer's heart may be there, and kept there through faith, and then all that is evil in the flesh will be judged in principle, and all practically set aside, with Faith's motto-"Crucified, dead, and buried, together with Christ." The fiery darts of the wicked one are not the belchings forth of the law of sin and death in our members, to which I have adverted. But they are rockets fired at us by the wicked one-which is quite another thing. The law of sin is in my members: if I go into the way of evil, I tempt Satan rather than he tempts me. He may come and tempt me on the principle of the flesh, if I be idle, and go not forth to the war at the time that the King's sons usually go forth. But a fiery dart-a dart carrying fire-is quite another thing to a mere hurt, and it is launched, in the case before us, by the wicked one, and against us. If we may believe some heretics and schismatics, a sudden and bright luminous thought was the beginning of their course. They judged it to be of God. The denial of the grace, or the holiness, or the truth of the Gospel, led others to suppose it was of Satan-a fiery dart-that set them on fire. Blessed be God! He has said whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. The light of heaven has truth, righteousness, and grace always in it. The light of the enemy is often only one element, so exaggerated as to displace the other two: and it has thus proved to be not of God. But practical dependance upon God tries all things, discerns and judges all things: tests all things by its congruity or want of congruity, before God, with Christ. And dependance upon God, the shield of faith, can receive upon it and quench all such fiery darts, be they great, or be they

little. But it needs practical faith to walk thus.

The flesh works most with the carnal Christian. The darts are aimed at the soldier on service.

5.-The next word is- "And receive the helmet of salvation." It is a different word in Greek- "receive", "accept what is offered" (v. 17), from the word "take to yourself" (v. 16). The complete deliverance from evil, and the complete introduction into blessing, seems to me the force, here, of "salvation." According to the epistle before us, both of these are ours already, and known to us as ours; and, as righteousness covers and protects the seat of our affections, so does perfect salvation shelter the head or seat of intelligence and thought. As a man naturally clothes himself in his armor ere he dons the helmet, so also there is spiritual propriety in the place and order in which this truth is here introduced to us. Next, we have-

6.-[And receive] the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

None but God himself can fully appreciate or use perfectly aright the things of God. The Lord Jesus on high applies that sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, to the hearts of heavenly worshippers (Heb. 4.12,13). He uses it for God among the churches, and among them that have an ear to hear (Rev. 2 and 3). To them that are strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, this sword is put into their hands. They need to remember that it is the sword of another, and that they must use it according to His exercise, and under Him: but, like as Goliath's sword was to David, and in an hour of distress he said, "there is none like that; give it me" (1 Sam. 21.9); so is this sword of the Spirit to a believer. It has quite a history of its own; and its being ready provided for his hand is a very history in itself: and to him it is not said, as to David, "If thou wilt take that, take it," but "receive ye the sword of the Spirit."

I should limit my thoughts here by the position in which the epistle views the soldier. In the temptation in the wilderness, the sword of the Spirit which the Captain of Salvation himself used, was used defensively, as parrying the assaults of the adversary, and driving him from the attack. Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be exposed there to the aggressive attacks of the foe. He was there tried in every way, and He was found to be that which He assuredly was, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." But He showed the power of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. "IT IS WRITTEN," was his answer to every assault. He kept the perfect servant-place and character, though He was personally Lord and God. And He there showed the almighty eternal temper of the weapon. Satan can do naught against any one that is sheltered in intelligence, subjection, and obedience to God. If he could, he would be more than God; and God's character would not be that which it is, nor His way such as it is, to honor those that honor Him.

As a man, I may well pray "Lead us not into temptation;" but, as a saint, I may also well say "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). As soldiers of Christ, the Lord's battles are all of them ours; and we have to endure hardness as the good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

May we know how to act in the Lord, and in the power of His might; that so, not our poverty, but the ethereal, divine perfectness of the weapons wherewith we are armed may be made apparent.

7.-Lastly, we have the individual tone and the individual connection with the Church Militant, marked in the final exhortation-All-prayer.

" Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak."

Praying: "praying always" marks the moral position of dependance; "with all prayer and supplication", shows its fervency; "in the spirit," marks its tone.

And the extent of range: first-"for all saints"; and, secondly-for the outwardly embarrassed, but heaven-sent and heavenly sustained, servants of the gospel upon earth is to be noticed, viz.: I, however little I be-however little known to the saints-my name, perhaps, unheard of by the Lord's servants in the work of the gospel and the truth in the Church Militant upon earth-I am one of them, and I have to resist as one of them as one that has an interest in them all, and the work which God is doing through them and among them; and they all have a place in my heart* and I in theirs.

The heart and mind are found at various times, in various states and circumstances; but "praying always with all prayer" takes in every state of experience. We can empty our hearts out with all that's in them, though we may then have to add a "nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt," which the Perfect One added (Matt. 26:39), though His servant Paul forgot to do so (2 Cor. 12:8). We can pray, when we do not know what to pray for (as in Rom. 8:26, 27). And we can pray in the Holy Ghost, knowing at the very time that we have the petitions from Him, and shall receive the answers in due season (as Dan. 9, etc.).

It is in weakness that we find strength made perfect: but it is also (as is seen in this contest) in strength being made perfect in us, that we realize and learn the weakness, yea, the nothingness of what we are in ourselves.

A faithful, victorious servant knows his own dependance and weakness better than any other one.

Mail'd in armor, heavenly bright,

Strong in Him, whose grace is might;

Faint not, little doth remain

Of the drear campaign.

The Fear of Death

"Want of subjection to God "-is, in every creature in whom it is found, Sin. I intentionally say, want of subjection, or the absence of subjection (i. e., non-subjection, which is negative); and I do not say insubjection: be-cause, to many minds, in-subjection would seem something positive. But the absence of subjection is sin, without its being needful to prove the positive presence of any activity of rebellion, or any act of rebellion whatever.

It is written concerning man, " The wages of sin is death." We know from Scripture that to man death has two parts: there is, 1st, the death of the body, when the mortal life ceases to animate it; and there is, 2ndly, hereafter, the second death. Moral death (as men speak) is sin indwelling. To touch a certain tree in Eden was the expression of man's independence toward God. I can think with awe and dread of the touching it, without sin or moral death; but when the will to touch it was once formed, there was sin; and when Eve had touched it, there was moral death. The judgment of this sin was death of the body, and after that the judgment and second death, of the whole race who might descend from Adam and Eve.

Why do men fear death? I cannot answer this question in full here- a few words must suffice. An honest infidel (if such a thing can exist) told me that "death was as a black curtain across his path, and was ever there before him, telling him that he was worse off, by trusting to reason, than the Christian, by trusting to faith; for reason was at a dead stand before death. Faith could walk through it, and know what was on the other side." To intelligent nature, death must be a fearful thing; because death is the judgment which God spake of as the result of man's transgression. And to unintelligent nature, it is very humbling to be not only exposed to the attacks of a strong adversary, who cannot be guarded against, or set aside and sent away, and who is gradually gleaning away, to the bottomless sack behind him, the generation to which we belong.

To him that has God's word in his hand, death is known to be a just act of the judgment of God, by reason of sin, and that it has an arrear of details behind it in the second death.

When the Christian doctrine is known and received of a new nature communicated to each believer, and of the present connection of him that has it with Christ, as a living person now in heaven, - everything as to death is changed.

Nature's view and faith's view of death must differ; because the testimony of God as to what death is, in itself, and, to a man in nature, is the opposite of what His testimony is as to what death is to a believer in Christ. Observe -

1st. There is an essential difference between a believer, on the one hand, and, on the other, Adam, as set in his first estate in Eden, together with all those who have no higher nature than he had; and,

2ndly. The basis, or ground of standing, of the two are contrasted -

Man was a living soul, that knew God as the Giver;|The believer is quickened in the Spirit; one Spirit with the Lord,|

and|and|

his basis, or ground of standing, was obedience.|stands in and together with Christ.|

Alas!|Happily,|

his race are all dead in soul, and ascribe to themselves what is due to God alone.|Christ was, now is, and will be FOR him; and the Spirit of Christ dwells in him.|

I do not admit that death is the wages of sin, to a believer, in any sense whatever. As a man, I was upon the ground of nature. Christ found me there, and undertook for me. His whole work, as finished ere He rose, went to settle all that for me. He had paid all; and He cried, " It is finished!" ere He gave up the ghost. When He rose from the grave, He rose as a Head; and the purpose of grace concerning me has now been fulfilled, for I know and believe that I rose together with Him. Does the death of believers enter into the debt to be paid? Surely not. For if the death of one of them was needful, as part payment, then, also, the death of all of them. But all will not die, but a great part be changed. And if I have to pay part of the penalty, then the penalty is not paid already by Christ, and grace is no more grace; nor am I upon the ground of being in Christ Jesus at all, but I am still upon the ground of being in Adam, and a debtor. Well! but shall I not die? Do not you see believers dying all around you? No; never. I shall not die. If the tabernacle be taken down, that will not kill me. I myself, a man in Christ, can go through the death of this body cheerfully, Christ cheering me as one, through grace, associated with Himself; just as. I can go through all the sorrows of the wilderness as a Christian, and not only as a man. I do not see that the new man the man in Christ - ever dies.

The Christ who stood for me, as my substitute, in His death, has, by the faith He has given to me in His work there, and in Himself, as alive from the dead, enabled me to know that the whole score that stood against me has been cleared off; and not only so, but myself put upon an entirely other ground than that I was upon before; not now in Adam, where all die, but in Christ, where all are made alive. I am not now under broken law, nor before a God who is demanding of a ruined creature the payment of his debts, and the enduring of the penalties of sin. I am in the wilderness where Christ once was, but I am there as being already a redeemed one, and in communion with Him, who is now for me in heaven. If I am to pass through death, the first question will then be, By what death I shall glorify God (a very different thought from that of nature)? and the second, How much shall I gain by the death of my body? "for to live is Christ, and to die is gain," to the Christian, at least.

If, indeed, I walk here below after the flesh, and according to it, I shall find (believer though I am) that I am in the wilderness, as Israel was; but if I walk after the Spirit, and according to it, I shall find the wilderness is to me what it was to Christ. Faith would make me taste it as Christ tasted it. Experience as a man would make me taste it as Israel tasted it. Two very different ways of tasting it. If in the wilderness, then I have already passed through the Red Sea. It may be that little faith may have a great deal to relate of long experiences made! and awful ones, too! ere it knew where it was, and how it had passed through the sea. But at whose cost, and toil, and labor, was that boundary mark between Egypt and the wilderness passed by Israel? Surely their God was at

charges for them altogether, and none other. And what shall we say as to what we did, or suffered, in the redemption which our God wrought out in Christ Jesus, and revealed to us?

Is Jordan a worse stream than the Red Sea? or who has ever been called to cross it at his own charges? or why lingered the hearts of the two and a-half tribes on, this side of the river? Did they wisely so to choose?

The pestilence, or famine, or war, sweep o'er the earth. The wave of Death rolls in upon a man who is in nature; it finds him in nature, with nothing in him which is beyond nature. It takes its course (say), and he dies: it comes next to a believer. But here another question arises, viz., not only who is it that has the power of death (that is, the devil), but "that one," says Christ, "is one of my sheep, I gave my life for it." Has Satan- has death - any title which is above Christ's? No; none. Suppose, however, that the time be come for that individual to glorify God by being stoned to death-by being nailed to a cross head downwards. If he that has the power of death is hailing a storm of stones on Stephen, He that has the power of life is there too. A saint is not like an ordinary man; he cannot be killed till Christ, as Prince of Life, acts. Death may roll in, under a general and a particular providence, among men as mere men. But a saint has to go on high; the life - well-spring of life, eternal life - in him, opened there by Christ, and fed by Christ every moment, can neither be stopped up by the enemy, nor can the thread of life be cut off by him. Satan cannot do it. It needs Christ to gather up the life to Himself

Jesus of Nazareth, alive again from the dead, and owned in heaven as Lord of all and Christ; and, proof thereof, the believer down here consciously in possession of a life in and from Him; - these are the two great points as to freedom from the fear of death:

I believe that the common expression, that death is the portal into eternity, is a very erroneous one. This life, to a mere man, is the portal: as the tree falleth, so shall it lie. But to the believer, eternal life has been given to him, and he has been already introduced, really, though by faith, into the presence of God and of Christ. Christ, in the glory of the place where He is, has made Himself known, with life-giving power, to me, or I am not a Christian. For he that does not know Jesus Christ risen from the dead is none of His. I have no doubt that the expression referred to, and similar ones, are among the means used by Satan to confuse the thoughts of Christians.

P.S. The hope of many seems defective. They speak as if they hoped to wait on earth until the Lord comes down to it. Such is not my hope, as a heavenly Christian.

Faith reveals to me Christ as Son of God, now upon the Father's throne. I, on earth, have enjoyed Him there, as did Paul when he was here. So does he non also, that, absent from the body, he is present with the Lord. Until He leaves the place where He is, there will be this enjoyment; to many in His presence, and to some few upon earth. When I speak of Hope, my hope, like my faith, has Him as the substance of it. I being in the body, my faith lays hold of Him, and of who and what He is, and where He Now is; the very things which I should taste (only the more fully and without let) if I were absent from the body and with Him. Hope views Him, not as in His present position, but in a future one Hope has Christ in what is to Him a future position for its substance: it must be so, for the Spirit in us views things, not 'according to our feelings, but according to Christ. He has to rise up from the position in which He now is, in order to enter into those heavenly courts which form part of the redemption-spheres. So far as I can see, He conducts with Him, in His train, the

company of blessed ones who have been absent from the body and present with Him. That the dead in Christ shall rise first, is true; yet will it be but a moment, but the twinkling of an eye, that the power, which is in Him, will take to cause the corruptible to put on incorruption, and the mortal to put on immortality. They that sleep will be first, but the rest follow close after; one blessed crowd, though it have its front-line and its rear-line.

The way that some shrink from being present with the Lord, and cleave to being absent, from Him, is strange!

Do they find that all in 'them is so perfectly homogeneous with the glory to come, that they would harmonize with it in body, soul, and spirit, just as they are, if He came? How, then, not be happy with Himself where He is?

Is it that they have no taste for solitude with Christ, so that they know not how to trust themselves all alone to Him? Or is there, to His lovers, nothing attractive in His being where He is? Or are Peter, James, and John in a lower condition than they were in when they were pilgrims on earth?

The quiet experience of Christ, as pilot of my soul, is not strange to me. He is to choose for me, and He is to be trusted, which ever way He leads. Who knows the straits of death so well as He, or how to comfort a Stephen therein The passage through the veil is a pass well known to faith, and neither did Christ-the living Christ-ever yet fail me; nor are the courts of heaven, as a terra incognita, afar, afar off, with a wide sea between.

What it is, I know not; but I do fear that, in many, in this respect, things that are seen, and can be seen, have a stronger hold upon them than things which are spiritual and but the objects of faith. Or is it that, like Jacob at Jabbok, they can send their all over the little brook, but not pass over themselves until their flesh has been crippled

Fellowship With Christ: 9. Glorified and Reigning Together With Him

There is sufficient connection between these two thoughts-Dominion and Glory-to incline the mind to look at them together. Let it, however, be remembered, that the Holy Ghost has not, in writing Scripture, been pleased to handle truths by subjects-taking (as man would have done) one topic after another, until all were severally considered; and giving each in a way as abstract, and, as internally perfect in itself, as possible. A creed or a confession made by man may so give us truth, or its skeleton, on dissection. What God reveals comes, on the contrary, instinct with Divine power and full of vital energy-and comes in the power of the associations which belong to it. Forgetfulness, or neglect of this, will lead to weakness and feebleness in the faith.

1. In Rom. 8:17, we read, **■να κα■ συνδοξασθ■μεν**, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together [with Him]."

The person of the Christ, as he now is in Heaven, is the very center and regulator of the truth, given to us in this chapter: Christ up there; Christ in and before God -the present object of the faithful, as being witnessed of to them by the Holy Ghost: and their present position and standing; their privileges, experiences, calling, and hopes-all according to this blessed truth that they are looked upon by God as one with the Christ. Led by, as subjected to, the Spirit of God, they are sons of God, They know- it; for the spirit which they have received is according to that position; it is not a spirit of bondage again to fear, but of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba! and the Holy Ghost bears witness, according to the word, to the same truth of the position of sons, which belongs to the new nature divinely given to us.

In the Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, the blessings of believers are often presented to us, according to the law of the relationship which exists; 1st, between Christ as the Head of a body, and the members of that body; and 2ndly, between Christ, as the second man, and His bride; blessings according to positions taken by the Son as the Christ and assigned to us. In the Epistle to the Romans, we are looked at more in our individuality of being: consequently, the whole question of sin in man, and in the individual, is more gone into in the Epistle to the Romans than in that to the Ephesians, and the blessing is according to a place assigned to us by God in His Family, as placed there around the Christ, who is His Son. The nature given to us, and the place. assigned to us in this new nature, correspond. We "were by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3); we have been made "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Having the divine nature, we are (as we see in Rom. 8) sons of God. For the Spirit of Christ (ver. 9, 10), "the Spirit of God who raised up Jesus from the dead," as given to us to lead us, is the Spirit of sonship. We are sons of God (ver. 14); and we know the blessed position in which grace has thus set us, for we "have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." The position assigned to us is according to the nature given to us.

The blessing of this gift to us, as is shown in Rom. 8, is manifold. In it are found, through faith, in the work of Christ: 1st, complete deliverance from all that was against; and 2ndly, complete

introduction into a new world and life—a life, according to which (walking in the light of that other world into which we are brought) we can live to God, and serve Him in the spirit—though the body be dead because of sin. And what a blessedness to be a son of God; a son of God according to the pattern of the Christ. Not a son, as was Adam by creation; nor as was Israel, in the governmental arrangements of God upon earth; but a son by grace, through adoption, enabled, through ability given to us, to know that He, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is also our God and Father; and able to say to Him in the energy and according to the new nature, Abba! Father. But, then, not only does the heart, instinct with the new nature, turn and say, in its confiding, happy, though peaceful joy, ... Abba! but "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (ver. 16). Yes; the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the word, and all His divine actings as a living person toward us (in the care which, as the Paraclete, He has over us)—all bear witness that He recognizes and owns us as the children of God. But what a place of holy safety, happy privilege, and amazing honor is this! We are already sons of God; already been called and named sons of God; and we know it; and we have hearts to enjoy it; and a sure witness greater than ourselves (through whom is the word, and from whom is every action, and impulse, and regulation of blessing) is acting as God the Comforter (or rather Paraclete, Guardian) towards us, caring for us all through our course, as those whose names are inscribed in the Book of Life, and whom He knows to be clear to God ' and to the Lord Jesus Christ. A relationship is above all its consequences, and contains more in it than all its consequences. To be a child of God, and to know it; to be owned now in such relationship, not only by God and by Christ in heaven, but by the Spirit of God in the word and in all His personal and individual dealings towards me now, is a blessing which links me up to the living God in all the affections of His heart as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this is a most precious joy to the heart. But the blessing stops not there. When God's fountain is open, His streams well forth, and each blessing has a tale of eternal fullness to tell; blessing from God never comes alone. So we read, ver. 17, " And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Such are the hopes which are inseparable from the adopted children. They belong to —they are called now to love as members in—a family which has a bright to-morrow. Redemption has an inheritance for Christ with God. He waits, who is the heir, for the inheritance—'tis God's inheritance as connected with redemption; 'tis ours, also, who, as now sons, have the hopes of the family of God—heirs of God —And An—heirs with Christ. Men have to wait until their fathers, loved in nature, are dead ere they can inherit, and many a heart would rather be without the inheritance and keep the parent. But when God takes in possession, together with His Christ, redemption-glory—we as sons shall be there, and we know that Himself now looks forward to it, for He has bidden us rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and more than this, He, the Christ, has given to us the glory which was given unto Him. Surely, apart from the inheritance itself and the mode of taking it, as associate with Christ, there is food divine in the love which thus gilds the Christian's horizon for him:—If children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Indeed, that the association of us with Himself and with His Christ, is the very object of this portion, is plain. For He goes on: "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Christ: and no separation from Christ. Our hearts may well humble themselves as to the little practical association which we realize, in suffering together with Christ. The Lord Himself show us mercy in this respect, and give us of that moral glory which filled His Son and may fill us, as it has done many Christians even to the overflowing their small vessels; but that moral glory and character never can be, and shine out in a world like this, without suffering. The unselfishness of

enlightened love, which seeks not its own but God's, and seeks, as to man, his blessing in that which is God's, cannot be here below without suffering. Let no one deceive himself as to this.

But, further, as the suffering together with Him now is the result of association in life with Him, for the life is not in harmony with the state either of our bodies or of the world around us; so, when the Lord of Life has displaced Satan from his usurped position, He will so change our bodies and bring them also into a sphere where all will be in accordance with Himself, and that life which we now possess, as that the glory of it then, shall be as natural a result of its being there, as sorrow now is of our being here. The life has its own moral glory peculiar to itself; of sympathy with God, and devotion to Him and His plans and ways. Shown it was perfectly in Christ, in humiliation; shown it will be, too, in all the eternal fullness of its source in Him, in redemption-glory. It is in us, and its moral glory can now be displayed in the fellowship of His mind here below; its native, intrinsic, moral glory will have a bright outshining here-after; but the sweetest part of the portion to come will still be in that it is together with

The glory here spoken of may, of course, be at first in connection with the kingdom; but it is separable from the kingdom; for it outlasts it, and it is of wider scope. It is the display in glory of association with the Lord.

It is "the glory which shall be revealed in us" (ver. 18), as the Lord Himself said elsewhere - " I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one " (John 17:23). It is " the manifestation of the sons of God" (ver. 19)- " the glorious liberty of the children of God" (ver. 21). And on this bright hour, God has hung the hopes of creation (ver. 20), though no heart has the hope, sentiently and with intelligence, save the us, who, having received the first fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. This hope in the heart, divinely sustained, being in accordance with that for which creation is kept by God, marks the character of our association, and the intelligence of the association, with the Christ which grace has given to us. We know with certainty of a glory, not yet seen, that is coming; and, therefore, " do we with patience wait for it " (ver. 25).

And then (ver. 26) the Spirit goes on to show the results of this present association in life with the Christ; association, which leads now to sorrow in the flesh and from the world, as also it gives the assurance of a future revelation in glory. But it has a heavenly side, which even now, at the present, is replete with blessing. For God ministers to us amid all our present infirmities, and they may be but the occasion of letting us into the exceeding grace of God. We have infirmities, weaknesses; and we do not know what we should pray for as we ought. This would be sorrowful, if the instruction stopped here. But it goes on to show how the Spirit, and Christ, and God, use the very present infirmities in us poor yet blessed ones, as the means to display the riches of grace. " Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (ver. 26, 27). And thus our very infirmities, instead of discouraging us, lead us to a better realizing of the unsearchable preciousness of that life given to us, which is unsearchable by human ken in its sympathies now, in the range of its glory hereafter; and which, just when we realize infirmities, is the means of making us realize dependance, and the near, close watchfulness of God. We know also (ver. 28) our connection with

the counsels of God, as turning all to our blessing, because (ver. 29) the end of that counsel is the glory of His Son as to be (not alone in redemption-glory, but) surrounded by many.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow

He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (ver. 28, 29). Chief in joy He shall yet be, whose sorrows were beyond those of all others. But the counsel and the plan divine are, that He shall then not be alone in His joy and glory, but surrounded by many brethren. And so we read (ver. 30), "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

The concluding part of the chapter, in like manner, leads the mind not to dominion, but to association with Christ according to the mind of God.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who (can be) against us? Be that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (ver. 31-39).

Faith may scan the wondrous, vast revelation which is here given. Surely-yea, most surely-does it portray the blessedness of association with God and His Son, which is ours, as possessing the Spirit of Christ Jesus. He who sets our infirmities before us, to make us know our blessedness, here to silence us in wonder, causes the vision of His plan, and works, and care, to pass before us; while His Spirit moves our hearts within to say, What shall we say to these things?

2. If We Suffer, We Shall Also Reign With Him. 2 Tim. 2:12

Moral character, relationship, and external manifestation hang together naturally and necessarily before God, whether in good or in evil. He that has usurped power in this world has a character (as of a liar and a murderer from the beginning), and all that is opposed to God may cluster round him and be under his sway. In man's day He may make darkness to pass for light, and light to pass for darkness; but a day is coming, even the day of the Lord and of God, when all shall be seen in its true color, and be manifested accordingly. The Prince of Life, on the other hand, has a moral character of His own-in the perfection of sympathy with, and subjection to, all the good pleasure of God, He has relationships of the most blessed kind; and a time is coming in which not only shall He be owned, as now, on the Father's throne, though hidden there, but shall stand forth confessed as the Champion and the Victor, whom God delights to honor. His taking His power and reigning will be still in Servant-character. It is well, with such hearts as we have, to recall this to mind; for many a one looks forward to the day of power, without remembering that in that day the gift of power to us will not be the letting of self loose, but the expression of perfect exemption from all selfishness and self-seeking. The power of that day is the power of God and of the Lamb.

As in the Epistle to the Romans, the being glorified together with Christ brings out the blessedness of our association with Him, in all with which He will stand connected in that coming day; so, this passage (2 Tim. 2:12) brings out the truth, most important in its place, that, if now we are associates of Christ's, realizing our weakness, and suffering from a rude rough world around, as was Timothy, that the time draws near when power, and power of dominion, shall be ours. " We shall reign together with Him." For He that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, has made us unto God and His Father kings and priests; and we shall reign together with Him (Rev. 1:6). When He comes to put down His enemies, He will bring us with Him (Rev. 2:26,27). While He is putting them down, we shall be with Him (1 Cor. 15).

And when He reigns, we shall reign together with Him (Rev. 1:6, and 21). As a stimulant to patient endurance under suffering, and to hardy, courageous warfare, nothing is better than for the soul, amid its sufferings, to bethink itself of the glory and power which awaits it. Only, as has been said before, let the thought of its being fellowship together with the Christ, whether in the suffering or in the glory, be that on which we are set. If we be in association with Him, no burden of sorrow, weakness, anguish, or suffering will be found too much for us, for He bears the burden of our load; and if our prospect is association with Him in glory and dominion, there is no fear of the heart's getting elated or puffed up. The glory is His, and our share of it, though it be an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, is His free gift to us; and the very greatness of it will, even in anticipation, if His person and presence is borne in mind, only humble our souls. Who or what am I, or what have I, or what can I do or be, that the Lord of all glory should have told me plainly, that when He takes His dominion and glory, and reigns, He means me to be there, as a sharer of that dominion and that glory together with Him?

Fragment: Bengel and Dying

" According to Bengel (born 1687), the Christian has not so much to wait for death as for the appearance of Jesus Christ, and the most important business for every man is to come from a state of sin into a state of grace, and afterward not to look for death, but for the Lord. Death had originally no place in the economy of God and was only introduced afterward.

" Bengel did not think highly of the artificial mode of dying, and followed his own ideas thereon. He would not die with spiritual pomp; but in a common way, and was employed to the last with his proof-sheets. It was as if he was called out of his room during the hours of work."

Fragment: Death

Death worsts all flesh that comes under it! True; but faith worsts death itself.

He that has the power of death is the devil; but the Christ of God, Object and Giver of faith, is greater than he. The Christ ever was and is above Satan. He became, indeed, obedient unto death,-the death of the Cross; that, through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And, if He gave His heel to be bitten, it was in grace, that in bruising Satan's head He might do it as Redeemer. " His be the Victor's name, Who fought our fight alone; Triumphant saints no honor claim, His conquest was their own.

" By weakness and defeat, He won the meed and crown; Trod all our foes beneath His feet, By being trodden down. He hell in hell laid low; Made sin, He sin o'erthrew; Bow'd to the grave and burst it so, And Death, by dying slew."

Yet, however, a man may be ready to endure all hardness; and however he may see what Christ did, in His first coming, in His death and resurrection, he will not have victory in death unless he see and abide in communion with Christ in the heavenly places. 'Tis only with a risen Christ that relationship can be traced, that union exists,-a living Christ in heaven is ours. The writer of the hymn, just quoted, had no settled peace: for his faith stopped short of an ascended Christ. It was the knowledge of an ascended Christ, alive in heaven, that led one to say " It would kill me, with very joy,-if I heard I was a dying."

Fragment: Expectations of the Apostles and the Intentions of God

What a difference between the expectations of the apostles (as expressed Acts 1), and the intentions of God!

The kingdom restored to Israel, was their thought.

The King gone on high, and Israel left on earth to fill up the measure of their iniquity, in persecuting a people dear to and connected with their lately-rejected King (a people to be formed by the testimony about the King gone on high, and the Holy Ghost come down-the promise of the Father), such was God's intention.

Fragment: John 1:10; 12-13

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not...As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Fragment: Journey in the Wilderness

" And now his checkered and eventful course is past; but all before him is clear as crystal, and calm as the sea of glass.

" How triumphant the grace that has borne with, forgiven, restrained, and restored, during all] that long journey in the waste wilderness."

"Blessed was the composure with which he looked death ha the face as a foe long since triumphed over; behind whom, too, all was bright and glorious."

I thought of the words:-

"There, no stranger, God shall greet thee;

Stranger thou in courts above

He who to His rest shall greet thee,

Greets thee with a well-known love."

J. C.

Fragment: Life and Death

In Scripture, the terms "LIFE and DEATH" are used in various connections; and so in senses which differ. They are used as to the natural body; they are used, also, as to the moral inward state of man; and they are used as to man in his eternal state. Man, as at first created, was, as a creature, morally alive when placed in Eden. He had natural life in his body; he had not eternal, divine life in body, soul, or spirit.

Disobedience brought in moral death - death in trespasses and sins; it entailed mortality on the trespasser, laid him under the power of death, and pointed onward to the second death.

Faith gives a new, a divine nature, a seed that is incorruptible. To that seed belong affections, thoughts, intentions, desires, which all flow from Christ, and lead back, by the Spirit, to God: and this is shown in us while in the body; while on our way to God; while -waiting for Christ, and for the glorious bodies which He will give to us. God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Fragment: Revelation 22:10-15

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie " (Rev. 22:10-15).

Fragment: Sinners of Whom I Am Chief

" Sinners, of whom I am chief " (1 Tim 1:15). Had, ever, any other man such occasions as Saul? Jesus, killed on earth, had, from heaven, sent down the Holy Ghost. The Jews reject grace from Christ in heaven and the Holy Ghost sent down to earth too. And when they stone Stephen, the heavens being opened on him, -the young men lay down their garments at Saul's feet. It whetted his soul to go and persecute the Church! Yet Christ came to save such.

Fragment: Understanding

"As saints, we are to have understanding as well as affections. Nothing marks our low estate more than the unintelligence of our prayers."

Fragments

1. If the old Roman earth is to be formed again, - must not Austria be broken, so to speak, in half?
2. The great impeder of the Bible, has been Austria, with its old-world theory of " the Papacy and Superstition." Should it master Sardinia, it will drive the Bible thence. Is infidelity, and its theory of man's rights, better than Superstition, with its mandate of blind submission? Thank God! we have not, as Christians who have the word of God and His grace, to answer such questions. Yet God can use an Emperor and a Czar, if He wills (though Infidelity and man's rights be in the wake), to break the iron of a Kaiser's support of Superstition. Who shall say to Him: What doest THOU?

Fragments

1. The Keys.-The key has, from of old, been the symbol of authority (Is. xx. 22) and power (Job 12:14; Rev. 3:7). In this sense, a mountain-pass, or a strait of the sea, is sometimes, even in modern language, called the key of a kingdom. Possess it, and the whole that lies within is yours. There is harmony of ideas, too, in applying it to a house; he that has the key of a house is the master. But there seems no congruity, no sense, in applying it to the human body. In it the head has all the directive power; and in that spiritual body, of which Christ is the Head, it is so also.
2. A creature, as such, ought to keep its first estate, as assigned to it by God. No creature, because a spirit, had the right to leave its first estate (Jude 6) any more than had Adam to leave his. When the Creator sets what He has created in a given sphere, that is its estate. But the Son of God had the right and title to leave any sphere, for He is God. Yet when (Phil. 2) He left the divine glory on high, it was in the perfect character of one, taking a new sphere, as entirely subserving the glory and will of God and the Father. His having the right to leave the divine glory on high, to become seed of the woman, proved that He was God; and the object with which He left it, and His whole way afterward proclaimed the same.

Fragments

" There are still Christians who believe that God in supreme love became a man, and so died for them in love:-that the first of duties, the truest affection-without which all others are vile-is to appreciate Him who did it as we ought; that the first of all obligations is to the Savior; and that to slight that, and to attempt to sustain love in despite of that, is the chiefest wickedness and the worst of all dispositions. We owe some-thing to Christ; and if He be dishonored and slighted, I may seek to win, but I cannot be the loving companion of one who has denied my Lord deliberately. 'To me to live is Christ.' To own Him and dishonor Him, is worse than heathenism; it is to own and acquiesce in His dishonor when I know better. The man who believes Christ to be God, and is the professed Christian companion of him who denies it, is worse than the latter. We may all, alas, err; but he who knows the truth, and accepts what he knows degrades Christ, is deliberately preferring ease and companionship to Him, though he may dignify it with the name of love. Every effort to recover is right; but a step in acquiescence is a step in disloyalty to One, whom no one would have dared to dishonor if He had not come down in love.

" Christ, not opinion, is the center of union; but I never meant, nor do I mean that a true Christ and a false one were equally good as a center, provided people are amiable one with another; for that means that union is man's amiability and the denial of Christ. What do I want of union, if it be not union in Christ, according to the power of life, through the Holy Ghost.

" The business of those united is Christ's glory. If Christians ever unite on a condition of that not being essential, their union is not Christian union at all. I have no reason for union but, Christ, the living Savior. I do not want any union but that which makes Him the center, and the all and the hope of it. 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;' but to make that a plea of indifference to Christ's personal glory in order to be one with him, who, calling himself a brother, denies and undermines it, is, in my mind, wickedness."

Heaven

"The Heaven, even the heavens are for Jehovah; but the earth hath he given to the children of men."

The offer of a few remarks, and those of a simple kind, is all that I can hope to attain to upon this topic, The subject is of interest to all those who are on their way to heaven; and it is of importance, too, to those whose faces are not yet turned thitherward. For darkness is everywhere else, and nowhere else is there to be found light, in which to see light; but in heaven, there is a light; and it is the true and abiding light; which, not only sheds its light over a world in darkness, but, communicates itself to those who, in heart, seek after it. For God and His Christ are now in heaven; and " this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

To any extraordinary knowledge about the place, I make no pretension; indeed, I not only confess myself to be still a learner about it, and to know nothing, save the little which God may have given me, to see for myself that He has revealed about it in the book, but, I have individual confession for culpable past ignorance to make. Still I have read what others have written, as students gleaning for themselves, and for God's people in the field of His written Word, and, I have, while gleaning there for myself, found some things, which have struck my own mind, and which I would desire now to present to others.

1. Contrast of Heaven and Earth

A contrast between heaven and earth might be drawn; and that would throw heaven out into bright relief, in contrast with earth and its history.

The history of the earth is the history of sin, and of man's failure upon it; but, amid all the failure here below, When did heaven above prove itself unmindful of the failed ones that looked up to it? Or, baffled as to wisdom, power, or intelligence, of how to show its wealth, and befriend the failed ones that seek to it? This is saying too little; in every way too little. For heaven, not only has made known that there is One in it, able and willing to help the seekers; but that One, has been altogether before the seekers, in proffering aid, and in displaying resources, ready for help in time of need. Yea! and more too. For in the unfolding of the doctrine of salvation, - the doctrine of God, the God of Heaven, being a Savior-God - the tale does not begin outside of Eden, after the door was closed upon the guilty, rebel man; - but, when the whole tale is told, we find that, somehow or the other, he that brought in ruin upon earth, had showed himself ere ever Eden's garden was planted.

The Book of Genesis, gives us the genesis of man, and of the earth; but there was one before them, a liar and a murderer from the beginning, who, if he found in Eden an occasion to do mischief, found, in that very mischief he did, in the midst of that very ruin which he occasioned, that he himself was entangled and trapped; - for the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. This brought out the priority and the preeminence of heaven, as to good, in its contrast with earth; and something of a length and depth about the ways of heaven, which goes altogether beyond the bounds of earth.

Man would not stand in the light that shined in paradise. Man kept not his first estate there. But, if man was to be driven out, God would first give him a word, spoken to Satan, about the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head, ere he was driven out. Outside of Eden, we see, in Cain and Abel, man under a new phase; and what the goodness of God, in those circumstances, was; and in the fresh blessing of Seth, as a line of hope.

But man declined and failed still more; the judgment of the deluge swept away the wicked; and Noah, the man of the new earth, received a covenant of providential mercies.

Man sinks again, until idolatry is spread abroad, and Abram is called out, to walk with God as a stranger and pilgrim. The God of Heaven shows His grace in various ways to Abraham and to Lot, to Isaac and to Jacob; yet, alas! each character among them, is one of less perfect conformity to the mind of heaven, than the preceding one. Joseph is now found in Egypt. The slavery of Israel follows; for the God of heaven was preparing for Himself a redemption, to be accomplished in Israel, even as He had shown a call and gifts in the case of Abraham. The senselessness of flesh, appears but too soon; and the law of righteousness is given, to teach Israel what there is, and what there is not in the flesh. This goes on, with various modifications, until there are but a few left, and they poor and feeble. Messiah is born. One appears, whose predicted coming had raised

hopes in many hearts. He spreads out all His readiness to take up the whole burden of the nation, in its fallen state, and to bear the whole responsibility Himself. But He is slain with wicked hands. Raised again from the dead, He lingered, forty days, in the haunts of His days of humiliation, and goes up to heaven, thence to send down a message of mercy, and the power of the Holy Ghost, beginning at Jerusalem.

Judea, Samaria, the Gentiles hear the word of the grace of the Lord and Messiah. Then Saul of Tarsus is raised up, to witness to the personal association of the heavenly people, with the Son of God, as such, in heaven; not merely as Lord and Christ, but as Son of God.

The Word spreads out. Churches are formed every-where. Declension sets in. God moves the chosen servants of His Son, to give the analysis of the evil, and heaven's judgments upon it in the epistles. And in the Apocalypse it is shown out afresh, that, fail as the candlesticks may, the Lamb is on the throne, and all sure in Him - for God and His people.

The apostasy of Israel, the declension of the churches, the final apostasy, as to governmental power, may now be maturing; but faith knows that Jesus will yet be King in Zion,- that the Church will be the bride of the Lamb on high,- and that the Gentiles, extern and intern, shall yet be forced to bow the knee to the Nazarene:

When the Lord rises up from the right hand of God, the heavenly places will be purged; the Church established there - there to reign a thousand years with Christ; but the heaving of the earth, when the heavens are cleansed, will issue in a reign of righteousness, over Jew and Gentile, during a thousand years; and then Satan, let loose once more from the pit, will show what man is; and then shall follow the judgment and the new heavens, and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It is a contrast, and no mistake; and, however rapidly we may run the eye through the points of the history in which the contrasts stand forth, heaven is found to be always the resource for man, because God is there; and more than that, for the plan and purpose of the God of heaven to give blessing, is evident from first to last. The God of heaven will put down Satan; put him down by means of the seed of that very woman whom he, Satan, first entangled; and so put him down, so break all his power and rule, as that all the weak ones, once the children of wrath, even as others, who cleave to this seed of the woman, they shall share, either in heaven above or earth beneath, the glory that belongs to Him as the Redeemer.

2. the Unity of Heaven's Ways, Etc

Or, again, we may look at heaven in the various displays of it. For there is not only a unity that we trace in "heaven as it was," "heaven as it is," and "heaven as it shall be" - a blessed unity in Him who is God; and a blessed unity in His counsels; in His plans; in His work; in His objects.- But, also, while the counsel, plan, work, and purpose are but one, there is such a marvelous variety in the, ordering of the plan itself, as cannot be passed by unnoticed.

The purpose was, that God should be all in all (1 Cor. 15) That is, as I understand it, that in heaven above, and on earth beneath, in spite of all that Satan has done and tried to do, the name of God shall be permanently stamped everywhere, on everything, in heaven above, and on earth beneath; while all that will not bow, all that will not bear and wear that glory, shall be circumscribed to the place prepared for the devil and his angels.

It may be, that in heaven above, God shall be all in all, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that in earth, God shall be all in all, as Jehovah-Elohim-Shaddai, Messiah, and the Spirit. But the time shall come, when, neither in heaven above, nor in earth beneath (in the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness), shall there be anything and any one not fully subject to the display of divine glory. Each thing and each person in their respective spheres and characters of glory; but God all in all.

If, leaving aside, for the moment, the peculiar displays which God means to make of His glory in connection with man, we consider broadly what has been shown out among men upon earth, as having been characteristic of what was in heaven, we shall see a gradually increasing light about heaven; and not only so, but certain elements introduced, or to be introduced, which justify our speaking of heaven as it was; heaven as it is; and heaven as it will be.

Creation gave a plain token of God's presence, and of the beneficence of the eternal power and Godhead of the God of heaven. In His visit to man after the fall, He did more; in his clothing and driving man out of Eden; in His acceptance of Abel's lamb and rejection of Cain and his fruits, and in His replacing Cain by Seth; in His dealings with Enoch and with Noah, with Abraham and Lot, according to a call given; in His separation of

Israel as a nation, to be the central nation to Himself upon earth, with the other nations grouped round it; in His redemption of that nation; in the Mediatorship, priesthood, tabernacle, kingly glory, temple, prophetic office; in the power put into the hands of four nations, to oppress the people of the Lord in the land which belonged to Him; in the fact of the incarnation and tabernacling in flesh of His Son; and, when Israel and the Gentiles rejected Him, His forming a Church on earth, and revealing a heavenly tabernacle and heavenly hopes;-in all these things we see, as the stream widens, how the subjects connected with the interests of heaven become more plain. And in the Lord descending hereafter to cleanse the heavenly places, and have His bride there, while all the heads and substance and powers which are now at work on earth, are to be put down under the Son of man in His reign, until (after the final apostasy) He abolishes death, and brings in the divine

glory-we see the still wider stream in all its perfectness. All this speaks of the God of heaven, and tells of the counsels and plans of heaven.

3. Heaven As It Was, Is, Will Be

But if we turn to heaven as it IS, we find that which sets before us a certain contrast from that which was, and from that which will be.

In the prayer now answered-" And now, Father, glorify Thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was"-we have, clearly enough, Jesus of Nazareth as Son of man in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

The Son of God in the divine glory, creating and upholding and testifying in Scripture, is that which faith recognizes to have been true of the Son from Gen. 1:1, down to the day of His incarnation.

But this is very different from this same blessed One being displayed now, as Son of man, upon the throne, in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Now, the work is done; and He Himself is there, in proof of its being finished, and the power of the Holy Ghost is come down.

And as to what will be. He, on whom every title of redemption-glory rests, has yet, hereafter, to rise up from the place where He now sits, in patience, waiting, and to act upon and according to the titles so resting upon Him.

It was, I admit, an amazing step onward, when God became manifest in flesh; and when the Son of the Highest was born a babe in Bethlehem. But still the work was not done: the cross was still future; and, until the cross had been endured, the work was not done.

The work ended, and the value of it proved by the resurrection of the Lord, He is now in heaven: His patience still waiting. The work is now known only to faith; because grace will gather a people to Him there in heaven.

And when that gathering and calling to heaven are closed, He will rise up to act in energy and power; to show out the power and the glory.

If I consider the manifestation of the glory of God in connection with these three general testimonies of heaven as it was, heaven as it is, and heaven as it will be, I cannot hesitate for a moment as to which is the brightest and best manifestation of that glory.

True! each was perfect in its time; each display, too, has a bearing upon the others, and a voice from and for the others: but as well might we say, that heaven as it will be, when the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb shall dwell in the new Jerusalem, will not be a brighter and fuller display than that which now is-as to say, that heaven as it is, has no fuller testimony to faith, as to the glory of God, than had heaven as it was.

While man was being tried, and while time was allowed to roll out, in order that it might be seen that, among men, there was no savior, heaven shut its light in to itself, and spake forth its thoughts by types and shadows upon earth, and in earthly redemptions of an earthly people.

When the Son appeared—who was worth speaking of; save He? God manifest in flesh; He of whom it could be said, "He that hath seen Him, hath seen the Father"—this was light displayed; the true and real Light. And yet it had not expressed itself, according to the earth, fully, until upon the cross He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But here was an enigma which none but God could solve or explain: it was solved by the resurrection; and is now explained to faith since the ascension, and descent of the Holy Ghost.

And here comes in that other all-important truth; namely, that the light was light fitted for man as a sinner upon earth. It was not only perfect light, shining forth from God; but light that now can shine into the heart and mind and conscience of a poor sinful soul. Where was this to be found in Old-Testament times? There was nothing then that could make the conscience perfect.

God in the tabernacle, or God in the temple? Yes; but how far will the tabernacle of the wilderness, or the temple of the land, set a soul at rest? As God of Israel, He may pardon: but eternity? How shall I find rest as to it? The Jewish sacrifices have only efficacy for a year! And the day that discharges all guilt, the great day of atonement, precedes days on which sin may be renewed.

Then, again, shall I give a bullock or a ram for the sin of my soul? Or how can a sinner like myself mediate for me? Thanks be to God! all this is now changed. Upon the throne of the Majesty of the Highest, there is a Man who, with the heart of the Son of man, assures our souls, that that which has justified God in proclaiming His throne to be the throne of mercy, may well justify us in drawing near with boldness. And what solemn truth meets one's soul there? Sin was against the God of heaven, in His eternal majesty; His own Son, as Son of man, has borne the full penalty in His own body on the tree; and, token of the ineffable delight of God in Him and His work, He has received the promise of the Father, and sent down to us the Holy Ghost. Here the soul finds a perfect rest; and though we have, with patience, to wait until He rises up, yet are our hearts assured before Him in love; and we do with patience wait for Him, who shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation. We take our place as a redeemed people, His own heavenly people; not of the world, as He is not of the world; but who wait for Him to come, and receive us to Himself.

We have thus looked briefly, 1st, at heaven as in contrast with earth, in their several histories; 2ndly, at the unity of the mind, etc., of heaven at all times; and, 3rdly, at the points of contrast internally in heaven as it was, heaven as it is, and heaven as it will be.

The field is thus before us; and it has treasures of untold value in it, some of which we may examine. The fact is, that the person of our Lord being there, every title of honor and blessing and glory rests upon Him; and we can only know them as they are found in Him there; and according as His acting upon them to usward, has caused the reality of that which was contained in the titles to become apparent. These heavenly things are thus (as connected with the honor which Heaven has set upon Christ) most precious; and, inasmuch as they are made known by His acting towards us upon them, they become at once the expression of the delight which God and the Father has in Him and in us, towards whom the blessing flows forth: and they lead our souls, withal, into the relationships of Christ in heaven, and into the fellowship which we have through His being there, and sustaining there certain titles of glory, with heaven and with the God of heaven.

The first great titles which shine forth in Christ in heaven as it is, are those of LORD and CHRIST, and SON OF GOD.

Heaven As It Is: so Far As Manifested by the Setting up of the Church

Heaven as it was, at any period before the ascension of the Lord Jesus, is not my topic now; nor, again, heaven as it will be in any period after that the Lord Jesus has left the place which He took consequent upon His ascension. Heaven as it is (the Lord Jesus being ascended, owned by God, and known to faith, but waiting in patience there), is that to which I limit my present remarks. For the page of Scripture, without any question, as I have said, throws light upon heaven, and the revelations of it and of its ways in various periods that preceded the ascension of our Lord Jesus; and also on the different kinds of glory and different ends for which they will be revealed at various epochs after that the Lord Jesus shall, hereafter, take a position different from that which He now holds.

Scripture gives us light upon the Lord's course of humiliation; upon His present position, as resting in patience at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest; and on His future course, when the time is come for His glory to be manifested. Into these three parts the history divides itself; though it adds much and full testimony, in so doing, to the glory, honor, and dignity of the person of the Lord, and the offices to be sustained by Him. And it is especially in these three chapters of the Redeemer's course, that the light and mind of heaven shines out; but it is the second of them alone, viz., "heaven as it is," which is my topic.

Of course, when the soul turns to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in the divine glory in heaven-the Spirit of God come down here being the power and guide of our faith-of course, I say, we cannot forget either the perfect sympathies of His heart, shown as a man, when in the world, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, on the one hand; or, on the other, the perfect expression of His divine fullness who, on the cross, did receive at God's hand the full judgment due to our sins, that He 'night separate between us and our sins, and between us and Satan. Himself alive is before us. But, then, while Himself is ever the same, the position and display of Him is now quite other than what it was. He was the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; He is "crowned with honor and glory." To the heart of Christ Himself, and to the hearts of those that love Him, these two positions awaken very different, thoughts. Each position is perfect in itself, and Himself perfect in each position; but the humiliation and the glory are not one, but TWO positions-and two most widely contrasted positions.

If Christ in resurrection were my subject, I should have to refer to Matt. 28, to Mark 16, to Luke 24, to John 20 and 21 in detail, as showing the sympathies and graciousness to His own disciples of a risen Lord; but Christ in ascension is not found in these portions; and heaven is only presented in them directly thus: Jesus said, " All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). " The Lord... was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16.19). Jesus " led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50).

I turn now to some passages in the first seven chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and Peter and Paul. In many details, Acts repeats the same things as are mentioned in Luke 24. But the contrast between the placing of the facts with that which is peculiar to the two books, is easily seen. The Gospel of Luke gives an outline of the history of the Son of man from His first appearing here on earth, until the curtain drops on Christ's going up into heaven. The Acts give you the entrance within the curtain, with all that follows it. The Gospel leads you on outside right up to the fall of the curtain in Christ's disappearing. The Acts leads you from the inside of the curtain right onward; but Christ Himself within, and the effects consequent thereon.

And here we shall find a gradual development of light about the Lord ascended to heaven. As, 1st, the fact and act of His ascension was presented in a way which addressed itself to the experience of the eleven apostles, as men in the body down here; and, 2ndly, there was, as a result of this fact (of the Son of man being in heaven), the doctrine of the coming down of God the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father, the Spirit of power and of testimony. "Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4). "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (ver. 8).

Such the doctrine. And connected with that doctrine, as I have said, the fact of His being seen to ascend into heaven. "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight." So they returned to Jerusalem, and continued in prayer and supplication. There-upon, unwonted wisdom appeared in Peter, in handling the word of God: a twelfth apostle is consequently chosen; and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, we have the third step onward: "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind; and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4).

To see their Lord, who was risen from the dead, and had been in and out among them as one risen from the dead, thus ascend up into heaven—a man going up into heaven was a marvelous sight - and to know that this one, their Lord and their God, had been hidden (in the very body in which He was crucified, though it was now glorified) in heaven, was a marvelous secret. But they waited on Him so gone up; and when the time was fully come, they found the fulfillment of the promise of the Father, and this manifest and distinct sign of how they were recognized in heaven as being associates of His; for the Holy Ghost comes down upon them, and in His power they became witnesses of and for their Lord. A Lord risen from the grave had indoctrinated them, and given power of understanding, which appeared in them after His ascension. The Holy Ghost came down, and they heard and saw that which marked His descent and presence; but not only so: for, this descent upon them being a token, from Him who had gone on high, of the recognition He had met with in heaven, they had a testimony to give as to Him their Lord. There was a doctrine which they would have to announce, and there were effects which, in grace, would follow the proclamation of it. True; but there was, as I have said, first of all, in and to themselves, this blessed mark of the delight of the Father in them, as in those who delighted in the One whom He delighted to honor. The promise of the Father is fulfilled; they receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is given; and, in taking the place of witnessing of His having been received up on high, they take His place of testimony which Himself had just left - place which, but for the Holy Ghost (one need

hardly say it), they were utterly unable to hold.

The world around understood not the sign, though confounded by that which they witnessed. Peter and the eleven rise up as solvers of the enigma; and let it be remarked how they use the word of God as their weapon. Prophecy had told of signs and wonders to precede the coming of the Lord; and it had been written: " And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved" (ver. 21).

Who was that? Why that same Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among them by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of Israel, as they themselves knew; whom they, with wicked hands, had crucified and slain: this same Jesus (in order that the hopes of, and promises made to, David might be fully made good, and also in that He was one whose personal glory made it impossible that He could. see corruption)-" this Jesus has 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. For David saith, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." God had raised Him from the dead, and they had seen Him: God had highly exalted Him, the earth-rejected man; and He, having received the promise of the Father, had shed forth, on and in the apostles, the power and signs and testimony which men witnessed and beheld. It was not new wine which was a mocker-a mocker as great as the mockers who wanted to suggest that this expression of the Father's delight in Jesus, exalted as Son of man, was only the effects of too much wine drunk by the apostles. (Oh the brute-beast stupidity of sin!) Not new wine, but Jesus of Nazareth declared by God in heaven to be both Lord and Christ, and witnessed of thus, by God the Holy Ghost, in those that were the Lord's friends.

Let the place which the fear of the Lord puts man in, when it is acted upon, be here noticed. The apostles had much to learn still; their minds and their consciences and their hearts were still not where the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Hebrews, etc., have put ours. But the fear of the Lord was real in them, and fully practical; and God, in doctrine, began there where He surely ought always to begin; viz., in showing the place His Beloved has in His eyes, and how the fullest association and power of association is provided by Him (through Him who is both Lord and Christ) for all those who fear and wait upon Jesus. If Jesus was Lord and Christ, and owned so by God in heaven, all was theirs. It needed not much wisdom to see that. Though none but God knew how full the blessing was which He had prepared for them, yet this was now seen -that the Holy Ghost was sent down froth the anointed Jesus, as the proof and the power of association of His disciples with Himself on high.

The first question for me, I repeat it, is not as to my mind, my conscience, my heart - though, in their proper places, such questions do arise- but, if God's supremacy is to be owned, and God's Christ honored, this must ever be the first question for a man, "am I practically associated with the One whom God delights to honor?" The knowing and owning the Christ, is the way into all blessing.

But this word-expression of the blessedness of His disciples--was terror to those that knew Him not. Pricked in their heart, they demand, " What shall we do?" The secret of the Lord is with them

that fear Him; and so this question gives occasion to the apostles to show their fellowship with, and understanding of, the grace. Then Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (ver. 38, 39). Three thousand are added to their blessed company-company which not only enjoyed, but reflected the blessed light of heavenly grace and glory.

The doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, of the apostles' company, had its unearthly, its heavenly marks about it. There was fear upon every soul; -wonders and signs by the apostles; fellowship and communion; unselfishness and disinterestedness; gladness and singleness of heart; praise to God and favor with man. Such was the company of saved ones. (See ver. 42-47.)

Heaven, Heaven as it is-is thus first brought before us; and thus are we first introduced to it, as it now is.

It cannot be too much noticed, that it was altogether and entirely A NEW THING, the fact of Jesus of Nazareth being in heaven; he had been on earth, a man approved of God among the Jews, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him, in the midst of them.- That same Jesus had been taken by them, and by wicked hands had been crucified and slain; but God raised Him up, because it was not possible that he should be holden of death; this Jesus, raised up from the dead, and by the right hand of God exalted, was now seated in heaven, at Jehovah's right hand, until His foes are made His footstool; that same Jesus, whom man had crucified, God had made Lord and Christ. He was thus glorified as Son of Man in heaven, according to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, as Son of God.

And having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He shed forth that which was then seen.

Contrast, if you please, heaven, as thus set forth, with heaven, when at creation: -" The morning-stars sang together, and all the [angels as] sons of God, shouted for joy " (Job 38:7); contrast it with the ladder, seen but in a dream, by Jacob, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it (Gen. 28:12); contrast it with the manifestation to Moses in the bush (Ex. 3); with the glory of God, as seen when Moses went up into the Mount (chap. 24:9-18); or with Isa. 6 How far does the revelation of Heaven as it is, go in grace beyond all that had ever been? In Heaven as it is, all that God is, or has,-all revealed as honoring, as Lord and Christ, and that too in heaven, a man whom earth had rejected; and, when the Father has fulfilled the. promise to Him, He shedding abroad of its blessednesses upon His people upon earth who believe in Him. And let us not confound counsel, the carrying of it out, and the fruits of its having been carried out, together, as some do. The counsel was from everlasting, about Him who had been known in His own eternity, as the first and the last. But the existence of such a counsel, and its promulgation openly in heaven, and on earth, too, as a counsel accomplished when the work was ended, - which enabled Jesus to take the place as Son of Man, owned of God as Lord and Christ,- were very different in themselves, and in their effects as revealing divine glory, and as the means of blessing, to the people of God. Now, all was done, and the Man whom God delighted to honor, the one who, alone, personally, could be Lord and Christ, was shown out to faith, as Lord and Christ in

heaven, the Giver and Sender down of the Holy Ghost.

I only remark further, that all this blessed scene has been made known to us thus, through the words which flowed from the lips of these self-same apostles, as, filled with the Holy Ghost, they uttered that which God the Holy Ghost gave them to speak, as witnessing to the same Jesus.

But the grace and love, which, heaven being thus ordered, showed itself forth in power upon earth, were not to be limited to the forming of a blessed company, however holy and happy that might be. Grace became more loud in its claims for space to display itself in; and, by the healing of one in the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, it opened a way for the claim to be raised, by the servants and ambassadors of heaven, that Israel should open its doors, to welcome the blessing which had long been predicted, as to follow to 'Israel, when it hailed the prophet who was greater than Moses. In man's rejection of the claim and the judgment forewarned, which would follow, man showed his senselessness, but could not change the grace. " Unto you, first, God, having raised up His Son Jesus sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one Of you from his iniquities." The effect of the appeal, we see to have been the conversion of two thousand more (chap. 4 ver. 4).

The authorities resist and persecute; but Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, vindicates God, for having so honored Jesus as He had. The authorities threaten, but dismiss their troublers. These, returned to their own company, make an appeal to God, still to honor the name of His holy Child, Jesus, and heaven's answer to the appeal is not wanting; the place is shaken, all are filled with the Holy Ghost, and speak the word of God with boldness.

It is most blessed to trace the effects of the energy of the Spirit of God, and of Christ in this company in the one mind, and one object between God in heaven, and this company upon earth. The Father honoring the Son at His right hand on high, and the Holy Ghost, down here on earth, expressing, in these blessed ones, a life on earth spent only and solely for the glory of Him whom heaven honored.

The same truth comes out also in chap. 5, though in a different way. For here it enforces the holiness of the house upon earth, and sets Peter forward as one, used of God, to vindicate the holiness of God, very present among them. Holiness and truth, quite as much as grace, must be maintained wheresoever the Lordship of Jesus is owned; be it among a people who own the Christ in heaven, or, be it among those who own Him as Messiah upon earth. He and darkness, cannot go together; and where His power, as Lord, is present, there must be the detecting and purging out of evil; for the heaven of God, never loses its character. Lying, deception, and seeking after credit for self, from man-what have they to do in a house, formed for the manifestation, on earth, of truth, simplicity, and the honor due to the name of Jesus alone? Their appearing there at all, showed the inveteracy of the hatred of Satan, on the one hand, and of the weakness of man, on the other. Their being there, gave occasion, however, for an awful expression of the first judgment of God the Holy Ghost upon them, as things which He could not but judge in His house on earth. They are the formal principles of the sins by which the testimony has, since, while men slept (as Peter, at the hour of their first appearance, did not) been undermined and corrupted. Love of credit and applause from man for self; acting with lying and deceit; with a heart set upon the gold and the silver of the earth-these are the three evils referred to. Satan, working on flesh, through the elements of the world, thus first tried to make an inroad upon the House and the assembly of God upon earth; for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are still his weapons.

But, thank God! in the case before us, the very appearance of the evil, gave but occasion for God to show that the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was more mighty than the world, the flesh, and Satan; and also that, however weak and feeble, the separate stones in the house, looked at in their separateness, might be, when built together for a habitation of God, through the Spirit's presence, the place and the assembly were holy, and had power to detect, rise above, and judge the evil.

The holiness of the house and assembly, having been thus vindicated, and the impossibility of darkness living, as an energizing principle, in the midst of the light of God's assembly, having been shown, we next find how the fresh living water, from its rock on high, fills it afresh. By the hands of the apostles, were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; of the rest, durst no man join himself to them the people magnified them. Believers were added to the Lord- multitudes. The sick were brought into the streets, and laid on beds, that, at the least, the shadow of Peter, as lie passed, might overshadow some of them. Multitudes, also, out of the country round about, brought sick folks, and those which were vexed with unclean spirits and they were healed, every one (chap. 5:12-16.)

Such was the freshness of the grace given to this new-formed assembly. Power over the power of evil, to attract the world; to comfort those that came; to provoke to jealousy the opposers. It was the expression of the presence of God the Holy Ghost in the assembly, witnessing of how God in heaven delighted in those upon earth, who entered into His delight in the Christ; but it was a house, an assembly of, these associates of Christ, which had this honor. They had it not, save as members of that assembly.

The indignation of the priests is moved; they seize upon the apostles; but what can a prison do, when the angel of the Lord has commandment to open its doors? The malice of the enemy does but create an occasion, the more marked, for a testimony.-"We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand - a Prince and a Savior - for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

What could be a more simple explanation of the whole affair? What more cutting to the adversary (ver. 33)? What more suited for the time-serving Gamaliel (34-40)? The spite of the adversary, however, cannot refuse itself to give a few stripes to the apostles; but even this turns to their confusion, for the Lord fills the hearts of His people with joy, that they are counted worthy to suffer for His name's sake; and, daily, in the temple, and in every house, they teach incessantly, and preach Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter (6), we get another proof of the enemy's malice; and that, not displayed in those who were to be cut off, but in those who remained within. Murmuring and discontentment had arisen, because, that, in the administration to daily wants, some widows were neglected. The things of time are thus found to give occasion to the adversary, even where daily needs are in question. The difficulty is remedied by those to whom, in common, the purse belonged choosing almoners; and their choice is approved by the apostles. But one of these seven almoners, Stephen, had been chosen of God for another and a higher work as well, namely, to be an especial witness to Israel of its sin; and, through the enmity produced by the testimony thus given,

to become the first martyr who went on high. False witness is brought against him; but the help given to him from above is irresistible. His face was as it had been the face of an angel. His answer is based upon the Jewish Scriptures, but contains a summary of God's dealings, and the principle of His dealings with the whole race, from Abraham, downward, which is divinely perfect. Abraham, called of God to be a pilgrim and a stranger, had, indeed, had gifts and promises bestowed upon him. But, as to his descendants, they that were in the flesh, had always risen up against those that were, in spirit, the Lord's, and persecuted them. The Jews had ever cleaved to the outside blessings, and had neither heart nor mind to recognize God, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, were all witnesses of what a back-sliding people they were. And Solomon, the king, had borne witness, that heaven contained the Lord's throne, and earth was but His footstool. The generation, in Stephen's day, were but like their fathers, stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears-always resisting the Holy Ghost. Which of the prophets had not their fathers persecuted? What witness to the coming of the Just One had they not slain? That Just One, of whom (said he) ye have now been the betrayers and murderers.

They bowed not to the testimony.

" But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

This is a new and a very important step onward. All that was learned about heaven, in the earlier chapters, was learned by the testimony of persons preaching. Here, the heavens open upon the earth-rejected follower of an earth-rejected Christ,-and he sees right up into heaven. And he can speak as one that sees and knows for himself.

Being full of the Holy Ghost, he looks up steadfastly into heaven, sees the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God - and bears witness to what he sees.

So they stone Stephen, invoking and saying, "Lord Jesus! receive my spirit." Then he knelt down, and cried aloud, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" and so fell asleep.

The amazing power of support, which this Abel found, the first of the flock of slaughter, the members of which were to be as killed all the day long, was most gracious; and the whole scene showed, how death of the body as well as life, all things, are ours; for nothing can separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These seven chapters form a sort of book in themselves, and give us the light and bearing of the glory belonging to Jesus, as Son of man, owned in heaven as Lord and Christ.

As Lord, God will eventually put all His enemies under His feet. Appointed Judge of all, on His word, the fate for eternity of every soul eventually hangs. As universal Lord, 'tis He, who, in the end, puts down death, and locks up Satan in the lake of fire and brimstone. Yes; that same Jesus, whom man crucified, will do all this, and much more than this; for all power in heaven and in earth, is given to Him, and He is Lord of all. What a proof of His being Lord of all, the formation of that assembly was. In the days of His humiliation, none clave to Him, and, when the Shepherd was smitten, the sheep were scattered. Satan's sway over Jew and Gentile, over the High Priest and Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and over the mob, had seemed perfect. Peter and all the disciples had

fled dismayed. But now, on the day of Pentecost, how is everything changed. Peter, James, and John are full of courage; the word of these poor men is mighty, as they speak about Jesus, to arrest three thousand, to cause so large a mass to pass from the kingdom of darkness, right over, and at once, into the kingdom of light. And why and how was this? Jesus was Lord of all, and was now owned as such. He, therefore, endowed with power from on high His servants; and thus He formed upon earth, in Jerusalem itself, where also our Lord was crucified, an assembly for God - an assembly, the very existence of which, as well as its objects and purposes, were the living and abiding proofs of His being Lord of all in heaven. The Church was a new development on the day of Pentecost. A new position was taken by the Lord, as to His dealings with man upon earth, and this Church, the assembly where God Himself dwelt, was the unmistakable proof of it. People get so occupied sometimes with themselves, and with the question of their own consistency, or inconsistency, both with the truth, of which the Church is a proof, and with its hopes, purposes, and callings, as practically to forget that there is a Church to belong to. Now, I could desire, by all means, that we should judge and set aside whatever in us, individually, is practically inconsistent with the position which grace has given to us; but the way to do this, is to have the heart, and mind, and soul, well occupied with the position and privileges, hopes and calling, of the thing itself. And who does not know the blessedness of being able to say: "However much I may fail, blessed be God! He has a Church, and I belong to it, and the full blessedness of what it is, belongs to me." As has been often said, a stone has a relative value when it has been placed in a building, which it never would have had, had it remained in its individuality. So, a tache of gold, or a loop of a curtain, in the tabernacle, formed an integral part of the tabernacle of God, and was to be looked upon and judged as such, and not according to its own individual worth. When the tabernacle, in all its parts, was ready, and each part was just what it ought to be, Moses had done his duty so far; he had prepared a tabernacle for God. But it was God coming down into the tabernacle, that made it to be the tabernacle of God. Much more is true as to the Church. For when the Holy Ghost came down, on the day of Pentecost, it matters not about the parts, whether there were 12, or 120, or 3,000, or 5,000 parts, God the Holy Ghost was there, a witness of, and to, an earth-rejected, but heaven-honored Jesus. He took the lead; God always has the first place. To the believer, it runs thus: Seeing we have found such grace, what manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation? All our obedience supposes consistency, with a position of blessing. Ciphers are the expression of naught, when alone; concede one unit, and then the value of the cipher, will be according to its position as to the unit. As -to the Church, the energy of blessing supposes many things; and not merely the watchfulness of an individual, to keep himself up to a given standard. For instance, there is first the presence of God the Holy Ghost, who secondly, has, by the word, formed into a body, various quickened persons. Being together, the word truly acts upon the conscience and heart of individuals as such but it is the word as used by Christ, and empowered by the Holy Ghost. The place is a place of light and conscience, as, therein, both an enlarged arena, to act in, and the aid of many keepers, and the company being God's, there are gifts and gifted persons there; and the living God, who, when one fails, puts forward another.

Jesus being Lord, is His title to power and right over all. Jesus being Christ, or Anointed, is His title to office in testimony, worship, and government. Where He is, He must, of necessity, be the source and spring of all action. All the light which His people 'possess, is from and in Himself; the answer to all their needs, and their power as to worship in spirit and in truth, are found in Him; and who else, save Himself, either guides His people, or forms and fashions them. There is an

interesting and an important difference to notice, between the Christ-hood as for earth, and the Christ-hood as in heaven. The prophet, priest, and king, in Old Testament days, were all anointed, and each office pointed on to the Messiah upon earth. But, Messiah for earth, has no body associated with Him, in the same way as has the Christ in heaven. The prophet has a people to prophesy to - disciples; the High Priest has priests subordinate to him; the king has subjects. The correlative titles of the party inferior, are according to the title of the party superior. Official relationships characterize the earth. Personal relationships characterize the heavens. The Son of Man has a bride. The Head has a body. The Christ in heaven, has Christians too now upon earth. The Messiah upon earth has not Messiahites. It is not that there is not an unction for the earthly people; but it comes in a different way, attaches itself to a different class of things to what it does in the case of the heavenly people.

In these chapters, again, be it observed, we get the expression of the results of the combination of these two titles, Lord and Christ, Jesus of Nazareth being in heaven. While He acts upon them, He, being in heaven, He forms, and sustains, and directs a Church of God upon earth,- beginning at Jerusalem. He will, at a future time, act upon them, He being on earth; and the millennial earth will be the result.. He acts upon them combined together, in both these periods, in grace to man. In the first, God has been showing out, what His delight in Jesus of Nazareth, as Son of Man, Lord and Christ, is, He being in heaven; nothing less than the formation of a new body, could express THAT; a body which, in its very elements and essence, its objects, purposes, thoughts, and affections, told forth fellowship with the Father, in His delight in the Christ. In the second display, He will make good, as Jehovah, His title to place the root and offspring of David, as His fountain of blessing, upon earth. God has a right, if He wills, to have a people upon earth, who are of and for heaven, and who walk as citizens of it; such a people - new as the thought was to man -indeed, un-known till Pentecost, is the expression of the presence upon earth of the Holy Ghost, to make good all the titles which are owned by God and the Father, as being the Son's now in heaven. God has a right, too, when the time shall come, to reform a people for Himself upon earth-people who shall be willing, in the day of Messiah taking His power, to reign upon earth.

But the titles thus acted upon in combination, whether in heaven or in earth, are for blessing to man; and as power from God in that blessing. A state of weakness is no expression of the present power of an Almighty Lord: and power which has not the honor of the Christ of God as its object, is not power divine in man. Power and grace, I conceive, will be found always united, when these two names are acted upon together. If I take them separately, I could not say this: for the Lordship has expressions of its glory as against and over adversaries that are recognized as remaining adversaries; and the activities of Lordship in Jesus have not the same place for them, when He has put down all enemies under His feet, as they have while He is putting down, or showing (as now) His competency to put down. On the other hand, the blessedness of the anointing only becomes more enlarged, when the spheres in which enemies now exist, for the grace of it to be shown to, have ceased to exist.

The revelation of our portion is indeed wondrous. It reveals the glory of the throne of God and the Father, as the resting-place of Jesus of Nazareth, and that Jesus endowed with the promise of the Father; and, consequent thereon, the Holy Ghost come down here to form and sustain a people in whom, upon earth, the virtues of the Lordship and the Christhood of Jesus should abound; while all that the heart of the Son of man feels about

God, and His people, is told out to them and in them and by them. It is this which makes the book called the Acts to be of such peculiar interest to the hearts of the children of God. It gives, truly, the divine explanation of the change from the temple-worship at Jerusalem (being the only one which God recognized for the earth), to the meetings for worship in spirit and in truth, the wide world over, among all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus out of a pure heart. It gives, truly, the history of the actings of the apostleship of Peter; and the drifting of the testimony, after worship was set up in the Church at Jerusalem, out through Judea, Samaria, and to the Gentiles. It gives the outline, to a certain extent, of the actings of the apostleship of Paul -apostle of the uncircumcision, as Peter was of the circumcision: but it does much more; for it (not only shows us things wrought down here, but) opens to us the scenes above, where the springs of all that was wrought by the Holy Ghost down here, are shown to us; and everything traced up to God's delight, in heaven, in Christ, and the heart of Christ in heaven, faithful to God, and fresh in love to the people of God down here. As we read it, we see and are made to feel that we have, indeed, not a dead Christ-who was merely crucified, dead, and buried -to do with, but one alive again from the dead, and at God's right hand. This, as connected both with one's own soul individually, and with the work that is passing here below in the name of the Lord, is of exceeding importance.

No one can read carefully from chapters 1 to 8, without seeing the part and place held by Christ, though Himself in heaven, in the forming and sustaining of the testimony at Jerusalem, and up to the hour of its first formal rejection of it by the Jewish people.

Chapter 8 If God's hand ever moved men upon the board of life, His hand was certainly making itself known in Jerusalem during the period which is brought before us in the first seven chapters of the Acts. His hand was there ordering everything external, and His Spirit ordering all internal to His Church - His church-expression, here below on earth, of His delight in Jesus, both Lord and Christ, at His right hand in heaven.

What a remarkable incident, Saul's presence at Jerusalem! and his being just in the way to have the young men's clothes (who were the witnesses against and stoners of Stephen) laid down at his feet. While Satan was doubtless in it, there was another than he also in it all-even that One who looked down from heaven on Stephen, and gave to him his testimony and upheld him in it. And what were Christ's thoughts as to Saul? Much, in one sense, what they were about Peter, as found in John 13 and 14. If Peter had to be Christ's witness as to Israel's self-sufficient rejection of the Messiah, Peter is first made to know what he himself is, and how he was in no wise better in himself than they. If Saul was to go to the Gentiles, to tell of a heavenly calling, and of fellowship with an ascended and glorified Christ, he is allowed to prove that grace found nothing in him, when it first looked upon him, but a man who was a persecutor and a blasphemous and injurious. How wondrous are the ways of God; yet how perfect withal!

And let us mark here, too, in another respect, the contrast between the ways of God and the ways of man. Man makes a proffer; and, if it is refused, he too oft finds the springs of his own willingness to give to be choked: his gift rejected, returns with sorrow and pain " to his own soul, to vex him." Not so God. Jerusalem -has it rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost given from heaven by Jesus gone up thither, and sat down there as Lord and Christ? Christ moves on in testimony. He saw Saul there, and doubtless thought of what was coming as to him; but if Jerusalem ceases to be an open channel for the blessing, the waters can-not, according to His heart, reach the Gentiles

without Judea and Samaria first getting a benefit. From Jerusalem, in its wickedness and madness, persecution scatters all save the apostles, and the cities of Judea thus first get a testimony. Satan might concentrate all his power in Saul. Christ would make it visible that means were not lacking to Him. The apostles shall tarry at

Jerusalem. The disciples, scattered, shall, by the Holy Ghost, tell of that which filled their hearts. Therefore they that were "scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."

Saul's part in the persecution is three times named: "The witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (7:58); "And Saul was consenting unto his [Stephen's] death" (viii. 1); "As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison" (ver. 3). He was a persecutor in thought, word, and deed, whom the heaven-sustained testimony and joy of dying Stephen did not reach; and who had no sense of pity for the weak, or sympathy for the afflicted. What is man, when not subject to God!

The persecution thus arising, Philip is led, in this simple way, to Samaria. The power of God is with him. Miracles are wrought, unclean spirits cast out, the palsied and the lame healed; and great joy filled the city.

Then we find the record of a move of the enemy in a new form-perils of false brethren unawares brought in. Simon, a sorcerer, listens, and takes his place among the disciples.

The news of the movement-most gracious movement -in Samaria, reaches Jerusalem (ver. 14). The apostles send Peter and John, who pray for them, that they may 'receive the Holy Ghost; then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost (ver. 17). This exhibition of communicative power detects Simon. Who might not long for a share in such a power? True; but where was the heart and mind. which could see it and overlook GOD, and count that a little silver would induce Peter to sell the power of communicating the Holy Ghost? Alas! what is man? What is flesh in any of us, when it expresses itself, be it placed in the world or in the Church? active amid the excitement of persecution, or active amid the flowing streams of divine grace and power? That which is born of the flesh is flesh.

The effect of all this upon Peter, is to produce anger without sin, though his indignation is strong, and expresses itself with unmeasured strength. The apostles preach the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans, and then return to Jerusalem.

Grace flows on, no longer pent up within the walls of Jerusalem, or to the order of things there. It is pleased to work through Philip; and in a proselyte from among the heathen, who was on his journey back into Ethiopia after the feast. An angel bids Philip go down into Gaza, which is desert: there he finds the Ethiopian eunuch; communicates to his puzzled mind the light of the Gospel, as led by the Spirit of God, and then is caught away.

Samaria was in a circle farther off for the manifestation of God, according to man's mind, and according to God's order too, than was Judea, for worship upon earth. Under the law, there was no worship save in Jerusalem. Under the new order of things, there could be worship in Judea as much as in Jerusalem; for the three great feasts which had to be kept in Jerusalem, had now yielded to the truths as found in a crucified and risen Christ, to which they pointed. But, if Jesus (earth-rejected and heaven-honored) was the door through which the gift of the Spirit came to all

that believed, then Samaria was not shut out; and the water was flowing out still farther. Accordingly, here we have a proselyte who had come all the way from the court of Ethiopia up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast, met by Philip; and his heart made to joy and rejoice as he goes back, not empty-handed, but a worshipper of God in spirit and in truth.

How blessed is the thought of the part which the Lord Jesus, alive in heaven, had in all this And how blessed, to see how the Holy Ghost orders and arranges everything and every detail for the disciples-just as much and as overtly as the blessed Lord Jesus had done in the days of His humiliation 1 And yet, while it is God the Holy Ghost who is directing all, He directs all according to the thoughts and affections of the glorified man, Christ Jesus the Lord, who though in heaven, thinks of all the littleness and all the slowness of His people down here. And so all passes with that leisure which our littleness and little faith makes meet. And let it be noted, that we have here, not (as before) the Holy Ghost only as in the assembly of believers, and working through and with office-bearers and men of note -but, away from the assembly, this same Spirit is found divinely directing and overtly leading a man who had been chosen to be an almoner for the saints, yet who now has to go out to a desert-place, and, finding a nobleman in a car there, has to go near and join himself to the chariot. And the same Spirit, as He had manifested His presence once and again with various groups, now catches away Philip, and sends the eunuch on his way full of joy.

What a blessed doctrine is that of the Holy Ghost down here, as Witness of and for Jesus, Lord of all in heaven, and Guardian of the Church and people of Christ! Yea, divine and heavenly blessing it is!

Chaps. 9-12. The formation of the Church upon earth; the testimony to, and of it, rejected; the testimony breaking out from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria; a proselyte;-these things we have seen. But the testimony was to take a larger and a wider range yet; and, in the four next chapters, we find the outline of the provision made in connection therewith. Saul's conversion, when he was near Damascus, by direct revelation from heaven, and the mission of Ananias to him, is, together with its consequences, the first grand incident (9:1-31). The second is as to Peter, in the fresh honor put upon him just at this period, in the restoration of Aeneas at Lydda (9:32-35); the raising from the dead of Dorcas at Joppa (to ver. 43); and the vision to him of the great sheet, with the attendant call to go to the Gentile Cornelius, and its blessed results (chap. 10). The third fact is the effect of this first outbreak of mercy to the Gentiles, upon the saints at Jerusalem (11:1-19). Fourthly, Barnabas gets led to Antioch; and, seeing the need there, he fetches Saul-the Lord leading forth their service, and giving abundant supplies of grace (to end of chap. 11). Then (chap. 12) follows the persecution under Herod; the Lord's rescue of Peter; the death of Herod, his iniquity being indeed awfully full.

In entering upon the Lord's dealings with Paul, as the apostle of the uncircumcision, we shall see how the person of the Lord comes out, more and more, into light, as the object. It is not that, to God's mind, there ever was other center, or other way of displaying God, than that blessed one; but, clearly, the light may shine out more simply and fully at one time than at another. At first, it was God dealing with the people of Jerusalem, who had rejected the Messiah when He was upon earth; and the leading truth pressed upon them is, that God in heaven had owned as Lord and Christ that same Jesus whom they had rejected. Here (in Paul's case) the blessed Lord reveals Himself in heaven to him; and though it is Jesus who does so, this Jesus is known in heaven as

Son of God. The question, in this part, is of what it becomes God to do for His Son, when revealed in heaven as the Second Adam.

Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, arms himself with authority from the-high priest, and is then off for Damascus. The Lord makes an appeal to the whole man, as any man upon earth, and in mere nature, could take notice of it. Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth. Then (and Oh, what a volume to the renewed heart does the part which the Lord takes in it all contain!) he heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, -why persecutest thou me?" Aye, why? What reason had Saul for persecuting Jesus? But what grace for a glorified Lord, for the Son of God, thus to offer to hear what a rebellious creature has to say in vindication of his most unreasonable opposition. The query was well framed, and drew forth another question in reply from Saul: "Who art Thou, Lord?" The voice of a man had addressed Him; the voice of a man ushered in by a display of divine effulgence, of a Man in heaven, who asserted that He was the object of the persecution of Saul of Tarsus. "Who art Thou?" was a natural question; but it would not have been the fair expression of Saul's state: he knew now that he had to do with another than a mere man; and the conscious conviction of the divine character of the revelation, comes out in his using the word Lord. "Who art Thou, Lord?" Had Saul ever before been an enquirer after divine glory? Had he not rather taken it for granted, that he knew intuitively all about God, and what he had to do for God? I judge that he never, until now, had really found himself in the divine presence-never knew how man needs to be taught of God. "Who art Thou, Lord?" 'T was a simple question, and the answer is as simple: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." "I am Jesus." What a simple word! and how simple, too, that which qualifies it!-"I am Jesus whom THOU persecutest." Of the truth taught here there can be no mistake: it is Christ, as the Head of a body, who speaks here; feeling in Himself that the Saul who was before Him, had been acting most rudely and cruelly; though not He, the Head, but the members of His body alone, were within Saul's reach.

Love leads Christ, here, to present Himself as being personally concerned: he that touched a Christian, touched a member of that body, the Head of which was Christ. But grace adds another word too: "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." When almighty power closes up a man's way, who shall break through, or set aside the power of the Lord? Overwhelmed, he demands: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Entire, personal surrender of himself is what I here see. He is told to go and seek the help of one of those poor despised sheep, whose lives he had come down to destroy. Saul arises from the earth; and is led by the hand, being blind, into Damascus. The Lord's love does not hide itself, does not even bring things to pass merely in a providential way. He who alone could curb and bow such a spirit as was Saul's, had been pleased Himself to meet with him, and to curb and bow that spirit: He, Jesus, had Himself set Saul at his wit's ends-at points which he had never known before-in positions in which for the first time in his life he had ever said to Jesus, "Who art thou, Lord?... What wilt thou have me to do?" But the gracious love in Christ, which moved thus with power, kept Saul in the consciousness of dependence, and formed the longing in his heart after discipleship. It is He, too, who Himself speaks to Ananias in a vision; and having called his attention to Himself, then bids him (Ananias) "arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him,

that he might receive his sight." Saul had come down to seek the life of such as Ananias: Christ exposed not Ananias to the uncurbed, unbroken Saul; but, having broken Saul down, He, in the sovereignty of His own power, and in full accordance with the thoughts of God, that the word of God spoken by men should be honored, and that the disciples should have the fullest fellowship possible with the Master - He, I say, will use the word of Ananias to perfect the work Himself had commenced. Ananias demurs (ver. 12-14): Surely, the Lord would not let in such a wolf upon the flock which Ananias loved! But the Lord is imperative; and yet, withal, how considerate to Ananias in his little faith! "Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name unto the Gentiles, and kings, and children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." What a Lord He is! and how perfectly, in every way, does He carry out the duties which rest upon Him, as Head of His body, the Church, toward all the weakest and least intelligent members in the body!

Ananias goes. His "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," is not without effect: for "immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized": a token, this, of the Lord's love to Ananias. Saul joins himself to the disciples: "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God."

Persecution arises (ver. 23): the disciples took him by night, and ignominiously let him down by the wall in a basket. He had not much to boast of in this, according to the flesh. But the same flesh which had run riot when he was Satan's servant, needed, in him as in us all, constant crippling, that he might be able to serve the Lord.

Arrived at Jerusalem, the disciples stand in doubt of him (ver. 26). But Barnabas befriends him when standing outside the door (so to speak), and he is accredited (ver. 27). His bold testimony again exposes him to persecution, and he is sent off to Tarsus.

There was rest to the Churches throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and edification; and the disciples, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. When man acts, too oft a new friend or servant leads to the forgetfulness of the old. Not so with the blessed Lord. All He did remained in its perfectness; and every part of His plan, and every workman whom He called, had due regard and attention paid to him.

Peter is not forgotten because Paul has appeared. One Lord is Master of them both. Aeneas, sick of the

palsy for eight years, is restored by Peter (ver. 33, 34). The testimony spreads (ver. 35). Dorcas falls on sleep at Joppa; but Peter is used to confound all, by raising her from the dead (ver. 36-41). The testimony flows outward thereby. Peter, tarrying at Joppa, lodges with one Simon, a tanner. There was nothing marvelous in that: others, perhaps, had lodged there often before. Ah! but the Lord meant to make the house of Simon a house to be remembered; and therefore, on this occasion, Peter turns in thither. How exquisitely simple is the account given to us, in chap. 10, of Cornelius' vision at Caesarea! and how bright the scene is, as a scene in which the living affection and energy and occupation of Christ towards His people is displayed!

A bell and a pomegranate. A bell and a pomegranate round the high priest's vesture, was to announce where he was on certain occasions of tabernacle and temple worship. But here we have more than that; viz., all the fruitful love of the Lord toward His people showing itself in the arrangement of everything connected with the enlargement of the sphere of testimony. The Gentiles, as such, were to have the word of grace preached to them. Cornelius is chosen as the first who is to be called, and Peter is selected as the one first to call a Gentile: for this would make still more clear the principle on which God was now acting. But here the Gentile was a seeker of God, and has himself to send for Peter to come to him. The Lord, by His angel, tells him to send for Peter; and tells him, too, where the said Peter is to be found. Cornelius promptly obeys, with all due attention. On the morrow, while the messengers are a-journeying, Peter is on the house-top. He falls into a trance, and "saw heaven opened upon him, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth; wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." And then a voice is heard, saying, " Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter objects: he had never eaten any common or unclean thing. The same voice is heard a second time: "What God has cleansed, that call not thou common." This was done thrice, and then the vessel was received up again into heaven.

Peter understands not, but Cornelius's messengers are at the door.- Peter muses; but the Spirit said to him: " Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them" (ver. 20). How blessedly does the part and place which God the Holy Ghost, down here, has undertaken to fill up-responsively to Christ up in heaven - here shine out. When the Son of Man was on earth, He listened, morning by morning, for instructions as to what next He, in His servant course, should do. And He was led and guided perfectly by the Spirit. Now, He, as Son of Man, is gone up into heaven, and His people down here. The Spirit is with them, to guide and direct in all the ignorance, which is natural to them, each step of the way. And all down here is to be according to what Christ up there is doing. This is beautiful and blessed. The Son of Man would walk down here as a pilgrim, and was led here and led there by the Spirit. Now, we, who know nothing, get the perfect guidance of the Spirit; and that as a part of, and means to practical fellowship with Christ in heaven.

Peter goes down, and presents himself as the person whom the three men seek. They explain their business. Peter shows them hospitality for the night, and starts with them next morning for Caesarea. Cornelius and his friend are awaiting their coming; for the vision of an angel was not a common-place matter to such an one as Cornelius. He meets Peter, and would have rendered him homage, such as Peter could not receive. Peter explains what he is; and then Cornelius explains why he had sent for him. Peter owns the exceeding largeness of the principle upon which God is now acting (vers. 34, 35). He then gives the brief outline of that which he himself had known of Jesus, as a man upon earth, and a witness for God; of His experience here at man's hand, and afterward how God had raised Him from the dead; shown Him to His friends; and that He was to be preached as the appointed judge of quick and dead; the One, in whom every one that believes, finds forgiveness of sins, as witnessed by all the prophets.

While Peter is discoursing, the Holy Ghost falls on all that hear, to the no small astonishment of those of the circumcision who were present, who marveled, because, that on the Gentiles also, was poured out the gifts of the Holy Ghost, with all signs, and the power of worship.

Peter then asks: " Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?"

The entire unpreparedness of man, for such an extension of the blessing, divine and heavenly blessing, as would, necessarily, pass over all distinctions in the flesh and world, now appears. Peter is called to account in Jerusalem, on his return, for his practical inconsistency; he had eaten with, and in the house of, men uncircumcised (ver. 4). He relates the vision he had had; the concurrent testimony to it, of the facts of the men coming; the injunction of the Spirit to him, to go without doubting; his six brethren with him; - he had gone to the house of Cornelius; had heard of the angel's instructions to Cornelius; and, lo! while he was himself speaking, the Holy Ghost had fallen on the Gentiles, as He had on them who were Jews at the beginning. This had recalled the Lord's own words to him: " Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." For as much then, as God gave these the like gift, as he had given unto the others, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, what was Peter, that he should withstand God?

The circumcised bow to the truth of mercy having thus reached the Gentiles (ver. 15), even repentance and life.

In the meanwhile, and it was another step connected with the establishing the same truth, of the enlarged measure of bliss, Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch became evangelized, so far as the Jews and Hellenists are concerned, by means of those whom the persecution had scattered.

Barnabas is sent down from Jerusalem, that he might confirm the work at Antioch. He does so, and then starts for Tarsus, seeking Saul, and bringing him (not Peter) to Antioch; where they tarry a whole year, and are greatly blessed. Antioch (which is more connected with Paul, as the starting place of his labors), is thus brought into view. And the disciples got their name of Christians first at Antioch (ver. 26).

An act of love and power on the Lord's part, here occurs, and marks how He will have all knitted together in one.

Prophets come down from Jerusalem to Antioch; the Spirit signifies by one of them, Agabus, of a great dearth a coming. The disciples make a collection for brethren in Judea. Barnabas and Paul take it up (ver. 27-30).

In the midst of the famine, the Lord had shown His love, which knows how to gather and to glean occasions of displaying itself, in blessing every where; he does so, again, chap. 12, in the midst of a persecution. Herod persecutes; kills James with the sword, and lays hands on Peter, casting him into prison. But prayer rises in his behalf. An angel is sent to open the prison gates, and bring him out. Peter is asleep, between two soldiers, bound with two chains; but light shines into the prison; the chains fall from his hands, and he arises and follows the angel; they pass the first and second wards; the iron gate, into the city, opens of its own accord to them. Peter is alone outside. He hastes to the house of prayer, to announce the Lord's mercy, and then retires. The ado next day in and about the prison, can be conceived. But the cup of Herod's iniquity is now well nigh filled up. Sycophancy and adulation are ready to be offered by those who thought to turn his pride to their own benefit, and the shout arises from his flatterers: " It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." The angel of the Lord smote him with a loathsome disease.

God has not ceased to be God, nor has He ceased to exercise a governmental restraint over, and judgment upon, nations, because He has set grace in the Church, and rules there. The book of Jonah shows us, that it was so, also, when He was God of Israel upon earth. Today, His sway in the world is in exercise; kings and emperors, kingdoms and empires, though energized in by powers of darkness, are not outside of the governmental survey of God.

In chap. 13:9-11, there is another instance of the Lord's grace. Barnabas and Saul return from Jerusalem, their work there being ended (chap. 12:25), and are found (chap. 13) gathered at Antioch, with certain others.

Then and there the word comes "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them (ver. 2).

Thus sent forth by the Holy Ghost (ver. 4), they begin a progress or course of preaching and testimony; Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, John being with them, as their minister.

It is to be noted, that this is the time when Saul's name is changed to Paul in the Book. The circumstances are to be remarked, too. They were before Sergius Paulus, a man who wanted to hear the Word of God. Elymas, a sorcerer and false prophet, and a Jew, who was with Sergius, opposed them, and the progress of the faith.

Then Saul (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes upon him, and said, "O, full of all subtlety, and all mischief, thou child of the devil-enemy of all righteousness-Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And, now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And, immediately, there fell on him, a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand." The deputy Sergius receives the word.

We may remark here, that the mission of the first preachers of the Gospel outside of Jerusalem, and the mission of Barnabas and Saul from Antioch, were very different. The twelve apostles had been the holders of authority in the Church at Jerusalem; yet (not did they send, but) persecution scattered abroad, throughout all the regions of Judea and Samaria, the first preachers in those parts of the Gospel: it was an effect of Providence, that they were scattered (8:1); grace led them, every-where, to speak of Him they loved (ver. 4). It is the Holy Ghost who says to the prophets and teachers who were gathered together in prayer at Antioch, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (chap. 13). In this case, the mission is manifestly directly from God in the assembly.

From Paphos they go to Perga; whence John departs from them, returning to Jerusalem. But they go onward, whither the Spirit led them, to Antioch, in Pisidia. There, in the synagogue, Paul gave his testimony on the seventh day (ver. 16-41), with no little blessing. The Jews leave the synagogue; the Gentiles beg to hear the word again. Many of the Jews and proselytes follow Paul and Barnabas, who persuade them to continue in the grace of God. Next Sabbath, all the city, so to speak, comes to hear. Envy moves the Jews against the words spoken by Paul; they contradict and blaspheme. This forces these servants of the Lord to make good the position to which their work led them. They warn the Jews, and turn, in the most formal way, to the Gentiles. This is so important a step in their course, that we may as well quote the text: " But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul,

contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of, everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (ver. 45-48).

The word spreads (ver. 49). The unhappy Jews stir up persecution, and thrust the word and the Lord's messengers of it from them; but they, shaking off the dust of their feet against them, come to Iconium: and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

At Iconium, the testimony again begins in the synagogue: there is decided blessing (14:1), and opposition (ver. 2). But the Lord is with them in power (ver. 3); persecution ensues. They pass on to Lystra and Derbe (ver. 6). At Lystra, Paul displays his power on a cripple who had faith to be healed. The mob salutes them as gods, and would make Barnabas to be Jupiter, and Paul Mercury (he being the chief speaker). They protest against the blasphemy (ver. 8-18); and in the next verse (19) we read, that Jews came down from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people; and having stoned Paul, they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. But the mercy of the Lord was, in this case, above the enemy's spite and the disciples' fears; for as these last stood round Paul, he rose up and came into the city: thence he is onward to Derbe; back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.

They seek to settle the souls of the disciples in faith and patience (ver. 22), appoint elders in every assembly, and commend the disciples to the Lord with prayer. They pass onward, through various places, back to Antioch, whence they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled; and there relate what they have passed through-all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

The next chapter is one of peculiar interest in many respects. It contains an account of the effort made by some coming from Judea, to legalize the brethren at Antioch, through a false place given by them to the ordinance of circumcision. The disciples determine to take up the matter, and to send up Paul, Barnabas, and others to the head-quarters of such teaching. They go up, spreading joy everywhere by the blessed news of the conversion of the Gentiles. At Jerusalem they are received, announce the same good news, and set forth the legalizing teaching complained of. Peter (and it is the last time he appears in this book) takes his place as the one whom God had chosen among them, that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe.

God had given to the Gentiles the Holy Ghost, as well as to the Jews: He had put no difference between the two; both were to have the heart purified by faith. Why, then, tempt God, and put an unbearable yoke on the necks of disciples? Such was his thought. " But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they" (ver. 11). Barnabas and Paul then declare what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them (ver. 12). James confirms Peter's judgment (ver. 13-21). The apostles and elders of the whole Church send forth their written judgment by Barsabas and Silas, chosen men of their own company, who are to go down with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (ver. 22-29). This, which seemed good to the Holy Ghost and them at Jerusalem, is in a very solemn way made known at Antioch; and they were

glad (ver. 30, 31). Judas and Silas aid in the work; and, even when let go in peace, still please to stay on there (ver. 32-34).

Paul, after a time, proposes to Barnabas to repeat their former excursion: they split upon the question of companions. The contention was sharp, and issued in Barnabas taking Mark (who on the former occasion had turned back from the work), and sailing for Cyprus (alas! his native place); and Paul departs with Silas, being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God-no little matter that.

Here I close: for my subject was not the apostleship of Paul, but Heaven as it is, so far as it manifests itself in the setting up of the Church upon earth. We have seen the expressions of heaven as it is in acts; and we have seen deeds which proclaim the love and wisdom and power of God and of Jesus in heaven, owned now as Lord and Christ and Son of God, and of the Holy Ghost come down to earth. The aggressiveness of the love; the pertinacity and faithfulness of it; the way that power, in Providence and circumstances, acts, so as to make good the purposes of love where man fails to understand the Spirit's mind and teaching, and the depth and wisdom of the Lord's ways-are all to be noted and admired. What a master-stroke is found in the choice of Saul of Tarsus, the leader of the persecution by the circumcision, to be made the apostle of the uncircumcision! What depth in using the very persecution as the means of spreading the word everywhere; and that, too, when the Jerusalem prejudices of the twelve apostles had hindered them in understanding and in going forward with the commission they had received!

Jerusalem, and the testimony presented there by the Church, and renewed in various ways; the cities of Judea; Samaria; a Gentile proselyte; the Gentile Cornelius, and those with him--these were the trophies of grace in connection with the circumcision: the circumcision, as such, being clearly a mark for earth. The call of Saul as apostle of the uncircumcision -called from heaven, and sent by the Holy Ghost-is another thing. And the gradual leading of Saul through all the questions which seemed on earth to entangle his freedom, and his coming out in the close of this chapter, not with Barnabas, who had befriended him. (9:25) and counted on him (11:25), but with Silas (whom he chose, 15:40, and) whose working propensities had approved them-selves at Antioch, is remarkable, and tells of a mind in heaven which was directing everything for him.

The differences between the Church when at Jerusalem, and the Churches of heavenly disciples the wide world over, would tell many a tale of the perfectness of the same wisdom, love, and power, had we room to go into them.

For divine and heavenly grace, acting upon a limit which was confined by its connection with Jerusalem (God's self-chosen center for earthly dealings), could not express itself in the same free way as it chose for itself when its connection was (not with Jerusalem upon earth, but) with Jesus a§ Son of God in heaven-earth-rejected, though owned in heaven as Lord and Christ.

Hebrews

The important nature of the Epistle to the Hebrews demands that we should examine it with peculiar care. It has its own very distinct place. It is not the presentation of Christian position in itself, viewed as the fruit of sovereign grace, and of the work and the resurrection of Christ, or as the result of the union of Christians with Christ, the members of the body with the Head; a union which gives them the enjoyment of every privilege in Him. It is an epistle in which one who has apprehended the whole scope of Christianity, considered as placing the Christian in Christ before God, whether individually or as a member of the body, looks, nevertheless, at the Lord from here below; and presents His person, and His offices as between us and God, in Heaven, for the purpose of detaching us (as walking on earth), from all that would attach us, in a religious way, to the earth; even when-as was the case among the Jews-the bond had been ordained by God Himself.

This epistle shows us Christ in Heaven; and, consequently, that our religious bonds with God are heavenly, although we are not yet personally in Heaven ourselves. Every bond with the earth is broken, even while we are walking on the earth.

These instructions, naturally, are given in an epistle addressed to the Jews, because their religious relationships had been earthly, and at the same time solemnly appointed by God Himself. The heathen, as to their religions, had no formal relationships except with demons.

In the case of the Jews this rupture with the earth was in its nature, so much the more solemn, the more absolute and conclusive, from the relationship having been divine. This relationship was to be fully acknowledged, and entirely abandoned-not here because the believer is dead and risen again in Christ, but because Christ in Heaven takes the place of all earthly figures and ordinances. God Himself, who had instituted the ordinances of the law, now established other bonds, different indeed in character; but it was still the same God.

This fact gives occasion for His relationships with Israel to be resumed by Him hereafter, when the nation shall be re-established, and in the enjoyment of the promises. Not that this epistle views them as actually on that ground, but it lays down principles which can apply to that position, and in one or two passages it leaves (and ought to leave) a place for this ultimate blessing of the nation. The epistle to the Romans, in the direct instruction which it furnishes, cannot leave this place for the blessings proper to the Jewish people. In its point of view, all are alike sinners, and all in Christ are justified together before God in Heaven. Still less in the epistle to the Ephesians, with the object which it has in view, could there be room for speaking of the future blessing of God's people on the earth. It only contemplates Christians as united to their heavenly Head, as his body; or as the habitation of God on earth by the Holy Ghost. The epistle to the Romans, in the passage that shows the compatibility of this salvation (which because it was of God, was for all, without distinction), with the faithfulness of God to His promises made to the nation, touches the chord, of which we speak, even more distinctly than the epistle to the Hebrews; and shows us that Israel will-although in a different way from before-resume their place in the line peculiar to the heirs of

promise: a place which, through their sin, was left vacant for a time, to allow the bringing in of the Gentiles, on the principle of faith, into this blessed succession. We find this in Rom. 11 But the object in both epistles is to separate the faithful entirely from earth, and to bring them into relationship religiously, with Heaven: the one (that to the Romans), as regards their personal presentation to God by means, of divine righteousness; the other, with respect to the means which God has established, in order that the believer, in his walk here below, may find his present relationships with Heaven maintained, and his daily connection with God preserved in its integrity, or restored, if interrupted through his negligence.

I have said, preserved; because this is indeed the principal subject of the, epistle; but it must be added that these relationships are established on this ground by divine revelations, which communicate the will of God, and the conditions under which He is pleased to connect Himself with His people.

We should also remark, that in the epistle to the He-brews, although the relationship of the people -with God is established on a new ground, being founded on the heavenly position of the Mediator, they are considered as already existing. God treats with a people already known to Him. He addresses persons in relationship with Himself, and who for a long period have held the position of a people whom God had taken out from the world unto Himself. It is not, as in Romans, sinners without law, or transgressors of the law, between whom there is no difference, because all have alike come entirely short of the glory of God, all alike are the children of wrath. They were in need of some better thing-but those here addressed were in that need because they were in relation-ship with God, and the conditions of their relationship with Him brought nothing to perfection. That which they possessed was in fact nothing but signs and figures, -still, the people were, I again say, a people in relation-ship with God. Many of them might refuse the new method of blessing and grace, and consequently would be lost; but the link between the people and God is ac-counted to subsist.

It is very important for the understanding of this epistle, to apprehend this point, namely, that it is ad-dressed to Hebrews on the ground of a relationship which still existed; although it only retained its force in so far as they acknowledged the Messiah, who was its corner-stone.

Some remarks on the form of the epistle will help us to understand it better.

It does not contain the name of its author. The reason of this is touching and remarkable. It is that the Lord Himself, according to this epistle, was the apostle of Israel. The apostles whom He sent were only employed to confirm His words by transmitting them to others. God Himself confirming their testimony by miraculous gifts. This also makes us understand that although, as Priest, the Lord is in Heaven for the exercise of His Priesthood there, and in order to establish on new ground the relationship Of the people with God, yet that the communications of God with his people by means of the Messiah had begun when Jesus was on earth living in their midst. Consequently, the character of their relationship was not union with him in Heaven, it was relationship with God, on the ground of divine communications, and of the service of a Mediator with God.

Moreover, this epistle is rather a discourse, a treatise, than a letter addressed, in the exercise of apostolic functions, to saints with whom the writer was personally in connection. The author takes rather the place of a teacher than of an apostle. He speaks, doubtless, from the height of the

heavenly calling, but in connection with the actual position of the Jewish people; nevertheless it was for the purpose of making believers at length understand that they must abandon that position.

The time for judgment on the nation was drawing near; and, with regard to this, the destruction of Jerusalem had great significance, because it definitively broke off all outward relationship between God and the Jewish people. There was no longer an altar or sacrifice, priest or sanctuary. Every link was then broken by judgment, and remains broken, until it shall be formed again under the new covenant according to grace.

The author of this epistle (Paul, I doubt not, but this is of little importance) employed other motives than that of the approaching judgment, to induce the believing Jews to abandon their Judaic relationships; it is this last step, however, which He engages them to take; and the judgment was at hand. Until now, they had linked Christianity with Judaism; there had been thousands of Christians who were very zealous for the law. But God was about to destroy that system altogether-already in fact judged by the Jews' rejection of Christ, and by their resistance to the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Our epistle engages believers to come forth entirely from that system and to bear the Lord's reproach: setting before them a new foundation for their relationship with God, in a High Priest who is in the Heavens. At the same time, it links all that it says with the testimony of God by the prophets, through the inter-medium of Christ, the Son of God; speaking during His life on earth, though now speaking from Heaven.

Thus the new position is plainly set forth, but continuity with the former is also established; and we have a glimpse, by means of the new covenant, of continuity also with that which is to come-a thread by which another state of things, the millennial state, is connected with the whole of God's dealings with the nation, although that which is taught and developed in the epistle is the position of believers, (of the people) formed by the revelation of a heavenly Christ, on whom depended all their connection with God. They were to come forth from the camp; but it was because Jesus, in order to sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. For here there is no continuing city, we seek one that is to come. The writer places himself among the remnant of the people, as one of them. He teaches with the full light of the Holy Ghost, but not those to whom he had been sent as an apostle, with the apostolic authority which such a mission would have given him over them. It will be understood that in saying this we speak of the relationship of the writer, not of the inspiration of the writing.

While developing the sympathies of Christ and His sufferings, in order to show that He is able to compassionate the suffering and the tried, the epistle does not bring forward His humiliation, nor the reproach of the Cross, till quite at the end, when-His glory having been set forth-the author engages the Jews to follow Him and to share His reproach. The glory of the Messiah's person, His sympathies, His heavenly glory, are made prominent, in order to strengthen the faltering faith of

the Jewish Christians, and to fortify them in their Christian position that they might view the latter in its true character; and that they themselves, being connected with Heaven and established in their heavenly calling, might learn to bear the Cross and to separate themselves from the religion of the flesh.

We must look, then, in this epistle, for the character of relationships with God, formed upon the revelation of the Messiah in the position which He had taken,-and not for the doctrine of a new nature.

He is speaking to persons who were familiar with the privileges of the fathers.

God had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, at different times and in different ways; and now, at the end of those days, that is to say, at the end of the days of the Israelite dispensation, in which the law ought to have been in vigor at the end of the times during which God maintained relationship with Israel (sustaining them with a disobedient people by means of the prophets), at the end, then, of those days, God had spoken in the person of the Son.

It was not only by inspiring holy men (as he had done before), that they might recall Israel to the law, and announce the coming of the Messiah. Himself had spoken, as the son; in [His] Son. We see, at once, that the writer connects the revelation made by Jesus of the thoughts of God, with the former words addressed to Israel by the prophets. God has spoken, he says (identifying Himself with His people), to us, as He spake to our fathers by the prophets.

The Messiah had spoken, the Son of whom the Scriptures had already testified. This gives occasion to lay open, according to the Scriptures, the glory of this Messiah, of Jesus, with regard to His person, and to the position He has taken.

And here we must always remember, that it is the Messiah of whom he is speaking; He who once spoke on the earth. He declares, indeed, His divine glory; but it is the glory of Him who has spoken which he declares; the glory of that Son who had appeared according to the promises made to Israel.

This glory is two-fold, and in connection with the two-fold office of Christ. It is the divine glory of the person of the Messiah, the Son of God. The solemn authority of His Word is connected with this glory. And then there is the glory with which His humanity is invested, according to the counsels of God-the glory of the Son of Man; a glory connected with His sufferings during His sojourn here below, which fitted Him for the exercise of a priesthood, both merciful and intelligent with regard to the necessities and the trials of His people.

These two chapters are the foundation of all the doctrine of the epistle. In chap. 1 we find the glory of the Messiah's person; in chap. 2:1-4 (which continues the subject), the authority of His word. In chap. 2:6-18, His glorious humanity. As man, all things are put in subjection under Him; nevertheless, before being glorified, He took part in all the sufferings and in all the temptations to which the race, whose nature he had assumed, is subjected. With this glory His priesthood is connected: He is able to succor them that are tempted, in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted. Thus He is the Apostle and the High Priest of the "called" people.

To this two-fold glory is joined an accessory glory: He is Head, as Son, over His own house, possessing this authority as the One who created all things, even as Moses had authority, as a servant, over the house of God on earth. Now, the believers whom the inspired writer was addressing were this house, if, at least, they held fast their confession of His name unto the end. For the danger of the Hebrew converts was that of losing their confidence, because there was nothing before their eyes as the fulfillment of the promises. Consequently, exhortations follow

(chaps. 3:7; 4:13), which refer to the voice of the Lord, as carrying the Word of God into the midst of the people, in order that they might not harden their hearts.

From chap. 4:14, the subject of the priesthood is treated, introducing, also, the two covenants, the change of the law-necessarily consequent upon the change of priesthood-the value of the sacrifice in the new covenant, in contrast with the figures that accompanied the old; and, on which, and on the blood which was shed in them, the covenant itself was founded. This instruction on the priesthood continues to the end of ver. 18 in chap. 10. The exhortations founded thereon, introduce the principle of the endurance of faith, which leads to chap. 11, in which the cloud of witnesses is reviewed, crowning them with the example of Christ Himself, who completed the whole career of faith in spite of every obstacle, and who shows us where this painful but glorious path terminates (chap. 12:2).

From ver. 3, he enters more closely into the trials found in the path of faith, and gives the most solemn warnings with regard to the danger of those who draw back, and the most precious encouragements to those who persevere in it; setting forth the relationship into which we are brought by grace; and, finally, in chap. 13, he exhorts the faithful Hebrews on several points of detail, and in particular on that of unreservedly taking the Christian position under the cross, laying stress on the fact that Christians alone had the true worship of God, and that they who chose to persevere in Judaism had no right to take part in it. In a word, he would have them to separate themselves definitively from a Judaism which was already judged, and to lay hold of the heavenly calling, bearing the cross here below.

Such is the summary of our epistle; we return now to the study of its chapters in detail.

1. We have said that, in chap. 1, we find the glory of the person of the Messiah, the Son of God, by whom God has spoken to the people. When I say "to the people," it is evident that we understand the epistle to be addressed to the believing remnant, partakers, it is said, of the heavenly calling, but considered as alone holding the true place of the people.

It is a distinction given to the remnant, with regard to the real position which the Messiah took in connection with His people, to whom, in the first instance, he came. The tried and despised remnant are encouraged, and their faith is sustained, by the true glory of their Messiah, hidden from their natural eyes, and the object of faith only.

" God," says the inspired writer, placing himself among the believers of the beloved nation, " has spoken to us, in the person of His Son." Psa. 2 should have led the Jews to expect the Son, and they ought to have formed a high idea of His glory from Isa. 9, and other Scriptures, which, in fact, were applied to the Messiah by their teachers, as the Rabbinical writings still prove. But that He should be in heaven, and not have raised His people to the possession of earthly glory-this did not suit the carnal state of their hearts. And this was the reason of their being so greatly embarrassed when the Lord, in His last discourses at Jerusalem, applied Ps. 110 to the Son of David.

Now, it is this heavenly glory, this true position of the Messiah and His people, in connection with His divine right to their attention, and to the worship of the angels themselves, which is so admirably presented here, where the Spirit of God brings out, in so infinitely precious a manner, the divine glory of Christ, for the purpose of exalting His people to belief in a heavenly position; at the same time, setting forth His perfect sympathy with us, as man, in order to maintain their

communion with heaven, in spite of the difficulties of their path on earth.

Thus, although the Church is not found in the epistle to the Hebrews, the Savior of the Church is there presented, in His person, His work and His priesthood, most richly to our hearts and to our spiritual intelligence; and the heavenly calling is in itself very particularly developed.

It is also most interesting to see the way in which the work of our Savior, accomplished for us, forms a part of the manifestation Of His divine glory.

"God has spoken in the Son," says the inspired author of our epistle. He is then this Son. First, He is declared Heir of all things. It is He who is to possess gloriously, as Son, everything that exists. Such are the decrees of God. Moreover, it is by Him that God created the worlds. All the vast systems of this universe, those unknown worlds that trace their paths in the vast regions of space in divine order, to manifest the glory of a Creator-God, are the work of His hand who has spoken to us, of the divine Christ.

In Him has shone forth the glory of God, He is the perfect impress of His being. We see God in Him, in all that He said, in all that He did, in His person. Moreover, by the power of His Word He upholds all that exists. He is, then, the Creator. God is revealed in His person. He sustains all things by His Word, which has thus a divine power. But this is not all (for we are still speaking of the Christ); there is another part of His glory, -divine, indeed, yet manifested in human nature. He who was all this which we have just seen, when He had by Himself (accomplishing His own glory, and for His glory) wrought the purification of our sins, seated Himself at the right hand of the Majesty on Mei. Here is, in full, the personal glory of Christ. He is, in fact, the Creator, the revelation of God, the upholder of all things by His Word, He is the Redeemer -He has, by Himself, purged our sins, has seated Himself at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is the Messiah who is all this. He is the Creator-God, but He is a Messiah who has taken His place in the heavens at the right hand of Majesty, having accomplished the purification of our sins. We perceive how this exhibition of the glory of Christ, the Messiah, whether personal or that of position, would bring whoever believed in it out of Judaism; while linking itself with the Jewish promises and hopes. He is God, He has come down from heaven, He has gone up thither again.

Now those who attached themselves to Him, found themselves, in another respect also, above the Jewish system. That system was ordained in connection with angels: but Christ has taken a position much higher than that of angels, because He has for His own proper inheritance a name (i.e., a revelation of what He is) which is much more excellent than that of angels. Upon this, the author of this epistle quotes several passages from the Old Testament which speak of the Messiah, in order to show that which He is, in contrast with the nature and the relative position of angels. The significance of these passages to a converted Jew is evident, and we readily perceive the adaptation of the argument to such; for the Jewish economy was under the administration of angels, according to their own belief-a belief fully grounded on the Word. And, at the same time, it was their own Scriptures which proved that the Messiah was to have a position much more excellent and exalted than that of angels, according to the rights that belonged to Him by virtue of His nature, and according to the counsels and the revelation of God: so that they who united themselves to Him were brought into connection with that which entirely eclipsed the law and all that related to it, and to the Jewish economy which could not be separated from it, and whose glory was angelic in character. The glory of Christianity-and he speaks to those who

acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ-was so much above the glory of the law, that the two could not be really united.

The quotations begin by that from Psa. 2. God, it is written, has never said to any of the angels, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." It is this, character of Sonship, proper to the Messiah, which, as a real relationship, distinguishes Him. He was from eternity the Son of the Father; but it is not precisely in this point of view that He is here considered. The name expresses the same relationship, but it is to the Messiah born on earth, that this title is here applied. For Psa. 2, establishing Him as King in Zion, announces the decree which proclaims His title. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," is His relationship in time with God. It depends, I doubt not, on His glorious nature, but this position for man was acquired by the miraculous birth of Jesus here below, and demonstrated as true, and determined in its true import, by His resurrection. In Psa. 2, the testimony borne to this relationship is in connection with His Kingship in Zion, but it declares the personal glory of the King, acknowledged of God. By virtue of the rights connected with this title, all kings are summoned to submit themselves to Him. This Psalm, then, is speaking of the government of the world when God establishes the Messiah as King in Zion, and not of the gospel. But in the passage quoted Heb. 1:5, it is the relationship of glory in which He subsists with God, the foundation of His rights, which is set forth, and not the royal rights themselves.

This is likewise the case in the next quotation, "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son." Here we plainly see that it is the relationship in which He is with God, in which God accepts and owns Him, and not His eternal relationship with the Father: "I will be to Him a Father, &c.'" Thus it is still the Messiah, the King in Zion, the Son of David; for these words are addressed in the first place to Solomon as the son of David (2 Sam. 7:24, and 1 Chron. 17:13). In this second passage, the application of the expression to the true Son of David, is more distinct. A relationship so intimate, expressed, one may say, with so much affection, was not the portion of angels. The son of God, acknowledged to be so by God Himself-this is the portion of the Messiah in connection with God. The Messiah, then, is Son of God in an altogether peculiar way, which could not be applied to angels.

But still more. When God introduces the First-born into the world, all the angels are called to worship Him. God presents Him to the world-but the highest of created beings must then cast themselves at His feet. The angels of God Himself, the creatures that are nearest to Him, must do homage to the First-born. This last expression also is remarkable. The First-born is the Heir; the beginning of the manifestation of the glory and power of God. It is in this sense that the word is used. It is said of the Son of David, "I will make Him my first-born, I will exalt Him above the kings of the earth." Thus the Messiah is introduced into the world as holding this place with regard to God Himself. He is the Firstborn-the immediate expression of the rights and the glory of God. He has universal pre-eminence.

Such is-so to speak-the positional glory of the Messiah. Not only Head of the people on earth, as Son of David, nor even only the acknowledged Son of God on the earth, according to Psa. 2, but the universal Firstborn; so that the chief and most exalted of creatures, those nearest to God, the angels of God, the instruments of His power and government, must do homage to the Son in this His position.

Yet, this is far from being all; and this homage itself would be out of place, if His glory were not proper to Himself and personal, if it were not connected with His nature. Nevertheless, that which we have before us in this chapter is still the Messiah, as owned of God. God tells us what He is. Of the angels He says, "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers flames of fire." He does not make His Son anything-He recognizes that which He is, saying, " Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." The Messiah may have an earthly throne, (which, also, is not taken from Him, but which ceases by His taking possession of an eternal throne), but He has a throne which is forever and ever.

The scepter of His throne as Messiah is a scepter of righteousness. Also He has personally loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. These companions are the believing remnant of Israel, whom He has made, by grace, His fellows, although, (perfectly well-pleasing to God by His love of righteousness-and that, at all costs) He is exalted above them all. This is a remarkable passage, because while, on the one hand, the divinity of the Lord is fully established, as well as His eternal throne, on the other hand the passage comes down to his character as the faithful man on earth, where He made pious men, the little remnant of Israel who waited for redemption, His companions; at the same time it gives Him (and it could not be otherwise), a place above them.

The text then returns to the glory given Him as man, having the pre-eminence here as in all things.

I have already remarked elsewhere that while-as we read in Zechariah-Jehovah recognizes the humbled man, against whom His sword awakes to smite, as His fellow; here where the divinity of Jesus is set forth, the same Jehovah owns the poor remnant of believers as the fellows of the divine Savior. Marvelous links between God and His people!

Already, then, in these remarkable testimonies, He has the eternal throne and the scepter of righteousness, He is recognized as God, although a man, and glorified above all others, as the reward of righteousness.

But the declaration of His divinity, the divinity of the Messiah, must be more precise. And here the testimony is of the greatest beauty. The Psalm that contains it is the most complete expression of the sense which Jesus had of His humiliation on earth, of His dependence on Jehovah, and that having been raised up as Messiah from among men, He was cast down and His days shortened. If Zion were rebuilt (and the Psalm speaks prophetically of the time when it should have taken place) where would He be-Messiah as He was,-if, weakened and humbled, He was cut off in the midst of His days; as was the case. In a word, it is the prophetic expression of the Savior's heart, in the prospect of that which happened to Him as man on the earth: the utterance of His heart to Jehovah in those days of humiliation, in presence of the renewed affection of the remnant for the dust of Zion,-an affection which the Lord had produced in their hearts, and which was therefore a token of His good-will, and His purpose to re-establish it. But how could a Savior who was cut off have part in it? (a searching question for a believing Jew, tempted on that side). The words here quoted are the answer to this question. Humbled as He might be, it was the Creator Himself. He was ever the same; His years could never fail. It was He who had founded the heavens. He would fold them up as a garment, but He Himself would never change.

Such, then, is the testimony rendered to the Messiah by the Scriptures of the Jews themselves-the glory of His position above the angels who administered the dispensation of the law; His eternal throne of righteousness; His unchangeable divinity as Creator of all things.

One thing remained to complete this chain of glory-i.e., the place occupied at present by Christ, in contrast still with the angels: a place that depends on the one hand upon the divine glory of His person; on the other, upon the accomplishment of His work. And this place is at the right hand of God, who called Him to sit there until He had made His enemies His footstool. Not only is His person glorious and divine, not only does He hold the first place with regard to all creatures in the universe, (we have spoken of this, which will take place when He is introduced into the world), but He has His own place at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. To which of the angels has God ever said this? They are servants, on God's part, to the heirs of salvation.

2. This is the reason why it was so much the more needful to hearken to the Word spoken, in order that they should not let it pass away from life and memory.

God had maintained the authority of the Word that was communicated by means of angels, punishing disobedience to it, for it was a law. How then shall we escape if we neglect a salvation which the Lord Himself has announced? Thus, the service of the Lord among the Jews was a word of salvation, which the apostles confirmed, and which the mighty testimony of the Holy Ghost established.

Such is the exhortation addressed to the believing Jews, founded on the glory of the Messiah, whether with regard to His position or His person,

We have already remarked, that the testimony, of which this epistle treats, is attributed to the Lord Him-self; therefore we must not expect to find in it the Church (as such), of which the Lord had only spoken prophetically; but His testimony in relation to Israel, among whom He sojourned on the earth, to whatever extent that testimony reached. That which was spoken by the apostles, is only treated here as a confirmation of the Lord's own word; God having added His testimony to it by the miraculous manifestations of the Spirit, who distributed His gifts to each according to His will.

The glory of which we have been speaking is the personal glory of the Messiah, the Son of David; and His glory in the time present, during which God has called Him to sit at His right hand. He is the Son of God, He is even the Creator; but there is also His glory in connection with the world to come, as Son of man. Of this the second chapter speaks, comparing Him still with the angels; but here to exclude them altogether. In the previous chapter they had their place: the law was given by angels; they are servants, on God's part, of the heirs of salvation. In chap. 2 they have no place; they do not reign; the world to come is not made subject to them-i.e. this habitable earth, directed and governed as it will be when God shall have accomplished that which He has spoken of by the prophets.

The order of the world, placed in relationship with Jehovah under the law (or "lying in darkness"), has been interrupted by the rejection of the Messiah, who has taken His place at the right hand of God on high, His enemies being not yet given into His hand for judgment; because God is carrying on His work of grace, and gathering out the Church. But He will yet establish a new order of things on the earth: this will be " the world to come." Now, that world is not made subject to angels. The

testimony given in the Old Testament with regard to this, is as follows: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor; thou hast set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Thus all things, without exception (save He who has made them subject to Him), are, according to the purpose of God, put under the feet of man, and in particular of the Son of man.

When studying the Book of Psalms, we saw that which I recall here, namely, that this testimony in Psalm 8 is, with regard to the position and dominion of Christ as man, an advance upon Psa. 2. Psa. 1 sets before us the righteous man, accepted of God; Psa. 2, the counsels of God respecting His Messiah, in spite of the efforts made by the kings and governors of the earth. God established Him as King in Zion, and summoned all the kings to do homage to Him, whom He proclaimed to be His Son on the earth. Afterward we see that He was rejected, that the remnant suffer, and that even from Psa. 2 the kings are rebellious. But Psa. 8 shows that all this only served to enlarge the sphere of His glory. Christ takes the position of man and the title of Son of man, and enjoys His rights according to the counsels of God; and, made lower than the angels, He is crowned with glory and honor. And not only are the kings, of the earth made subject to Him, but all things, without exception, are put under His feet. It is this which the apostle quotes here. The Christ had already been rejected, and His being established as King in Zion put off, to be accomplished at a later period. He had been exalted to the right hand of God, as we have seen; and the wider title had accrued to Him, although the result was not yet accomplished.

To this the epistle here calls our attention. We see not yet the accomplishment of all that this Psalm announces; namely, that all things should be put under His feet; but a part is already fulfilled—a guarantee to the heart of the fulfillment of the whole. Made a little lower than the angels, He is crowned with glory and honor. He has suffered death, and He is crowned in reward for His work, by which He perfectly glorified God in the place where He had been dishonored, and saved man (those who believe in Him) where man was lost. For He was made lower than the angels, in order that, by the grace of God, He should taste death for all things. It appears to me that the words, "for the suffering of death," "crowned with glory and honor," go together; and that "a little lower than the angels... so that by the grace of God," are connected together.

This passage, then, which is thus applied to the Lord, presents Him as exalted to heaven when He had undergone the death which gave Him a right to all, while waiting till all is put under His feet. But there is another truth connected with this. He had undertaken the cause of the sons whom God was bringing to glory, and therefore He must enter into the circumstances in which they were found, suffer the consequences thereof, and be treated according to the work He had undertaken. It was a reality; and it was fitting that God should vindicate the rights of His glory, and should maintain it with reference to those who had dishonored Him, and that He should treat the One who had taken their cause in hand, and who stood before Him in their name, as representing them in that respect. God would bring the Captain of their salvation to perfection through sufferings. He was to undergo the consequences of the situation into which He had come. His work was to be a reality, according to the measure of the responsibility which He had taken upon Himself. He must therefore suffer; He must taste death. It is by the grace of God that He did so—we, because of sin; He, because of grace, for sin.

This shows us the Christ standing in the midst of those who are saved, whom God brings to glory, although at their head. It is this which our epistle sets before us -He who sanctifies (the Christ), and they who are sanctified (the remnant set apart for God by the Spirit), are all of one: an expression, the force of which is easily apprehended, but difficult to express, when one abandons the abstract nature of the phrase itself. Observe, that it is only of sanctified persons that this is said. Christ and the sanctified ones are all one company, in the same position, before God. But the idea goes a little farther.

It is not of one and the same Father; had it been so, it could not have been said, " He is not ashamed to call them brethren." He could not then do otherwise than call them brethren.

If we say, "of the same mass " the expression may be pushed too far, as though He and the others were of the same nature as children of Adam, sinners together. In this case, He would have to call every man His brother; whereas it is only the children whom God has -given Him, " sanctified' ones, that He so calls. But He and the sanctified ones are all, as men, in the same human nature together before God. When I say, "the same," it is not in the same state of sin but in the same truth of humanity, as it is before God; the same as far forth as man when He, as the sanctified one, is before God. On this account, He is not ashamed to call the sanctified His brethren.

This position is entirely gained by resurrection; for although, in principle, the children were given to Him before, yet He only called them His brethren when He had finished the work which enabled Him to present them with Himself before God. He said, indeed, "mother, sister, brother"; but He did not use the term "my brethren," until He said to Mary of Magdala, " Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. Also in Psa. 22, it is when He had been heard from the horns of the unicorn, that He declared the name of a deliverer-God to His brethren, and that He praised God in the midst of the assembly.

He spoke to them of the Father's name, but the link itself could not be formed; He could not introduce them to the Father, until the grain of wheat, falling into the ground, had died; until then He remained alone, whatever might be the revelations that He made to them: and, in fact, He declared the name of His Father to those whom He had given Him. Still, He had actually taken the human position, and He Himself was in this relationship with God. He kept them in the Father's name, they were not yet united to Him in this position; but He was in the position in which they also should be before God, when they were united to Him in this same relationship with God. That which He does in the latter part of the Gospel by John, is to place His disciples-in the explanations He gave of the condition in which He left them-in the position which He, in fact, had held on earth; and He did not cease to associate Himself with; them-with us-when He ascended to heaven, although no longer corporeally subjected to the trials of that position.

He was not ashamed, then, to call them brethren, saying-exalted as He was-I will declare thy name unto my brethren, I will praise thee in the midst of the assembly. And, speaking of the remnant separated from Israel, He says, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me, are for signs unto the two houses of Israel." And again, " I will put my trust in Him," a quotation from Isa. 8; so in the Psalms, especially in Psa. 16, He declares that He does not take His place as God -" my goodness extends not to thee"- but that He identifies Himself with the excellent of the earth, that all His delight is in them. This is again the remnant of Israel, called by grace.

Christ takes the place of a sanctified man, a godly man on earth. In this passage, it is still His place on earth, adding to it His sufferings, His future glory, His divinity, as we have seen.

Having taken this place at the head of the chosen band, their servant in all things, He must conform Himself to their position. And this He did. The children being partakers of flesh and blood, He took part in the same; and that, in order that by death He might put an end to the dominion of him who had the power of death, and deliver those who, through fear of death, had been subjected all their life to the yoke of bondage.

Here, also (the apostle seeking always to display the glorious and efficacious side, even of that which was most humbling, in order to accustom the weak heart of -the Jews to that portion of the gospel), we find that the Lord's work goes far beyond the limits of a presentation of the Messiah to His people. Not only is He glorious in heaven, but He has conquered Satan in the very place where he exercised his sad dominion over man, and where the judgment of God lay heavily upon man.

Moved by a profound love for man, the Son-become the Son of Man-enters in heart and in fact into all the need, and submits to all the circumstances, of man, in order to deliver him. He takes (for He was not in it before) flesh and blood, in order to die, because man was subjected to death, and in order to destroy him who exercised his dominion over man through death, and made him tremble all His lifetime in the expectation of that terrible moment, which testified of the judgment of God, and the inability of man to escape the consequences of sin; the condition into which disobedience to God had plunged him. For, verily, the Lord did not undertake the cause of angels, but that of the seed of Abraham; and, in order to perform the work that was necessary for them, and to represent them efficaciously and really before God, He must needs put Himself into the position and the circumstances in which that seed were found.

It will be remarked here, that it is still a family owned of God, which is before our eyes, as the object of the Savior's affection and care; the children whom God had given Him. Children of Abraham after the flesh, if in that condition they answered to the designation of " seed of Abraham," (this is the question of John 8:37 -39), or his children according to the Spirit, if grace gives it them.

These truths introduce priesthood. As Son of Man, He had been made a little less than the angels, and, crowned already with glory and honor, was hereafter to have all things put under His feet. This we do not yet see; it is " the world to come, of which we speak." But He took this place of humiliation in order to taste death for the whole system that was afar from God, and to gain the full rights of the Second Man, by glorifying God there, where the creature had failed through weakness, and where, also, the enemy, having deceived man by his subtlety, had dominion over him (according to the righteous judgment of God) in power and malice. At the same time, He tasted death for the special purpose of delivering the children whom God would bring to glory, taking their nature and gathering them together as sanctified ones around Himself, de not being ashamed to call them brethren. But it was thus that He was to represent them before God, according to the efficacy of the work which He had accomplished for them; that is to say, He would become a priest, being able, through His life of humiliation and trial here below, to sympathize with His own, in all their conflicts and difficulties.

He suffered (never yielded - we do not suffer when we yield to temptation, the flesh takes pleasure in the things by which it is tempted); Jesus suffered, being tempted, and He is able to succor them that are tempted. It is important to observe that the flesh, when acted upon by its desires, does not suffer. Being tempted, it (alas!) enjoys. But when, according to the light of the Holy Ghost and the fidelity of obedience, the spirit resists the attacks of the enemy, whether subtle or persecuting, then one suffers. This the Lord did, and this we have to do. That which needs succor is the new man, the faithful heart, and not the flesh. I need succor against the flesh, and in order to mortify all the members of the old man.

Here, the needed help refers to the difficulties of the faithful saint in fulfilling all the will of God. This is where he suffers, this is where the Lord-who has suffered -can succor him. He trod this path, He learned in it that which can be suffered there from the enemy, and from men. A human heart feels it, and Jesus had a human heart. Besides, the more faithful the heart is, the more full of love to God, and the less it has of that hardness which is the result of intercourse with the world, the more will it suffer. Now, there was no hardness in Jesus. His faithfulness and His love were equally perfect. He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief and weariness. He suffered, being tempted.

3. Thus, the Lord is set before us as the Apostle and High Priest of believers from among the Jews, the true people. I say, " from among the Jews," not that He is not our Priest, but that here the sacred writer places himself among the believing Jews, saying, "our;" and, instead of speaking himself as an apostle, he points out Jesus as the Apostle; which He was in person among the Jews. In principle, it is true of all believers. That which He has said is the Lord's Word, and He is able to succor us when we are tempted. We are His house.

For we have here a third character of Christ. He is a " Son over His own house." Moses was faithful in all the house of God, as a servant, in testimony to the things that were afterward to be proclaimed. But Christ is over His own house; thus, it is not as a servant. He has built the house. He is God.

Moses identified Himself with the house, faithful therein in all things. But Christ is more excellent; even as he who builds a house is more excellent than the house. But He who built all things is God. And this is what Christ did. For, in fact, the house, i.e., the tabernacle in the wilderness, was a figure of the universe: and Christ passed through the heavens, as the High Priest passed into the sanctuary. All was cleansed with blood, even as God will reconcile all things by Christ in the heavens and on the earth. In a certain sense, this universe is the house of God. He deigns to inhabit it. Christ created it all. But there is a house which is more properly His own. We are His house; taking it for granted that we persevere to the end.

The Hebrew Christians were in danger-being attracted by their former habits, and by a law and ceremonies which God Himself had established-of forsaking a Christianity, in which Christ was not visible, for things that were visible and palpable. The Christ of Christians, far from being a crown of glory to the people, was only an object of faith, so that if faith failed, He was deprived of all importance to them. A religion that made itself seen (the "old wine"), naturally attracted those that had been accustomed to it.

But, in fact, Christ was much more excellent than Moses; as he who has built the house has more honor than the house. Now, this house was the figure of all things, and He who had built them was God. The passage gives us this view of Christ, and of the house; and, also says, that we are this house. And Christ is not the servant here. He is the Son over His own house.

We must always remember that which has been already remarked, namely, that in this epistle we have not the Church as the body of Christ in union with Himself.; nor even the Father either, except as a comparison in chap. 12. It is God, a heavenly Christ (who is the Son and God), and a people; the Messiah being a heavenly mediator between the people and God. Therefore, the proper privileges of the Church are not found in this epistle, they flow from our union with Christ; and, here, Christ is a person apart, who is between us and God.

There are still a few remarks which we may add here, in order to throw light on this point, and to assist the reader in understanding the two first chapters, as well as the principle of the instructions throughout the epistle.

In chap. 1, Christ accomplishes, by Himself, as a part of His divine glory, the cleansing of our sins, and seats Himself at the right hand of God. This work, observe, is done by Himself. We have nothing to do with it, save to believe in, and enjoy, it. It is a divine work which this divine person has accomplished by Himself; so that it has all the absolute perfection, all the force of a work done by Him, without any mixture of our weakness, of our efforts, or of our experiences. He performed it by Himself, and it is accomplished. Thereupon He takes His seat. He is not placed there-He seats Himself upon the throne on high.

In chap. 2, we see another point which characterizes the epistle. The present state of the glorified man. He is crowned with glory and honor; but it is with a view to an order of things which is not yet accomplished. It is the person of the man Christ which is presented, not the Church in union with Him, even when He is beheld as glorified in the heavens. This glory is viewed as a partial accomplishment of that which belongs to Him, according to the counsels of God, as the Son of Man, Hereafter, this glory will be complete in all its parts, by the subdual of all things.

The present glory, therefore, of Christ makes us look forward to an order of things yet future, which will be full rest, full blessing. In a word, besides the perfection of His work, the epistle sets before us the sequel of that which belongs to the Christ in person, the Son of man, not the perfection of the Church in Him. And this embraces the present time, the character of which depends-to the believer-on Christ's being now glorified in heaven while waiting for a future state, in which all things will be subjected to Him.

In this chap. 2, we see also that He is crowned. He is not sitting there as in His own original right, but having been made a little less than the angels God crowns Him. We also plainly see, that although the 'believing Hebrews are especially in view, and even that all Christians are classed under the title of Abraham's seed on the earth, yet that Christ is viewed, nevertheless, as the Son of man, and not as the Son of David; and the question is put, "What is man?" The answer (the precious answer for us) is, Christ glorified, once dead on account of man's condition. In Him we see the mind of God with regard to man.

The fact that Christians themselves are viewed as the seed of Abraham, plainly shows the way in which they are considered as forming part of the chain of the heirs of promise on earth (as in Rom.

11), and not as the Church united to Christ as His body in heaven.

The work is perfect-it is the work of God. He has by Himself purged our sins. The full result of the counsels of God with regard to the Son of Man is not yet come. Thus the earthly part can be brought in, as a thing foreseen as well as the heavenly part, although the persons to whom the epistle is addressed had part in the heavenly glory, participated in the heavenly calling, in connection with the present position of the Son of man.

The remnant of the Jews, as we have said, are considered as continuing the chain of the people blessed on earth, whatever heavenly privileges they may also possess, or whatever their especial state may be in connection with the Messiah's exaltation to heaven. We have been grafted into the good olive-tree, so that we share all the advantages here spoken of. Our highest position, and the privileges belonging to it, are not here in view. Accordingly, as writing to Hebrews, and as one among them, he addresses them, that is to say, Christians and believing Israelites. This is the force of the word "us" in the epistle; we must bear it in mind, and that the Hebrew believers always form the word "us," of which the writer is also a part.

As I have said, we rightly appropriate it, in principle; but to have a clear view of His meaning, we must put ourselves at the point of view which the Spirit of God has taken.

No one ought to harden their hearts; but this word is especially addressed to Israel, and that until the day when Christ shall appear. In speaking of it, the author returns to the word that had formerly been addressed to Israel; not now, in order to warn them of the danger they would incur by neglecting it, but of the consequences of departing from that which they had acknowledged to be true. -Israel, when delivered out of Egypt, had provoked God in the wilderness (it was, indeed, the case also of Christians in this world), because they were not at once, and without difficulty, in Canaan. Those to whom he wrote were in danger of forsaking the living God in the same way; that is, the danger was there before their eyes. They should rather exhort each other, while it was still called to-day, in order that they might not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. This word "to-day" is the expression of the patient activity of God's grace towards Israel, even unto the end. The people were unbelieving; they have hardened their hearts; they have done so, and will, alas! do so to the end, until judgment comes in the person of the Messiah-Jehovah, whom they have despised. But until then God loves to reiterate "To-day, if ye will hear my voice." It may be that only a few will hearken - it may be that the nation is judicially hardened, in order to admit the Gentiles; but the word "to-day" still resounds for every one among them who has ears to hear, until the Lord shall appear in judgment. It is addressed to the people, according to the long-suffering of God. For the remnant who had believed, it was an especial warning not to walk in the ways of the hardened people, who had refused to hearken-not to turn back to them, forsaking their own confidence in the Word which had called them, as Israel did in the wilderness.

As long as the "to-day" of the call of grace should continue, they were to exhort one another, lest unbelief should glide into their hearts through the subtlety of sin. It is thus that the living God is forsaken. We speak thus practically, not with reference to the faithfulness of God, who certainly will not allow any of His own to perish, but with regard to practical danger, and to that which would draw us away - as to our responsibility - from God, and forever, if God did not intervene, acting in the life which He has given us, and which never perishes.

Sin separates us from God in our thoughts; we have no longer the same sense either of His love, His power, or His interest in us. Confidence is lost. Hope, and the value of unseen things, diminish; while the value of things that are seen proportionately increases. The conscience is bad; one is not at ease with God; the path is hard and difficult; the will strengthens itself against Him; we no longer live by faith; visible things come in between us and God, and take possession of the heart. Where there is life, God warns by His Spirit (as in this epistle), He chastises and restores. Where it was only an outward influence, a faith devoid of life, and the conscience not reached, it is abandoned.

It is the warning against so doing that arrests the living. The dead - they whose consciences are not engaged, who do not say, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"-despise the warning and perish. This was the case with Israel in the wilderness, and God swore unto them that they should not enter into His rest (Num. 14:21-23). And why? They had given up their confidence in Him. Their unbelief - when the beauty and excellence of the land had been reported to them-deprived them of the promised rest.

The position of the believers to whom this epistle is addressed was the same as this, although in connection with better promises. The beauty and excellence of the heavenly Canaan had been proclaimed to them. They had, by the Spirit, seen and tasted its fruit; they were in the wilderness; they had to persevere, to maintain their confidence unto the end.

Observe here - for Satan and our own conscience, when it has not been set free, often make use of this epistle - that doubting Christians are not here contemplated, or persons who have not yet gained entire confidence in God; to those who are in this condition it has no application. The exhortations are to preserve a confidence which one has, and to persevere, not to tranquillize fears and doubts. This use of the epistle to sanction such doubts is but a device of the enemy. Only I would add here, that although the full knowledge of grace (which, in such a case, the soul has assuredly not yet attained) is the only thing that can deliver and set it free from its fears, yet it is very important practically to maintain a good conscience, in order not to furnish the enemy with a special means of attack.

4. The apostle goes on to apply this part of Israel's history to those whom he was addressing, laying stress on two points: 1st. That Israel had failed of entering into rest through unbelief; 2nd. That the rest was yet to come, and that believers (those who were not seeking rest here, but who accepted the wilderness for the time being) should enter into it.

He begins by saying: " Let us fear, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, lest any should seem to come short of it, not to attain it. For we have been the objects of the proclamation of His promises, as they were in times past. But the word addressed to them remained fruitless, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it: for we which have believed do enter into rest. The rest itself is yet to come, and it is by faith that we enter into it. For a rest of God there is, and there are some who enter into it; inasmuch as it is written, They, i.e. those [pointing out a certain class who are to be excluded] shall not enter into my rest.' " God had wrought in creation, and then rested from His works when He had finished them. Thus, from the foundation of the world, He has shown that He had a rest, as in the passage already quoted, " If they shall enter into my rest.' Two things, then, are evident: some were to enter in, and the first to whom it was proposed did not enter in, because of their unbelief. Therefore He again fixes a day, saying, in David, long after the entrance into Canaan, " To-day - as it is written - to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

Here a natural objection occurs, to which the apostle gives a complete answer, without speaking of the objection itself. The Israelites had, indeed, fallen in the wilderness, but Joshua had brought the people into Canaan, which the unbelievers never reached; the Jews were there. The answer is evident. It was long after this that God said, by David, " I swore in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest." If Joshua had given rest to Israel, David would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God. It is yet to come; but it is assured by the word of God. A truth, the bearing of which is immediately seen with regard to the connection of the believing Jews with the nation, in the midst of which they were tempted to seek a rest that, for the moment, faith (being enfeebled) did not afford them. To have God's rest, one must persevere in faith. Present, apparent rest, was not the true rest. God's rest was still to be waited for. Faith alone acknowledged this, and sought for none in the wilderness, trusting to the promise. God still said " To-day."

The state of the people was worse than the rest that Joshua gave them; which, as their own Psalms prove, was no rest at all.,

As to the order of the verses, the exhortation in ver. 11, depends on the whole course of what precedes, the argument having been completed by the testimony of David, coming after Joshua. After the creation, God indeed rested: but He said, after that, " If they shall enter into my rest." So that men had not entered into that rest. Joshua entered into the land; but the word by David, coming long after, proves that the rest of God was not yet attained. Nevertheless, this same testimony which forbade the entrance into rest because of unbelief,' showed that some are to enter in-otherwise there was no need of declaring the exclusion of others for an especial cause.

Now, as long as any one had not ceased from his own works, he had not entered into rest; he who has entered into it, has ceased from work; even as God ceased from His /works when He entered into His rest. "Let us, therefore, use all diligence," is the exhortation of the faithful witness of God, " that we may enter into that rest-the rest of God-in order that we may not fall, after the same example of unbelief."

We should especially observe here, that it is the rest of God which is spoken of. This enables us to understand the happiness and perfection of the rest. God must rest in that which satisfies His heart. This was the case even in creation-all was very good. And now, it must be in a perfect blessing that perfect love can be satisfied with regard to us, who shall possess a heavenly portion in the blessing which we shall have in His own presence, in perfect holiness and perfect light. Accordingly, all the toilsome work of faith, the exercise of faith in the wilderness, the warfare, (although there are many joys) the good works practiced there, labor of every kind will cease. It is not only that we shall be delivered from the power of indwelling sin; all the efforts and all the troubles of the new man will cease. We are already set free from the law of sin: then, our spiritual exercises for God will cease. We shall rest from our works-not evil ones. We have already rested from our works with regard to justification; and, therefore, in that sense, we have now rest in our souls; but that is not the subject here -it is the Christian's rest from all his works. God rested from His works - assuredly good ones - and so shall we also, then, with Him.

We are now in the wilderness, we also wrestle with wicked spirits in heavenly places. A blessed rest remains for us, in which our hearts will repose in the presence of God, where nothing will trouble the perfection of our rest, where God will rest in the perfection of the blessing He has

bestowed on His people.

The great thought of the apostle is, that there remains a rest (that is to say, that the believer is not to expect it here) without saying where it is. And he does not speak in detail of the character of the rest, because he leaves the door open to an earthly rest for the earthly people, on the ground of the promises: although to Christian partakers of the heavenly calling, God's rest is evidently a heavenly one.

The apostle then sets before us the instrument which God employs to judge the unbelief and all the workings of the heart which tend, as we have seen, to lead the believer into departure from the position of faith, and to hide God from him by inducing him to satisfy his flesh and seek for rest in the wilderness.

To the believer who is upright in heart, this judgment is of great value as that which enables him to discern all that has a tendency to hinder his progress or make him slacken his steps. It is the Word of God, which-being the revelation of God, the expression of what He is, and of what His will is in all the circumstances that surround us-judges everything in the heart which is not of Himself: It is more penetrating than a two-edged sword. Living and energetic, it separates all that is most intimately linked together in our hearts and minds. Wherever nature (the "soul") and its feelings mingle with that which is spiritual, it brings the edge of the sword of the living truth of God between the two, and judges the hidden movements of the heart respecting them. It discerns all the thoughts and intentions of the heart. But it has another character: coming from God (being, as it were, His eye upon the conscience), it brings us into His presence; and all that it forces us to discover, it sets, in our conscience, before the eye of God Himself. Nothing is hidden, all is naked and manifested to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Such is the true help, the mighty instrument of God to judge everything in us that would hinder us from pursuing our course through the wilderness with joy, and with a buoyant heart strengthened by faith and confidence in Him. Precious instrument of a faithful God - solemn and serious in its operation; but of priceless and infinite blessing in its effects, in its consequences.

It is an instrument which, in its operations, does not allow "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" liberty to act; which does not permit the heart to deceive itself; but which procures us strength, and places us without any consciousness of evil in the presence of God to pursue our course with joy and spiritual energy. Here the exhortation, founded on the power of the Word, concludes.

But there is another succor-one of a different character, to aid us in our passage through the wilderness: and that is Priesthood-a subject which the epistle here begins, and carries on through several chapters.

We have a High Priest who has passed through the heavens,-as Aaron, through the successive parts of the Tabernacle,-Jesus, the Son of God.

He has, in all things, been tempted like ourselves, apart from sin; so that He can sympathize with our infirmities. The Word brings to light the intents of the heart, judges the will, and all that has not God for its object and its source. As far as weakness is concerned, we have His sympathy. Christ, of course, had no evil desires. He was tempted in every way, apart from sin. Sin had no part in it at

all. But I do not wish for sympathy with the sin that is in me; I detest it, I wish it to be mortified, judged unsparingly. This the Word does. For my weakness and my difficulties I seek sympathy; and I find it in the Priesthood of Jesus. It is not necessary, in order to sympathize with me, that a person should feel at the same moment that which I am feeling-rather the contrary. If I am suffering pain, I am not in a condition to think as much of another's pain. But, in order to sympathize with him, I must have a nature capable of appreciating his pain.

Thus it is with Jesus, when exercising His priesthood. He is in every sense beyond the reach of pain and trial, but He is man-and not only has He the human nature which, in time, suffered grief, but He experienced the trials a saint has to go through more fully than any of ourselves; and His heart, free and full of love, can entirely sympathize with us, according to His experience of ill, and according to the glorious liberty which He now has, to provide and care for it. This encourages us to hold fast our profession in spite of the difficulties that beset our path; for Jesus concerns Himself about them, according to His own knowledge and experience of what they are, and according to the power of His grace.

Therefore-our High Priest being there-we can go with all boldness to the throne of grace, to find mercy and the grace suited to us in all times of need. Mercy, because we are weak and wavering. Needful grace, because we are engaged in a warfare which God owns.

Observe, it is not that we go to the High Priest. It is often done, and God may have compassion; but it is a proof that we do not fully understand grace. The Priest, the Lord Jesus, occupies Himself about us, sympathizes with us, on the one hand; and on the other, we go directly to the throne of grace.

The Spirit does not here speak positively of falls: we find that in 1 John 2. There also it is in connection with communion with His Father, here with access to God. His purpose here is to strengthen us, to encourage us to persevere in the way, conscious of the sympathies which we possess in heaven, and that the throne is always open to us.

5. The epistle then develops the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus, comparing it with that of Aaron; but, as we shall see, with a view to bring out the difference rather than the resemblance between them: although there is a general analogy, and the one was an image of the other.

This comparison is made in chap. 5, from ver. 1 to ver. 10. The line of argument is then interrupted till the end of chap. 7, where the comparison with Melchizedek is pursued; and the change of law consequent on the change of priesthood, is stated; which introduces the Covenants, and all that relates to the circumstances of the Jews.

A priest, then, as taken from among men, (he is not here speaking of Christ) is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin; he is able to feel the miseries of others because he is himself compassed with infirmity, and offers, therefore, for himself as well as for the people. Moreover, no one takes this honor to himself, but receives it, as Aaron did, being called of God. The epistle will speak farther on of the sacrifices-here, of the person of the Priest, and of the order of the Priesthood.

Christ glorified not Himself to become a High Priest. The glory of His person, manifested as man on the earth, and that of His function, are both of them plainly declared of God. The first, when He

said, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," (Psa. 2) The second, (Psa. 110) in these words, "Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." Such then, in both personal and official glory, is the High Priest, the expected Messiah, Christ.

But His glory, although it gives Him His place in honor before God, so that He can undertake the people's cause before God according to His will, does not bring Him near to the miseries of men. It is His history on earth which makes us feel how truly able He is to take part in them. "In the days of His flesh," i.e., here below, He went into all the anguish of death in dependence on God, making His request to Him who was able to save Him from it. For, being here, in order to obey and to suffer, He did not save Himself. He submitted to everything, obeyed in everything, and depended on God for everything.

He was heard because of His fear. It was proper that He who took death on Himself as answering for others, should feel its whole weight upon His soul. He would neither escape the consequences of that which He had undertaken (compare chap. 2) nor fail in the just sense of what it was to be thus under the hand of God in judgment. His fear was His piety, the right estimation of the position in which sinful man was found, and what must come from God because of it. For Him, however, to suffer the consequences of this position, was obedience. And this obedience was to be perfect, and to be tried to the utmost.

He was the Son, the glorious Son of God. But although, this was true, He was to learn obedience (and to Him it was a new thing) by all that He suffered. And then, having deserved all glory, He was to take His place as the glorified man-to be perfected. And in that position, to become the cause of eternal salvation (not mere temporal deliverances) to them that obey Him. A salvation which should be connected with the position that He had taken in consequence of His work of obedience: saluted by God as "High Priest after the order of Melchizedek."

That which follows, to the end of chap. 6, is a parenthesis which refers to the condition of those to whom the epistle is addressed. They are blamed for the dullness of their spiritual intelligence, and encouraged at the same time by the promises of God: the whole with reference to their position as Jewish believers. Afterward, the line of instruction with regard to Melchizedek, is resumed.

For the time, they ought to have been able to teach: nevertheless, they needed that some one should teach them the elements of the oracles of God-requiring milk instead of meat.

We may observe that there is no greater hindrance to progress in spiritual life and intelligence than attachment to an ancient form of religion, which, being traditional and not simply personal faith in the truth, consists always in ordinances, and is, consequently, carnal and earthly. Without this, people may be unbelievers; but under the influence of such a system, piety itself-expended in forms -makes a barrier between the soul and the light of God: and these forms which surround, pre-occupy and hold the affections captive, prevent them from enlarging and becoming enlightened by means of divine revelation. Morally (as the apostle here expresses it) the senses are not exercised to discern both good and evil.

But the Holy Ghost will not limit Himself to the narrow circle and the weak and futile sentiments of human tradition, nor even to those truths which, in a state like this, one is able to receive. In such a case, Christ has not His true place. And this our epistle here develops.

Milk belongs to babes, solid food to those who are of full age. This infancy was the soul's condition under the ordinances and requirements of the law. (Compare Gal. 4:1, seq.) But there was a revelation of the Messiah in connection with these two states-of infancy and of manhood. And the development of the word of righteousness, of the true practical relationships of the soul to God according to His character and ways, was in proportion to the revelation of Christ, who is the manifestation of that character, and the center of all those ways. Therefore it is that in 5:12, 13, the epistle speaks of the elements, the beginning of the oracles of God, and of the word of righteousness. In 6:1, of the word of the beginning-or the first principles-of Christ.

6. Now, the Spirit will not stop at this point with Christians, but will go on to that full revelation of His glory which belongs to them that are of full age, and in-deed forms us for that state.

We easily perceive that the inspired writer tries to make the Hebrews feel, that he was placing them on higher and more excellent ground by connecting them with a heavenly and invisible Christ; and that Judaism kept them back in the position of children. This, moreover, characterizes the whole epistle.

Nevertheless, we shall find two things here: on the one hand, the elements and the character of doctrine that be-longed. to infancy, to " the beginning of the word of Christ," in contrast with the strength and heavenly savor that accompanied the Christian revelation. And on the other hand, what the revelation of Christ Himself was, in connection with this last spiritual and Christian system.

But the epistle distinguishes between this system and the doctrine of the person of Christ, although the present position of Christ gives its character to the Christian system. The distinction is made-not that the condition of souls does not depend on the measure of the revelation of Christ and of the position He has taken, but because the doctrine of His person and glory goes much farther than the present state of our relations with God.

The things spoken of in chap. 6:1, 2 had their place, because the Messiah was yet to come: was in a state of infancy. The things spoken of in verses 4, 5, are the privileges that Christians enjoyed in virtue of the work and the glorification of the Messiah. But they are not in themselves the "perfection" mentioned in ver. 1: and which relates rather to the knowledge of the person of Christ Himself. The privileges in question, were the effect of the glorious position of His person in Heaven.

It is important to attend to this, in order to understand these passages. In the infancy spoken of in the verses 1 and 2, the obscurity of the revelations of the Messiah, announced at most by promises and prophecies, left worshippers under the yoke of ceremonies and figures, although in possession of some fundamental truths. His exaltation made way for the power of the Holy Ghost here below; and on this the responsibility of souls which had tasted it, depended.

The doctrine of the person and the glory of Jesus forms the subject of revelations in the epistle, and was the means of deliverance for the Jews from the whole system which had been such a heavy burden on their hearts; it should prevent their forsaking the state described in verses 4 and 5, in order to return into the weakness and (Christ having come) the carnal state of verses 1 and 2.

The epistle then does not desire to establish again the true but elementary doctrines which belonged to the times when Christ was not revealed; but to go forward to the full revelation of His glory and position, according to the counsels of God revealed in the Word.

The Holy Ghost would not go back again to these former things, because new things had been brought in, in connection with the heavenly glory of the Messiah namely, Christianity, characterized by the power of the Holy Ghost.

But if any one who had been brought under that power, who had known it, should afterward abandon it, he could not be renewed again to repentance by the former things of Judaism; and as for the new things, he had given them up. All God's means had been employed for him, and had produced nothing.

Such a one-of his own will-crucified for himself the Son of God. Associated with the people who had done so, he had acknowledged the sin which his people had committed, and owned Jesus to be the Messiah. But now he repeated the crime, knowingly and of his own will.

The judgment, the resurrection of the dead, repentance from dead works, had been taught. Under that order of things the nation had crucified their Messiah. Now, power had come; which testified of the glorification of the crucified Messiah, the Son of God, in heaven; and which by miracles destroyed (at least in detail) the power of the enemy who was still reigning over the world. These miracles were a partial anticipation of the full and glorious deliverance which should take place in the world to come, when the triumphant Messiah, the Son of God, should entirely destroy all the power of the enemy.

The power of the Holy Ghost, the miracles wrought in the bosom of Christianity, were testimonies that the power which was to accomplish that deliverance-although still hidden in heaven-existed nevertheless in the glorious person of the Son of God. The power did not yet accomplish the deliverance of this world oppressed by Satan, because another thing was being done meanwhile. The light of God was shining, the good word of grace was being preached, the heavenly gift (a better thing than the deliverance of the world) was being tasted; and the sensible power of the Holy Ghost made itself known, while waiting for the return in glory of the Messiah to bind Satan, and thus accomplish the deliverance of the world under his dominion.

Speaking generally, the power of the Holy Ghost, the consequence of the Messiah's being glorified above, was exercised on earth as a present manifestation and anticipation of the great deliverance to come. The revelation of grace, the good word of God was preached; and the Christian lived in the sphere where these things displayed themselves, and was subjected to the influence exercised in it. This made itself to be felt by those who were brought in among Christians: even where there was no spiritual life, these influences were felt.

But, after having been the subject of this influence of the presence of the Holy Ghost, after having tasted the revelation thus made of the goodness of God, and experienced the proofs of His power, if any one then forsook Christ, there remained no other means for restoring the soul, for leading it to repentance. The heavenly treasures were already expended-he had given them up as worthless,-he had rejected the full revelation of grace and power, after having known it. What means could now be used? To return to Judaism when the truth had been revealed was impossible: and the new light had been known and rejected. In a case like this, there was only the

flesh; there was no new life. Thorns and briars were being produced as before.

When once we have understood that this passage is a comparison of the power of the spiritual system with Judaism; and that it speaks of giving up the former, after having known it, its difficulty disappears. The possession of life, is not supposed: nor is that question touched. The passage speaks, not of life, but of the Holy Ghost as a power present in Christianity. To "taste the good Word," is to have understood how precious that Word is; and not the having been quickened by its means.

The apostle does not, however, apply what he says to the Hebrew Christians; for, however low their state might be, there had been fruits, proofs of life, which in itself no mere power is; and he continues his discourse by giving them encouragement, and motives for perseverance.

It will be observed, then, that this passage is a comparison between that which was possessed before and after Christ was glorified; the state and privileges of professors, at these two periods; without any question as to personal conversion. When the power of the Holy Ghost was present, and there was the full revelation of grace, if any forsook the Church and turned back again, there were no means of renewing them to repentance. The inspired writer, therefore, would not again lay the foundation of former things with regard to Christ-things already grown old-but would go on, for the profit of those who remained steadfast in the faith.

We may also remark how the epistle, in speaking of Christian privileges, does not lose sight of the future earthly state, the glory and the privileges of the millennial world. The miracles are the miracles of the world to come, they belong to that period. The deliverance and the destruction of Satan's power should then be complete; those miracles were deliverances-samples of that power. We saw this point brought into notice (2:5) at the beginning of the doctrine of the epistle; and in chap. 4, the rest of God left vague in its character, in order to embrace both the heavenly part and the earthly part of our Lord's millennial reign. Here, the present power of the Holy Ghost characterizes the ways of God, Christianity; but the miracles are a foretaste of a coming age, in which the whole world will be blessed.

In the encouragements that it gives them, the epistle already calls to mind the principles by which the father of the faithful and of the Jewish nation had walked, and the way in which God had strengthened him in his faith. Abraham had to rest on promises, without possessing that -which was promised; and this, with regard to rest and glory, was the state in which the Hebrew Christians then were. But, at the same time, in order to give full assurance to the heart, God had confirmed His Word by an oath, in order that they who built upon this hope of promised glory, might have strong and satisfying consolation. And this assurance had received a still greater confirmation. It entered into that within the veil, it found its sanction in the sanctuary itself, whither a fore-runner had entered, giving-not only a word and an oath --but a personal guarantee for the fulfillment of these promises, and the Sanctuary of God as a refuge for the heart. Thus giving, for those who had spiritual under-standing, a heavenly character to the hope which they cherished; while showing, by the character of Him who had entered into Heaven, the certain fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises, in connection with a heavenly Mediator, who, by His position, assured that fulfillment; establishing the earthly blessing upon the firm foundation of Heaven itself, and giving, at the same time, a higher and more excellent character to that blessing, by uniting it to Heaven, and making it flow from thence.

We have thus the double character of blessing which this book again presents to our mind, in connection with the person of the Messiah-and the whole linked by faith with Jesus.

Jesus has entered into Heaven as a forerunner. He is there. We belong to that Heaven. He is there as High Priest. During the present time, therefore, His priest--hood has a heavenly character; nevertheless, it is after the order of Melchizedek. It sets aside then the whole Aaronic order, but, by its nature, points out in the future a royalty which is not yet manifested. Now, the very fact that this future royalty was connected with the person of Him who was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, according to Ps. ex., fixed the attention of the Hebrew Christian, when tempted to turn back, on Him who was in the heavens, and made him understand the priesthood which the Lord is now exercising; it delivered him from Judaism, and strengthened him in the heavenly character of the Christianity which he had embraced.

7. The epistle, returning to the subject of Melchizedek, reviews therefore the dignity of His person and the importance of His priesthood. For on priesthood, as a means of drawing nigh to God, the whole system connected with it depended.

Melchizedek then, (a typical and characteristic person, as the use of his name in Psa. 110 proves) was King of Salem, i.e., King of Peace; and, by name, King of Righteousness. Righteousness and peace characterize his reign. But, above all, he was priest of the Most High God. This is the name of God as supreme governor of all things: possessor, as it is elsewhere added, of heaven and earth. It was thus that Nebuchadnezzar, the humbled earthly potentate, acknowledged Him. It was thus He revealed Himself to Abraham, when Melchizedek blessed the patriarch after he had conquered his enemies. In connection with his walk of faith, the name of God for Abraham was "The Almighty." Here, Abraham, victorious over the kings of the earth, is blessed by Melchizedek, by the King of Righteousness, in connection with God as Possessor of heaven and earth, the Most High. This looks onward to the royalty of Christ, a Priest upon His throne, when, by the will and the power of God, He shall have triumphed over all His enemies. Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek; his royalty was not all, for Ps. 110 is very clear in describing Melchizedek as priest, and as possessing a lasting and uninterrupted priesthood.

He had no sacerdotal parentage from whom he derived his priesthood. As a priest, he had neither father nor mother; unlike the sons of Aaron, he had no genealogy (compare Ezra 2:62); he had no limits assigned to the term of his priestly service, as was the case with the sons of Aaron (Num. 4:3). He was made a priest, like-in the form of his priesthood-to the Son of God: but the latter is in heaven.

The fact that he received tithes from Abraham, and that he blessed Abraham, showed the high and pre-eminent dignity of this otherwise unknown and mysterious personage. The only thing that is testified of him, -without naming father or mother, commencement of life, or death that may have taken place-is, that he lived.

The dignity of his person was beyond that of Abraham, the depositary of the promises; that of his priesthood was above Aaron's, who, in Abraham, paid the tithes which Levi himself received from his brethren. The priesthood then is changed, and with it the whole system that depended on it.

Psa. 110, interpreted by faith in Christ-for the epistle, we need not say, speaks always to Christians-is still the point on which its argument is founded. The first proof, then, that the whole

was changed, is that the Lord Jesus the Messiah (a Priest after the order of Melchizedek) did not spring, evidently, from the sacerdotal tribe, but from another, namely, that of Judah. For that Jesus was the Messiah, they believed. But, according to the Jewish Scriptures, the Messiah was such as He is here presented -and in that case the priesthood was changed, and with it the whole system. And this was not only a consequence that must be drawn from the fact that the Messiah was of the tribe of Judah, although a priest; but it was requisite that another priest than the priest of Aaron's family, should arise, and one after the similitude of Melchizedek, who should not be after the law of a commandment which had no more power than the flesh to which it was applied, but who should be according to the power of a never-ending life. The testimony of the Psalm was positive: "Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

For there is, in fact, a disannulling of the commandment that existed previously, because it was unprofitable (for the law brought nothing to perfection); and there is the bringing in of a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God.

Precious difference! A commandment to man, sinful and afar from God, replaced by a hope, a confidence, founded on grace and on divine promise, through which we can come even into God's own presence.

The law, doubtless, was good; but separation still subsisted between man and God. The law made nothing perfect-God was ever perfect, and human perfection was required; all must be according to divine perfection. But sin was there-and the law, consequently, without power (save to condemn); its ceremonies and ordinances were but figures, and a heavy yoke. Even that which temporarily relieved the conscience brought sin to mind, and never made the conscience perfect towards God. They were still at a distance from Him. Grace brings the soul to God, who is known in love and in a righteousness which is for us.

The character of the new priesthood bore the stamp, in all its features, of its superiority to that which existed under the order of the law; and, with which, the whole system of the law either stood or fell.

The covenant connected with the new priesthood, answered likewise to the superiority of the latter over the former priesthood.

The priesthood of Jesus was established by oath; that of Aaron was not. The priesthood of Aaron passed from one person to another, because death put an end to its exercise by the individuals who were invested with it. But Jesus abides the same forever; He has a priesthood that is not transmitted to others. Thus He saves completely, and to the end, those that come unto God by Him; seeing that He ever lives to intercede for them.

Accordingly, "such a High Priest became us." Glorious thought! Called to be in the presence of God, to be in relationship with Him in the heavenly glory, to draw near to Him on high, where nothing that defiles can enter, we needed a High Priest in the place to which access was given us, (as the Jews in the earthly temple), and such a One as the glory and purity of heaven required. What a demonstration that we belong to heaven, and of the exalted nature of our relationship with God. Such a Priest became us. " Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; exalted above the heavens"-for so are we, as to our position, having to do with God there; -a Priest who needs not to renew the sacrifices, as though the sin remained, for then it would be impossible for Him to

stay in the heavenly sanctuary as having made an end of sin. Our Priest offered His sacrifice once for all, when He offered up Himself.

For the law made high priests who had the infirmities of men-for they were men themselves-the oath of God, which came after the law, establishes the Son, when He is perfected forever, consecrated in heaven unto God.

We see here that, although there was an analogy, and the figures of heavenly things, there is more of contrast than of comparison in this epistle. The legal priests had the same infirmities as other men; Jesus has a glorified priesthood, according to the power of an endless life.

The introduction of this new priesthood, exercised in heaven, implies a change in the sacrifices, and in the covenant. This the author develops here, setting forth the value of the sacrifice of Christ, and the long-promised new covenant.

8th chap. in this aspect, is simple and clear; the last verses only give room for a few remarks.

The sum of the doctrine we have been considering is, that we have an High Priest, who is seated on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the heavenly sanctuary which is not made with hands. As such, He must make an offering there. Jesus, were He on earth, would not be a Priest; there were priests on earth according to the law, in which all things were but figures of the heavenly things; as Moses was told to make all according to the pattern that was shown him in the mount. But the ministry of Jesus is more excellent, because He is the Mediator of a better covenant, spoken of in Jer. 31, which is here quoted; a clear and simple proof that the first covenant was not to continue.

We again find here that particular development of the truth, which was called for by the character of the persons to whom this letter was addressed.

The first covenant was made with Israel; the second must be so likewise-according to the prophecy of Jeremiah. The epistle, however, in this passage only makes use of the fact, that there was to be a second covenant, in order to demonstrate that the first was to last no longer. It had grown old, and was to vanish away. He recites the terms of the New Covenant. We shall find that he makes use of it afterward. In that which follows he contrasts the services that belonged to the first, with' the perfect work on which Christianity is founded. Thus, the extent and the value of the work of Christ are introduced.

Although there is no difficulty here, it is important to have light with regard to these two covenants, because some have very vague ideas on this point, and many souls -putting themselves under covenants, i.e., in relationship with God under conditions in which He has not placed them-lose their simplicity, and do not hold fast grace and the fullness of the work of Christ, the position He has acquired for them in heaven.

A covenant is a principle of relationship with God on the earth; conditions, established by God, under which man is to live with Him. The word may, perhaps, be used figuratively, or by accommodation. It- is applied to details of the relationship of God with Israel; but strictly speaking, there are. but two covenants, the old and the new. The old was established at Sinai. The new covenant is made also with the two houses of Israel.

The gospel is not a covenant, but the revelation of the salvation of God. It proclaims the great salvation. We enjoy indeed all the essential privileges of the new covenant, its foundation being of God, but we do so in spirit, not according to the letter.

The new covenant will be established formally with Israel in the Millennium. Meanwhile, the old covenant is judged, by the fact that there is a new one.

9. The epistle, recounting some particular circumstances which characterized the first covenant, shows that neither was the conscience purged by its means, nor the entrance into the Holiest granted to the worshippers. The veil concealed God. The high priest went in once a year to make reconciliation: no one else. The way to God in holiness was barred. Perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, they could not be, through the blood of bulls and of goats. These were but provisionary and figurative ordinances, until God took up the real work itself, in order to accomplish it fully and forever.

But this brings us to the focus of the light which God gives us by the Holy Ghost in this epistle. Before proving by the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the doctrine that he announced, and the discontinuance of the legal sacrifices-of all sacrifice for sin-the writer, with a heart full of the truth, and of the importance of that truth, teaches the value and the extent of the sacrifice of Christ; still in contrast with the former offerings, but a contrast that rests on the intrinsic value of the offering of Christ. These three results are presented. 1st, the opened way into the sanctuary was manifested; i.e., access to God Himself, where He is. 2nd, the purification of the conscience. 3rd, an eternal redemption.

One feels the immense importance, the inestimable value of the first result. Every obstacle is removed, the believer is admitted into God's own presence, has constant access to Himself, immediate access to the place where He is, in the light. What complete salvation, what blessedness, what security! For how could we have access to God in the light, if everything that would separate us from Him, were not entirely taken away? But here it is the precious and perfect result which is revealed to us, and formally proved in chap. 10, as a right that we possess, that access to God Himself is entirely and freely open to us. We are not indeed told in this passage that we are seated there-for it is not our union with Christ that is the subject of this epistle, but our access to God in the Sanctuary. We go in perfect liberty to God, there where His holiness dwells, and where nothing that is contrary to Him can be admitted. What happiness! What perfect grace! What a glorious result, supreme and complete! Could anything better be desired? remembering, too, that it is our dwelling-place. This is our position in the presence of God, through the entrance of Christ into the Sanctuary.

The second result shows us the personal state we are brought into, in order to the enjoyment of our position; that we may, on our part, enter in freely. It is that our Savior has rendered our conscience perfect, so that we can go into the Sanctuary without an idea of fear, without one question as to sin arising in our minds. A perfect conscience is not an innocent conscience which, happy in its unconsciousness, does not know evil, but does not know God revealed in holiness. A perfect conscience knows God; it is cleansed, and having the knowledge of good and evil according to the light of God Himself, it knows that it is purified from all evil, according to His purity. Now the blood of bulls and of goats could never make the conscience perfect, nor could the washings repeated under the law. They could sanctify carnally, so as to enable the worshipper to

approach God outwardly. But a real purification from sin, so that the soul can be in the presence of God Himself in the light, without spot, and with the consciousness of being so-this, the offerings under the law could never produce. They were but figures. But, thanks be to God, Christ has accomplished the work; and being present, for us, in the heavenly and eternal Sanctuary, He is the witness there that sin is put away; so that all conscience of sin is destroyed, because we know that He who bore our sins is in the presence of God, after having accomplished the work of expiation. Thus we have the consciousness of being in the light without spot. We have not only the purification of sin, but of the conscience, so that we can use this access to God in full liberty and joy: presenting ourselves before Him who has so loved us.

The third result, which seals and characterizes the two others is, that Christ, having once entered in, abides in Heaven. He has gone into the heavenly sanctuary to remain there by virtue of an eternal redemption, of blood that has everlasting validity. The work is completely done, and can never change in value. If sin is effectually put away, God glorified, and righteousness accomplished, that which once availed to effect this, can never not avail. The blood shed once for all is ever efficacious.

Our High Priest is in the Sanctuary, not with the blood of sacrifices which are but figures of the true. Sin has been put away. This redemption is neither temporal nor transitory. It is the redemption of the soul, and for eternity, according to the moral efficacy of that which has been done.

Here, then, are the three aspects of the result of the work of Christ. Immediate access to God, a purged conscience, an eternal redemption.

Three points remain to be noticed, before entering on the subject of the covenants, which is here resumed.

Christ is a High Priest of good things to come. In saying "things to come," the starting point is Israel under the law, before the advent of our Lord. Nevertheless, if these good things were now acquired, if it could be said, "we have them," because Christianity was their fulfillment, it could hardly be still said-when Christianity was established-"good things to come." They are yet to come. These "good things" consist of all that the Messiah will enjoy, when He reigns. This, also, is the reason that the earthly things have their place. But our present relationship with Him is only and altogether heavenly. He acts as Priest in a tabernacle which is not of this creation: it is heavenly, in the presence of God, not made with hands. Our place is in heaven.

In the second place: "Christ offered Himself, by the eternal Spirit, without spot, to God." Here, the precious offering up of Christ is viewed as an act that He performed as man. He offers Himself to God-but as moved by the power, and according to the perfection of the eternal Spirit. All the motives that governed this action, and the accomplishment of the fact according to those motives, were purely and perfectly those of the Holy Ghost, i.e., absolutely divine in their perfection, but of the Holy Ghost acting in a man, (a man without sin, who, born and living ever by the power of the Holy Ghost, had never known sin; who, being exempt from it by birth, never allowed it to enter into Him), so that it is the man Christ who offers Himself. This was requisite.

Thus the offering was in itself perfect and pure, without defilement; and the act of offering was perfect, whether in love, or in obedience, or in the desire to glorify God, or to accomplish the

purposes of God. Nothing mingled itself with the perfection of His intent in offering Himself.

Moreover, it was not a temporary offering which applied to one sin with which the conscience was burdened, and which went no farther than that one, an offering which could not, by its nature, have the perfection spoken of, because it was not the person offering up Himself, nor was it absolutely for God; there was in it neither the perfection of will, nor of obedience. But the offering of Christ was one which, being perfect in its moral nature, being in itself perfect in the eyes of God, was necessarily eternal in its value. For this value was as enduring as the nature of God who was glorified in it.

It was made, not of necessity, but of free will, and in obedience. It was made by a man, for the glory of God, but through the Eternal Spirit, ever the same in its nature and value.

All being thus perfectly fulfilled for the glory of God, the conscience of every one that comes to Him by this offering, is purged; dead works are blotted out and set aside; we stand before God on the ground of that which Christ has done.

And here the third point comes in. Being perfectly cleansed in conscience from all that man, dead in sin, produces, and having to do with God in light and in love, there being no question of conscience with Him, we are in a position to serve the living God. Precious liberty! in which, happy and without question before God, according to His nature in light, we can serve Him according to the activity of His nature in love. Judaism knew no more of this than it did of perfection in conscience. Obligation towards God, that system indeed maintained; and it offered a certain provision for that which was needed for outward failure. But to have a perfect conscience, and then to serve God in love, according to His will: of this it knew nothing.

This is Christian position: the conscience perfect by Christ, according to the nature of God Himself; the service of God in liberty according to His nature of love, active towards others.

For the whole Jewish system was characterized by the Holy Place;-there were duties and obligations to be fulfilled in order to draw near, sacrifices to cleanse him outwardly who drew near outwardly. Meanwhile, God was always concealed. No one entered into the place where He sat. For, in saying the priests entered into "the holy place," it is implied that the Most High was inaccessible. No sacrifice had yet been offered which gave free access, and at all times. God was concealed. That He was so, characterized the position. They could not stand before him. Neither did He manifest Himself. They served Him out of His presence, without going in.

It is important to notice this truth, that the whole system was characterized by the Holy Place, in order to understand the passage before us.

Now the first Tabernacle-or Judaism as a system-is identified with the first part of the Tabernacle; the second part, i.e., the Sanctuary, only showing, by the circumstances connected with it, that there was no access to God. When the author of the epistle goes on to the present position of Christ, he leaves the earthly tabernacle -it is heaven itself he then speaks of, a tabernacle not made with hands, not of this creation, into which he introduces us.

The first tent or part of the tabernacle gave the character of the relationship of the people with God, when they could not reach God. When we approach God Himself, it is in heaven; and the entire first system disappears. Everything was offered as a figure in the first system, and, even as

a figure, showed that the con-science was not yet set free, nor the presence of God accessible to man. The remembrance of sins was continually renewed (the annual sacrifice was a memorial of sin), and God was not manifested, nor the way to Him opened.

Christ comes: accomplishes the sacrifice, makes the conscience perfect, goes into Heaven itself; and we draw nigh to God in the light. To mingle the service of the first tabernacle or holy place, with Christian service, is to deny the latter; for the meaning of the first was, that the way to God was not yet open,-the meaning of the second, that it is open.

God may have patience with the weakness of man. Till the destruction of Jerusalem, He bore with the Jews; but the two systems can never really go on together; namely, a system which said that one cannot draw nigh to God, and another system which gives access to Him.

Christ is come, the High Priest of a new system-of "good things," which, under the old system, were yet " to come;" but He did not enter into the earthly Most Holy place, leaving the Holy place to subsist without a true meaning. He is come by the (not a) more excellent and more perfect Tabernacle. I repeat it, for it is essential here, the holy place, or the first tent, is the figure of the relationship of men with God under the first Tabernacle (taken as a whole); so that we may say, " the first Tabernacle," applying it to the first part of the Tabernacle; and pass on to the first Tabernacle as a whole, and as a recognized period having the same meaning. This the epistle does here. To come out of this position, we must leave typical things and pass into heaven, the true Sanctuary where Christ ever liveth, and where no veil bars our entrance.

Now it is not said, that we have " the good things to come." Christ has gone into heaven itself, the High Priest of those good things, securing their possession to them that trust in Him. But we have access to God in the light, by virtue of Christ's presence there. That presence is the proof of righteousness fully accomplished; the blood, an evidence that sin is put away forever; and our conscience is made perfect. Christ in heaven is the guarantee for the fulfillment of every promise. He has made access for us, even now, to God in the light, having cleansed our consciences once for all-for He dwells on high continuously - that we may enter in, and that we may serve God here below.

All this is already established and secured: but there is more. The New Covenant, of which He is Mediator, is founded on His blood.

The way in which the apostle always avoids the direct application of the New Covenant is very striking.

The transgressions that were imputed under the first Covenant, and which the sacrifices it offered could not expiate, are by the blood of the New Covenant entirely blotted out. Thus they which are called-observe the expression-(ver. 15),-can receive the promise of the eternal inheritance; that is to say, the foundation is laid for the accomplishment of the blessings of the Covenant. He says, " the eternal inheritance," because, as we have seen, the reconciliation was complete; sin was definitively put away with respect to the nature and character of God Himself. This is the main point of all this part of the epistle.

It is because of the necessity there was for this sacrifice -the necessity that sin should be entirely put away, in order to the enjoyment of the eternal promises (for God could not bless, as an eternal

principle and definitively, while sin was before His eyes) that Christ, the Son of God, the Man on earth, became the Mediator of the New Covenant, in order that by death He might make a way for the permanent enjoyment of that which had been promised. The New Covenant-in itself-did not speak of a Mediator. God would write the law on the hearts of His people, and would remember sins no more.

The Covenant is not yet made with Israel and Judah. But, meanwhile, God has established and revealed the Mediator, who has accomplished the work on which the fulfillment of the promises can be founded in a way that is durable in principle, eternal, because connected with the nature of God Himself. This is done by means of death, the wages of sin, and by which sin is left behind; and, expiation for sin being made, according to the righteousness of God, an altogether new position is taken outside and beyond sin. The Mediator has paid the ransom. Sin has no more right over us.

The 16th and 17th verses are a parenthesis, in which the idea of a testament (it is the same word as covenant in Greek-a disposition on the part of one who has the right of disposal), is introduced, to make us understand that death must have taken place before the rights acquired under the testament can be enjoyed.

This necessity of the covenant being founded on the blood of a victim was not forgotten in the case of the first covenant. Everything was sprinkled with blood. Only, in this case, it was the solemn sanction of death attached to the obligation of the covenant. The types always spoke of the necessity of death intervening before men could be in relationship with God. Sin had brought in the judgment of death. We must either undergo the judgment ourselves, or see our sin blotted out through its having been undergone by another for us.

Three applications of the blood are presented here. The covenant is founded on the blood. Defilement is washed away by its means. Guilt is removed by the remission obtained through the blood that has been shed.

These are, in fact, the three things necessary. 1st. The ways of God in bestowing blessing according to His promises, are connected with His righteousness-sin being put away. The requisite foundation of the covenant.

2nd. The purification of the sins by which we were defiled, (by which all things, that could not be guilty, were, nevertheless, defiled), is accomplished. Here there were cases in which water was typically used; this is moral and practical cleansing. It flows from death; the water that purifies proceeded from the side of the holy victim, already dead. It is the application of the Word -which judges all evil and reveals all good-to the conscience and to the heart.

3rd. As regards remission. In no case can this be obtained without the shedding of blood. Observe that it does not here say " application." It is the accomplishment of the work of true propitiation, which is here spoken of. Without shedding of blood, there is no remission. All-important truth! For a work of remission, death and blood-shedding must take place.

Two consequences flow from these views of atonement and reconciliation to God.

It was necessary that there should be a better sacrifice, a more excellent victim, than those which were offered under the old covenant; because it was the heavenly things themselves, and not their

figures, that were to be purified. For it is into the presence of God in heaven itself that Christ has entered.

In the second place, Christ was not to offer Himself often, as the high priest went in every year with the blood of others. For He offered up Himself. Hence, if all that was available in the sacrifice was not brought to perfection by a single offering once made, He must have suffered often since the foundation of the world. This remark leads to the clear and simple declaration of the ways of God on this point—a declaration of priceless value. God allowed ages to pass, (the different distinct periods in which man has in divers ways been put to the test, and in which he has had time to show what he is;) without yet accomplishing His work of grace. This trial of man has served to show, that he is bad in nature and in will. The multiplication of means only made it more evident that he was essentially bad at heart, for he availed himself of none of them to draw near to God.

When God had made this plain—before the law, under the law, by promises, by the coming and presence of His Son,—then the work of God takes the place (for faith) of man's responsibility, on the ground of which faith knows man is entirely lost. This explains the expression (ver. 26), "in the consummation of the ages."

Now this work is perfect, and perfectly accomplished. Sin had dishonored God, and separated man from Him. All that God had done to give him the means of return, only ended in affording him opportunity to fill up the measure of his sin by the rejection of Jesus. But, in this, the eternal counsels of God were fulfilled. The Christ, whom man rejected, had appeared in order to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Thus it was, morally, the consummation of the ages.

The results of the work and power of God are not yet manifested. A new creation will develop them. But man, as the child of Adam, has run his whole career in his relationship with God: he is enmity against God. Christ, fulfilling the will of God, puts away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. This is the moral power of His act, of His sacrifice, before God; in result, sin will be entirely blotted out of the heavens and the earth. To faith, this result, namely, the putting away of sin, is already realized, in the conscience.

Moreover, this result is announced to the believer, to those who are looking for the Lord's return. Death and judgment are the lot of men as children of Adam. Christ has been offered once to bear the sins of many; and "unto them that look for Him He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

For them, sin is, even now, put away: their own sins are blotted out. Christ appeared the first time in order to be made sin, to bear sins; they were laid upon Him on the Cross. And, with regard to those who wait for Him, those sins are entirely put away. When He returns, Christ has nothing to do with sin, as far as they are concerned; He put it away at His first coming. He appears the second time to deliver them from all the results of sin, from all bondage. He will appear, not for judgment, but unto salvation. The putting away of sin has been so complete, the sins of believers so entirely blotted out, that when He appears the second time He has nothing to do with sin. He appears apart from sin—not only without sin in His blessed person; this was the case at His first coming—but (as to those who look for Him), outside all question of sin, for their final deliverance.

"Without sin" is in contrast with "to bear the sins of many." But it will be remarked, that the taking up of the Church is not mentioned here. It is well to notice the language. The character of His

second coming is the subject. He has been manifested once. Now He is seen by those who look for Him. The expression may apply to the deliverance of the Jews who wait for Him in the last days. He will appear for their deliverance. But we expect the Lord for this deliverance, and we shall see Him when He accomplishes it even for us. The apostle does not touch the question of the difference between this and our being caught up--and does not use the word which serves to announce His public manifestation. He will appear to those that expect Him: He is not seen by all the world, nor is it, consequently, the judgment, although that may follow. The Holy Ghost speaks only of them that look for the Lord. To them He will appear. By them He will be seen, and it will be the time of their deliverance. So that it is true for us, and also applicable to the Jewish remnant in the last days.

Thus the Christian position, and the hope of the world to come, founded on the blood and on the Mediator of the new Covenant, are both given here. The one is the present portion of the believer, the other is secured as the hope of Israel.

(To be continued.).

The House of God, the Body of Christ, and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

You have asked of me some account of the historical development of a false notion on which I have often spoken, and already written, briefly, in the "Present Testimony." The practical importance of this notion had caused my mind to be occupied with it, and led me to entertain the thought of pursuing its history. The false notion which I refer to, is the confusion of two distinct aspects of the Church, given us in scripture: that of the house of God, and that of the body of Christ. Since I first proposed treating this point, the subject has been taken up in the Bible Treasury. But, having the wish to go further into the statements of scripture than is there done, and, having long had my mind occupied with it, this does not hinder my pursuing it myself. The ground of the view there given, and of the following paper, I apprehend to be the same; but it will easily be seen how entirely independent they are one of another. The thought, that admission into the house conferred the privileges of the body, has been the root of the systematic corruption of Christianity, which has acquired the reverence of ages, was not shaken off at the reformation, and is now corrupting the Protestant systems, which were thought to have freed themselves from its fetters. - All the members of the body of Christ, are living members, quickened of the Spirit, or regenerate; they are forgiven all their sins, and perfected forever by His one offering of Himself; have received His Spirit, and are heirs of the inheritance of glory. If the body and the house are the same thing, then all that are admitted into the house, be they adults or infants, have part in the privileges which belong to the body. On the other hand, being true members of the body of Christ, secures nothing; for its true members may perish.- The very idea of being born of God, is destroyed; for, after having been born of God, they lose what they had, and have to be born over again, without the alleged means of being so, or they enter the kingdom of heaven, as they say, without life; the abiding efficacy of Christ's sacrifice is annulled- for they that are sanctified, are not perfected forever; and the sealing of the Holy Ghost for the day of redemption, is applied to those who will never be there, and has no effectual value in this respect. The first general idea, that of which we are to speak, is the Church. The word, however, I shall at once drop, and employ the literal rendering of the Greek word so translated: the Assembly. Technical words obtain a conventional meaning, which introduces great confusion into people's minds; for, though the local growth of thought produces language, in moral education, words, become names, and create rather than express ideas. Take as an instance, this word Church. It is applied, as all know, to buildings appropriated to ecclesiastical services. But the church is the house of God; and the building is treated as the house of God, though God has expressly declared, that, under the Christian system, He will not dwell in temples made with hands; that where two or three are gathered together in His name - the true church, so far, and so called in the passage, - there Christ is in their midst.

I shall speak, therefore, of the Assembly, the real meaning of the word. Only this is God's Assembly. Take the passage which I have referred to, and see the effect of this., If a brother trespassed against another, he was to tell it to him alone; if that were useless, to take two or three

more; if that failed, to tell it to the Assembly. What has not been made out of this passage? And how many delusions are dispelled by its plain and simple language, when it is taken as it stands? It is related, that King James forbade the translators of the Bible into English to change this word Church which, in the previous Geneva translation, had been dropped. The bearing of such a prohibition is evident enough.

The word Assembly, is one known to Old Testament language and thought. Yet it had there a very different character and foundation. Two words are there employed, which, it seems to me, give somewhat different ideas, HEDAH and KAHAL. The former seems to me, to present rather the corporate unity of the congregation; the latter the actual gathering; pretty much the difference which we might understand, between an Assembly and an Assemblage. Med is another thought; the meeting, the tent of meeting; because there they met God, and, indeed, one another; but the thought in the word is an appointed place of meeting. Israel was the Assembly of God, but they were it by birth; though excluded, if not circumcised. All this for the time was set aside; we may say, by the death of Christ, though the patience of God lingered, through means of the intercession of Christ upon the cross over the beloved people (compare Acts). The prophets had indeed spoken of all this beforehand, and, he among them, who unfolded the destinies of Israel, and their several causes more fully than any one, Isaiah, tells all through, of a remnant that should be spared, the children and disciples given to Messiah, when all was darkness in the nation, and the testimony of God shut up, save to that remnant, thus separated from the people, while God Himself hid His face from them. This remnant, would in future days return; and for their sakes, Israel be spared, and the glory of the nation be established in them (see Isa. 6:9-13; 8:15-18, 10:21, 22, 65:8-9, and 66). That chap. 8 shows us that, when the nation was set aside, this remnant came distinctively on the scene.-They were for signs to both houses of Israel. - There were two grounds for Israel's rejection; one, viewing the people as witness of the unity of the God-head against idolatry; the other, as visited by Jehovah in the person of the Lord Jesus.-In chaps. 40-57, these two points are treated. The captivity of Babylon was the judgment of their failure as to the former: hence we have Cyrus mentioned in connection with their deliverance. Their present state is the result of the rejection of their Messiah, the time the unclean spirit, after the Babylonish captivity, was gone out of them. Still it was but a remnant, preserved and brought back. That God would not look merely at the fact that they were His people, but -would distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, is also clearly stated in chap. 48 ver. 22, where the pleading on the question of idolatry closes; and chap. 57 ver. 21, where the pleading as to the rejection of Christ closes. And their wickedness, and the Lord's coming in power, and the intervening gospel-times, are then spoken of. At the end of their history, the unclean spirit, which had gone out, returns with seven others, worse; they are idolaters; and not only is Messiah negatively rejected, but they accept one who comes in his own name,-The last state is worse than the first, and wickedness ripens up into terrible judgment, which will yet be deliverance for those who will have called on the name of Jehovah, -who will have refused the idols, waited for Jehovah, and, in looking on Him, whom they had pierced, see Him come, in infinite grace, for their deliverance. But our inquiry now refers to the condition of this remnant, spared from the judgments of Israel, while God is hiding His face from the house of Jacob. The first witness we have, is only the binding up the testimony, and sealing the law, among His disciples, and waiting on Jehovah, who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and looking for Him. But this, though all blessing be founded on the death of Christ, does not bring in His death as a matter of knowledge. The

instructions in Matthew, such as the sermon on the mount, and still more, chapters x. and answer to this; though, of course, increased light is thrown on their position, both as to spiritual apprehension, and the introduction of the Father's name, which, Christ, as Son, as in the sermon on the mount, could do, and by the prophetic light afforded them by the Lord. Besides this, the introduction of the thought of the coming King, does cast a special light on all the instruction given. In Psa. 22, however, where the circumstances of the blessed Lord's death, and the immense truth of His enduring the forsaking of God; are brought before us, we have more definite light as to the position into which the remnant enter in virtue of it. The Lord had borne the forsaking of God, and was now heard from the horns of the unicorn. All the unspeakable and full blessing of the inshining of God's delight, when sin was put away -a delight, which, though everlasting, was enhanced by the value of that sacrifice - expressed in the names of God and Father - enjoyed as man, as son - all burst unclouded upon His soul.-This He declared to His brethren, to put them, these poor disciples that followed Him, into the same place with Himself. He can now call them His brethren, for the work of redemption is accomplished.- Go, tell my brethren, He says, to Mary Magdalene, that I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. But this was not all - He raises the song of praise, in the midst of the Assembly. Thus, the remnant already manifested, the disciples are set on redemption-ground, and gathered with Christ in their midst. The Assembly, composed (as yet) of the remnant of Israel, takes a definite and true ground. The Assembly of God was there. His presence there. We have the remnant, the brethren, gathered into an Assembly (kahal, that is the actual gathering of them together), and the gathering founded on the sacrifice and atonement of Christ, and the power of His resurrection as to life. God was a Savior-God, in the power of eternal life; He was known in peace, and grace, and glory- was rejoiced in in hope. The instructions of the New Testament will carry us further than all this; but thus much was laid as a foundation. For Christ died, not only to save, and not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God, who were scattered abroad.

The first great element promised in Scripture, and given after the exaltation of Jesus, was the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The assembly being now formed, the Lord added to it daily the remnant of Israel whom he Was sparing from judgment. Hereafter they will form the body of Israel itself-now they were added to the assembly. The hundred and twenty were, by grace, together in practical kahal, though as yet they had no definite object which rallied them, save the consciousness of a common faith, strengthened, doubtless, by Jesus visiting them the day of His resurrection and following first day of the week. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost constituted them a real kadah, a corporate body, a true Ohel- Med, a tent of meeting, where the Lord was. He owned it formally as His assembly in the earth. A temple there was which God yet bore with, but it was not where He dwelt. It was somewhat as when the tabernacle was at Gibeon without the ark, and the ark, by delivering grace, in Mount Zion. The title of "Assembly" became the generic name for this assembly formed amongst men. Its state or privileges, relationship with God or with Christ, be they one or various, and the dealings of God and Christ with it, remain to be searched out. We shall find that it had more than one aspect and relationship, to which God's dealings with it corresponded.

But the assembly of God was formed. It was not yet brought out in the faith of its members, though it were so in the counsels of God, and in that on which the assembly was founded and formed - that Jews and Gentiles should form one body without distinction. Nor did other truths connected

with it make a part of their faith; but there was an assembly of God formed on the earth.

I will now consider some of the aspects in which it is presented in Scripture.

First, the Lord's prediction that He is going to build it, and on what, in Matt. 16 Christ, to the end of Matt. 12, had presented Himself preaching repentance and the kingdom to Israel, not hiding Jehovah's righteousness in the great congregation; above all, He had presented Himself as Jehovah-Messias to Israel, and sought an answer and fruit in His vineyard. Then He breaks entirely with His relationship with Israel after the flesh. His disciples are His mother and brethren and sisters. The nation is judged: its state worse than all before (Matt. 13). He sows; does not seek fruit: and when the kingdom of heaven is set up, the field is the world, not Judaism. All this is very significant; but it only leads us on to one further point (14, 15). He unfolds many moral points on which the rejection is founded, as indeed predicted, and shews grace bearing with, and rising above the evil, as to Israel. But in chap. 16, He elicits from Simon the confession of His own person; which, indeed, the Father had revealed to him. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On this rock He would build His assembly in the world, in the power of Divine life itself in Him as the Son of God. He existed, as Son, in the power of the life which is in God. And what should he who had the power of Hades, or death, be able to do against it? Christ was the very expression of the power of the living God, and that in life, as Son: what could the power of death do? This was shown in resurrection: "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead." It was no longer to be announced that He was the Christ in Israel. That was closed: but as He was going to build the Church, He must, as Son of Man, suffer and die, but rise again; and then, in the power of that resurrection which was beyond the power of death, build it. Some would see (in the transfiguration-hereafter, fully) the Son of man coming in His kingdom. Now He was to suffer, relinquishing His then Christ-relationship with Israel, and, before finally taking the kingdom in power, build the Church on the title of Son of the living God. Thus we have His three titles in this respect: Christ as Messiahship in Israel no longer announced; Christ, the Son of the living God - a title He was never given elsewhere - on this He would build His assembly; Son of man - in this He would now suffer, but afterward be seen coming in His kingdom. He announces His death, but builds His assembly on the acknowledgment of His person. For Son of man, see Psa. 8, Dan. 7, and Psa. 80:17. The kingdom of heaven is another subject, mentioned in the chapter, but not one which occupies us directly at this moment: I may speak of it further on.

Christ then declares, that upon this- that is, the truth of His being the Christ, the Son of the living God - He will build His assembly, and the gates of Hades should not prevail against it. This is a remarkable statement. Over Adam innocent, over men, consequently, everywhere, over Israel under the law, the gates of Hades had prevailed. Death and ruin had come in. Satan had gained the upper hand, as having the power of Hades; but this was on the ground of human responsibility. But Christ, who, perfect in Himself when responsible, went there in grace for us, could not, as the Son of the living God, be holden of the power of death. He went there, not that the prince of this world had anything in Him, but in love and obedience to His Father; and He not only was not holden of it, but He totally broke its power, rendered wholly void the power of Satan in it.

This was grace then and power; - the resurrection the completion and witness of that power, though not the full result in righteousness. It was the great proof of this grace and power in Christ,

on which the assembly was built; not on responsibility and failure, as human hopes were, but in grace and power, on the Son of the living God. Not that there is no responsibility; but the safety of the assembly, its being carried to its divinely-purposed result, is not in question in it.

We shall see aspects in which what is called the Assembly is cast off; but not the Assembly as built by Christ; that is, His own house; and He builds it for His own purposes, for our blessing, according to His own heart and His glory. This is all we have of the Church or Assembly here. Remark, there are no keys to it. Christ builds it. Builds the keys are of the kingdom of heaven. Not only has Peter not the keys of the Church, but there are no keys to it. It has no keys, nor has anyone any keys of it. There are none. It is what Christ is building. Building is not done with keys. The whole thought of keys of the Church, in any and every sense, is a delusion. There are none.

But, to return. The assembly, viewed as built by Christ Himself, is built in grace and power. It is founded on the Rock of Jesus being the Son of the living God; and till that power be subdued by the power of Satan, as having that of death, it cannot be shaken; but that power of life in resurrection has been proved entirely triumphant over Satan, over the gates of Hades. Hence, whatever phases the Assembly may go through, through false brethren come in, in its outward state be it so corrupt that Christ will spue it out of His mouth, His building is as secure as that on which it is built, and that is Himself. He carries His work on through all that comes from man -and this is the carrying on the work and purpose of God on earth.

But remark here, we have not the smallest notion of the body or bride of Christ, nor of the indwelling of God by the Spirit. All this is foreign to the view here taken. It is life, i.e., Christ, as having, as Son, life in and from the life of the living God, life divine, life in Himself (proved in resurrection), which is the foundation and security of the Assembly built by the Heavenly Architect, against which he who has the power of death, Satan, cannot prevail. The result will be in assured victory over him, whatever the vicissitudes of the combat in man, according to the purpose of God. Hence also, though there is an assembly, yet it is an assemblage of individuals, not a body, the Holy Ghost forms. Thus Peter, in full unison with this revelation, declares we are begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And then, unto whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. They are together as stones in a building and as a priesthood; but it is not a body growing in itself with joints of supply.

Thus far, however, we have the assembly as built up by Christ on the earth (though for heaven; but it is not built in heaven, nor presented as connected with a head there), in contrast with the presenting Messiah to the Jews, on the ground of their own promises, as come in the flesh, the seed of David according to the flesh. Peter (in Acts 3) proposes, indeed, to the nation to come in and enjoy the promises on this ground, and Christ would return on their repentance. This is founded on Christ's intercession, "Father, forgive them"; but they resist the Spirit, as their fathers ha-d done; and this part of their history closes.

The Assembly was formed, and publicly inaugurated by the descent of the Holy Ghost: the Jews as a nation, reject its offered blessings in the persons of their chiefs. Another truth now shines out: God accepts in every nation. There is no word of the unity of the body here yet; but Gentiles could be received.. The reception of the Samaritans seems not so much to have surprised the disciples. That we can understand; they had been there with Christ: they pretended, at least, to Jewish

privileges. The witness of the Spirit in Jerusalem is finally rejected; a saint takes his place in heaven; and Christ now can definitely sit down till His enemies (alas, the word!) are made His footstool. Hereupon, the Assembly outwardly is dispersed. The Jewish mission of the apostles (of going from a city where persecution assailed them) disappears; they are the only ones who remain. The action of the Holy Ghost takes a free course by whom He will in all this scene, and carries the testimony to the Gentiles. Meanwhile, an event of the utmost importance takes place in connection with the ways of God. What had scattered the assembly, formed as we have hitherto seen it, brought out upon the scene, in connection with the death of Stephen, the bitterest of those rejecting enemies; and he, through sovereign grace, by a distinct and new revelation, which did not connect him with Christ after the flesh, nor make him dependent on the apostles previously called, sees Christ in heaven and supreme glory, and learns that all the saints are one with Him - are Himself. Confounded, converted, taken up by power, He becomes a witness of the great truth that Jesus is the Son of God (which Peter is never recorded to have taught, but that He was made Lord and Christ), not conferring an instant with flesh and blood. After a salutary setting aside - which man ever needs, if he is to serve - he comes forth, as we have all read, not from Jerusalem, not of man or by man, but sent forth by the Holy Ghost from Antioch, a Gentile city, dependent on Him alone who sent him under the authority of Christ, and by the moving power of the Holy Ghost, to preach the Gospel of the glory to every creature under heaven, and to be a minister of the assembly, to complete the word of God. But that assembly, he had learned, in his conversion, was one with Christ Himself in glory.

Hence, we find, in the writings of the Apostle Paul, -very distinct additional light on other important aspects of God's Assembly, Eph. 1:22. It is the body of which Christ is the Head, the fullness of Him who fills all in all; " True Christians, viewed as a whole, are the body of Christ, and members in particular." This is fully un-folded in 1 Cor. 12; " For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." We are taught also how this most important truth is made good, " For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." The apostle unfolds and insists on this in the following verses of the chapter. In Eph. 4, we learn, that the body makes increase of itself, to the edifying of itself in love. The mutuality of membership, is dwelt on also in Rom. 12 In a word, the assembly, which, remark, already existed, for Jesus had spoken to him of the saints he was persecuting, is looked at in its true living character, the body of Christ; and it is so, through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In the Ephesians, how-ever, when the body is fully spoken of-the Apostle refers to the elect saints, who are created again in Christ Jesus, and are sealed for the day of redemption; that is, he sees the Assembly, when speaking of it as the body of Christ united to the Head, as God knows it; quickened, raised, and seated in heavenly places in Christ the Head. That which has wrought this unity is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, under which the elect and manifested remnant were brought on the Day of Pentecost. Of course, all since called of God have their part in it; and, when the body is formed, will be found in it with heavenly glory. God's mind as to the Assembly is, that it is Christ's body, and Christ its Head; whatever is not this, is the fruit of man's work; who, when blessing from God has been committed to him, has always marred it; as my readers will have often seen insisted on. All en-trusted to man, Satan being unbound, has been lost and spoiled; all will be taken up in perfection, in the second Adam. Still the Assembly-viewed as God's Assembly; and so in the first instance it is, and ought to be, in its normal state, and as it will be hereafter-is the body of Christ. But, in that body, all are living indefectible members. Christ has no dead members, nor a

mutilated body. The same power that wrought in Christ-this is the express doctrine of Eph. 1-in raising Him up, and setting Him at the right hand of God, has wrought in them. They believed also, and were sealed. This it is, which is always spoken of when the body is spoken of. No man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it as the Lord the Assembly, for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. The Assembly is the gathering of the children of God on earth into one, the assembling them; but, viewed in its reality, this Assembly is Christ's body; they are quickened with Him raised up, sitting in Him in heavenly places. As it is said, man is the image of God, speaking of what he is as from the hand of God, in the epistle of James, as in Gen. 1 But the state and position of man was entrusted to him on his own responsibility; and he is at enmity with God, and ruined.

Israel is the object of divine favor, God's firstborn in the earth; and, as touching election, beloved for the fathers' sake, yet, outcast and enemies, the branches are broken off; that is, besides that which God has set up being viewed as in His mind and thoughts, it must be viewed also in the result produced under the responsibility of man. Israel were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and ate the same spiritual meat, and drank the same spiritual drink; evidently referring to baptism and the Lord's supper, the outward ordinances by which Christian Association, the Assembly, is distinctively maintained.-But, with many of them, God was not well pleased; they were not Israel, though of Israel, as the Apostle expresses it. We must examine this character of the Assembly too-that is, the Assembly as it is formed on earth, under the responsibility and by the activity of man. And here we return to the image of the house and building, even in the writings of Paul. The members of the body are members of Christ, and livingly secured in Him. Indeed, even in the other point of view, that is looked at as the house as established of God, the Assembly cannot fail; only, as Israel did, it will give place, on the earth, to another order of things. We have already seen, that Christ declares, He would build His Assembly, and the gates of Hades should not prevail against it. Nor will they. When the due time is come, what He has wrought will be transferred to heavenly habitations, and be the House and City of God there, as the remnant of Israel were transferred to the Assembly, and the apostate body who had made profession to be Christians cut off, just as the body of Israel were cut off; only, that with the Assembly, the Holy Ghost having been there, it is a final thing; heavenly, or entire and final excision and judgment,-while Israel is reserved for future dealings of grace.

This House we will now consider. The Lord speaks of -His own building, and Peter of the stones coming to Jesus, and as living stones being built up a spiritual house. In both, we get the real work of Grace and of Christ, without allusion to any human failure and dispensational dealings, save the fact that the assembly has taken the place of Israel on the earth. It is viewed in its natural normal state; and so it is as to discipline, in Matt. 18, where the without and the within, the heathen position, is referred to the Assembly, not any longer to Israel-if he neglect to hear the Assembly, he shall be to thee as a heathen man and a publican. But Paul takes us higher, and hence forces us to distinguish, and in a certain sense to descend lower. He has seen, not merely an assembly formed by Christ on earth, to which souls were adjoined and built up as a house (and holy priesthood), here on earth, which is the view of Matt. 16 and Peter,-but Christ in heaven and the saints one with Him, members of His body, and a vast ingathering here below: of these he is to tell us, as minister of the Assembly, on one side, the wondrous privileges in every respect, and, on the other side, its actual earthly history as in the hands of men. Hence, in building, man is introduced

in the work; he does not speak of Christ's building. It is the actual fact before him, in blessing and in responsibility of which he will teach us. Facts which abide in the wide spread scene of Gentile profession to this day. Eph. 1 may first draw our attention. The individual saints are the first and primary object; what they are in relationship with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, the purpose of God being revealed, what they are, as sealed. by the Holy Ghost, and heirs of the inheritance to come. The power that sets them in their place with God, has been exemplified in the exaltation of Christ. This introduces a further point, the counsels of God in their union with Him. Christ, thus exalted, God has given to be Head over all things, but to the Assembly which is His body. We get thus, in the second place, the union of the Assembly with Christ,-the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. It will be remarked here, that the Assembly is viewed in its normal condition with the divine eye. The doctrine in hand is the exercise of the same power in a believer's quickening, as was exercised in Christ, when raised and set at the right hand of God; a power by which He shows they were quickened together with Him, raised up together (Jew or Gentile), and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him-created again in Christ Jesus; not only so, but what more directly and immediately shows it. It is the Assembly, seen as the individuals previously, as they are in the thoughts and counsels of God in full future result. The individuals are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame before God in love, and predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself. Hence, we (believers), it is said, where present time is referred to, have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; and the saints (Gentiles) are, after they believed, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, for and until the redemption of the purchased possession. So as regards the Assembly, God who has exalted Christ, has given Him to be Head over all things to the Assembly, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Now this, though faith seizes it now, is the full counsel of God as to it, when the whole body complete shall be united to the Head in His then dominion over all things - the true Eve of the heavenly Adam; Lord, not only of this lower, but of the whole, creation. It is a citation of Psa. 8 It is not yet fulfilled, He is now sitting at the right hand of God, till His enemies be made His footstool; and, as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, citing the same Psalm, we see not yet all things put under Him. We see him crowned with glory and honor. Meanwhile, He is gathering the Church; and those who are sealed with the Holy Ghost, brought into the unity of the body, appropriate, justly, all the privileges that belong to their union with Christ, which is effectuated; though the outward results are not yet accomplished, and Christ has not yet received, in fact, this dominion as man, over all things; though all things are His of the Father. They know they are reconciled, but that the purpose of God to reconcile all things in heaven and earth is not yet accomplished.

As regards the passage, then, which occupies us, it presents to us the full result of the counsels of God, in this point, when Christ shall exercise His universal dominion as man, and the whole Assembly be complete; and hence, looks at it as in the mind of God, not in its administration on the earth in the hand of man.

Allow me to present a general truth as to God's ways; not a new one, I dare say, to many of my readers, but important to notice here. That all the glories which are to meet in Christ - that is, glories which He is to take as man, not the essential glory of His person and all connected with them in us, have been first tried in the hands of the first Adam, and his failure proved. Adam, as man, failed. The Second Adam is true Head over all things: God is glorified in Him victorious over

Satan in trial, as the first succumbed. Man in Israel is tried by the law given as a proving rule of life. Hereafter, the law will be written in their hearts, and the statutes of God kept by them. Priesthood was set up in man, and failed. Christ will present all saved to the end by His. Royalty in David's son failed, and the kingdom was broken up. It will be set up, never to fail, in Christ. Sovereign power in rule over the Gentiles and the world failed in Nebuchadnezzar, set idolatry up for unity of religion's sake, and, consequently, persecuted God's saints. It will be set up in Christ in perfectness, and in Him shall the Gentiles trust. The Assembly has been set up in its responsibility, that God might be glorified in it, and a glorious Christ fully known. It has failed in this; but when Christ comes He will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. True redemption is accomplished; and we know the whole counsels of God founded on them, as they never were known before, because the Lord Jesus has come and laid that blessed foundation; but it is not the less true that the Assembly has been set to glorify God and the Lord Jesus, by the present power of the Holy Ghost, and that it has failed in its responsible place here below, and has taken a place in flesh, out of which it has been called; but the sure counsels of God will be accomplished in the Assembly united to Christ in glory.

It is in this last way, the Assembly is viewed in chap 1 of the Ephesians, as is the case in respect of the subjects of the whole chapter, though that which the true heirs and members of Christ possess, meanwhile, is doubtless stated, but only in view of this ultimate purpose of God, and not what refers to the sphere of their earthly responsibility; of that there is nothing in the chapter at all. The thoughts, purpose, and counsels of God are its subject. The beginning of chap. 2 shows that by which those once dead in trespasses and sins are brought into the blessed place which these counsels have bestowed on us. From ver. 11 of that chapter, though still addressing saints, he speaks of their actual condition and position, in fact, down here on the earth -their present actual place. The Gentiles were made nigh. The middle wall of partition broken down in the cross, that Christ might reconcile Jews and Gentiles in one body to God; then the message of peace sent to both, so that we have both access by one Spirit to the Father. They are fellow-citizens of the saints and of the house-hold of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, Christ being the corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord. In whom they also were builded together for a dwelling-place of God, through the Spirit. Now, doubtless, the thought here presented is the normal state of the assembly upon the earth; Scripture would thus, speaking of it in principle, so describe it, it could not do otherwise; but we are here on quite other ground than in the first. We have not the purpose and counsel of God, but facts wrought and a system established upon the earth, in which men have their part, such as they are here below. Those whom he addresses were builded together to be a dwelling-place of God on the earth. The temple had been such in another way. Now it is another, a Christian dwelling-place, which God has by the Spirit. The more Eph. 1 and 2, to the end of ver. 10, is examined, the more it will be seen that the view there taken on every point is God's counsel and God's work, and its blessed result in us: no trace of dependance on man, or connection with man's responsibility, is found. First, His purpose as to us individually in Christ. Further, we are accepted in the Beloved, and we have redemption through His blood; then His will is made known to us; and in this place, for Christ's glory, we have an inheritance according' to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will. This, with the revelation of that will, characterizes the whole passage. He prays for them that they may know it, and the power that brings into it. This is according to the power which wrought in Christ, raised Him from the

dead, and set Him at the right hand of God. The same has wrought in us, before that dead in sins, and raised us up, too, and set us sitting in heavenly places in Christ. Now it is evident, that all this is, as expressed at the end of the passage, a work of God, forming the real members of the body of Christ. We are God's workmanship, sealed, after believing, by the Holy Spirit of promise, earnest of the inheritance which belongs to us in Christ through grace.

Now our union with Christ, as His body-, forms a de-finite part of this work, and, indeed, that in which the positive work and power of God operating in us, as in Christ, when it raised Him and set Him at His right hand. Thus the body is composed of the true members of Christ, united to Him by the power of God and the effectual presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, while He is sitting at the right hand of God; and they are sitting there in Him.

In ver. 11, as we have seen, the apostle begins with the dispensation of this mystery on earth. But some passages must be referred to before we enter on this. -Were this all, the doctrine current from Augustine downward, of an invisible Church, would have to be admitted as the thought of God, and, consequently, no recognized body on earth, or the whole system of corruption introduced by Satan, recognized as the body of Christ, and its outward administration accepted as the channels, and only legitimate channels, of grace, and all the privileges of the body itself admitted to belong to it. But this is not the case; we, have still to consider the body as presented in 1 Cor., that is in its outward manifestation on the earth in unity. Here we shall find the recognition of the power by which unity is formed on earth. The sign which constitutes the visible expression of that unity, and the distinct declaration that we may partake of the signs of Christian profession, or of unity and spiritual life, and yet be rejected. When He treats men as saints, He treats them as one body on the earth; but warns them, they may be outwardly 'incorporated into this in every way, and God reject them after all. Nor, indeed, would participation in outward power prove the contrary.

In chap. 12 we have the power of unity -" 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." In chap. 10 we have the outward sign of it -" For we being many are one bread [loaf], and one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf." The baptism of the Holy Ghost forms the body in. unity. The Lord's Supper is the external sign of it. It may be remarked here, consequently, that the apostle addresses the sanctified in Christ Jesus all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus, theirs and ours. Thus the unity here spoken of embraces the universal body of the, sanctified in Christ Jesus, yet it recognizes the local assembly of Christians-saints by God's calling -as representing locally this unity.

"The, Church (assembly) of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints (i.e., saints by calling)." They are distinctly addressed as having the testimony of Christ, and that confirmed by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. They were waiting for Christ's coming, who would confirm them to the end, so that they should be blameless (chap. 1). So he treats them all through, though warning them (chap. 10) to see that it was real. At the end of chap. 5, this body of called saints are to put out the wicked person from among them, that they may be a new lump (in fact), as they are unleavened in their place and standing before God. There are those without, and those within; those within, judged, those without, in God's hands. The one Assembly of the place, looked at as unseparated from the whole company of saints, acts as the body of Christ. In

chap. 12, after dearly speaking of the whole body, he says, " Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." They are placed corporately in this position, while all in Christ are included in it. There is no body but one, that of Christ; a local assembly acts as such, and can exclude none of His members. The verse which follows clearly shows that the whole assembly is in view, as apostles and all gifts are placed in it. God hath set them in the assembly, first apostles, then prophets, etc. Apostles and prophets are clearly not in any particular assembly, as such; locally, at any given moment, they may. Paul was acting as a member of the assembly at Corinth, yet not apart from his position at that time.

Further, it is proof that it is the Assembly on earth. Healings are not in heaven, nor the exercise of gifts either; that of which they are members, as exercising their gifts, viewed in the true light of their place according to the thought of God, is the body of Christ; that in which they are placed is the assembly, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints.

Further, the apostle supposes the possibility of a person possessing tongues, prophecy, miracles, and being still nothing. He does not say, such are members of the body. We have thus (Eph. 1) the body according to the counsel and work of God; and (1 Cor.) the body, as formed in this world by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and publicly manifested in its unity in partaking of the Lord's supper. In the first, Christ is Head to the Assembly, which is His body; in the second, the various members of the body are wrought in by the Holy Ghost to perform their various functions, and God is said to have set them in the Assembly; i.e., the Assembly is called the body in Eph. 1, in the full result of God's counsels, and the members of the body, as seen on earth, are set in the assembly in 1 Cor. In the perfection of both, the Assembly is said to be Christ's body. On earth, in God's mind, they are practically identified, but one is not said to be the other. But those addressed are the sanctified in Christ Jesus; saints by calling, and always viewed as such.

Other passages show, that false brethren could creep in among the rest, and apostatize from among the rest; but this, though there are warning and hints which lead to the possibility of it, is not contemplated here; we have nothing to do here with sowing tares among the wheat. It is the kingdom which is there spoken of, and in the field, the world. In Rom. 12, we have the same general idea as in 1 Cor. All are assumed to be true saints; the members are looked at, not in union with the Head, but in their mutual relationship and individual service. " We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." It is not necessary more particularly to refer to that passage, In Ephesians, the true saints, quickened with Christ, are the body of Christ, Head over all things; in 1 Cor., so also is Christ, seen on earth in us. In Romans, " We are one body in Christ."

I now turn to the second aspect in which it is viewed in the Ephesians. In a dispensational way, Christ builds an assembly, secure in result from the prevailing of Satan's power. In the counsel of God, the saints raised with Christ by divine power from His body. This body is formed and manifested on the earth by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But the apostle who has given God's counsel and work, as to it and its outward formative power, will also give it to us in its actually ordered condition, and what it will become in the hands of man as existing here below. Having taken the general fact which existed in the dispensations of God, He is given of God to reveal it as it stands in the counsel of God, and as formed by His workmanship, and what it becomes in the hands of man. And here he enters upon the domain of facts, not views-facts, in the first instance,

happy and pure enough, answering to God's mind; still facts taking place in the sphere of man and his condition and state. here below, though God may be working in and through it, and in result securing the accomplishment of His own counsel. But we are in the sphere of facts and circumstances, not of the counsel and thought of God; nor, however, at first, the work may answer by grace, by His working in and by man;-to His mind is it simply and absolutely His work. Hence, though in general the subject be the same, in general what is spoken of is not called the Assembly any more than the body.

Such a way of treating leaves room for the work being, by grace, most blessed, and much according to God's mind; but also, man being the workman, for awful departure from it, too. Still we shall see, in most material respects, God has a place in it, but another and a distinct one; we shall find no members of a body, but the sphere of work is God's in the world, and His presence is found to be there in what is built up. The apostle, in Eph. states the facts; thus, the Gentile believers at Ephesus had, once afar off, been brought nigh by the blood of Christ, for Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition, abolishing in His flesh ordinances, to make of twain (Jews and Gentiles) one new man, and reconcile both in one body by the cross, and having slain the enmity, preached peace to the Gentiles afar off, and the Jews nigh, through Him by one Spirit. Jew and Gentile (believers) had access to the Father;-all this brings out the great principles on which the work was founded.

Verses 19 and 20 further describe this new position. In Christ all the building, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. Thus Jew and Gentile are brought together to be the temple or dwelling-place of God; they grow up to this. In this sense, it will be perfect-a holy temple. But beside this, there is the present work which was going on. They were then builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. God dwelt there by the Holy Ghost. Now the thought of God, founded on the death of Christ, was to have a holy temple, in which He should dwell; and so He will. But there was a work going on now upon earth which corresponded to this. Jews and Gentiles were builded together, to be God's habitation by the Spirit. That which is definitely presented here, is the dwelling of God there in the person of the Spirit. There is no head, no union, no body. What God has to say to it, is not to animate the members and unite them in one body to the head and one another, but to dwell there.

No doubt, the house, in the mind of God and in result, will be a holy house of true Christians; nor is there that at the first, it was practically so, when the Spirit took up His abode in it. The apostle addresses them as saints-the body and the house were in fact the same. They were built on the foundation; but who had built them? Of this nothing is said. Although the present fact is assumed, that the building is in its normal state, yet we do not find the work of God perfecting His counsels, but a warning following, founded on the responsibility of man, of which we read nothing whatever in the first chapter, and first ten verses of the second. "I beseech you," says the apostle, " that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye were called, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." On this the triple unity spoken of in a former paper; one Spirit-body and hope; one Lord-faith and baptism; the God and Father of all, above all, through all, and in them all. When we turn to the actual accomplishment of the work on earth, presented to us in 1 Cor. 3, it takes an aspect characterized wholly by man's responsibility, not to the exclusion of the truth, that all the true work is of God, and man nothing; but that, in the work actually wrought on earth, man's working enters with all its consequences. Paul had laid the foundation as a wise master-builder:

the true foundation was laid, none other could be, but every one was to take heed how he built thereon; he might build gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; the enduring of the work depended on the materials. It would be tested. The teaching brought in souls according to its own character; and the superstructure of the building of that which was raised up on the foundation of Christ in the world, was according to the materials. Here we have the outward result in the world; yet God's building, as to its standing and position in the world, but man building it, and his responsibility in play, and the result according to the materials employed, It has been sought to justify the evil result of man's bad building; but of this there is not the smallest trace, the very man that had so built was himself saved only as through the fire, and all his labor lost. Here I need hardly say we have nothing of the body.

But the instruction of the Word goes further. God has allowed and ordered, since evil was to be, that the principles of that evil should work, before the eyes of those that scrutinized it with divine sagacity were closed; and if the coldness of the saints towards Christ, and the working of the mystery of iniquity pressed upon the heart of Paul; and the flowing in of iniquity under the garb of Christianity roused the glowing indignation of Jude and Peter; and the departure of some to take an antichristian position awakened the warning voice of John, they have afforded us a divinely-given inspired judgment, in the word, of all that did so. False brethren crept in unawares; wickedness came in, and those not really of the Christian commonwealth went out. But Paul-that wise master-builder, who above all had the ministry of the church committed to him-would, above all, judge by the Spirit, the bearing of this work of the enemy, and give the needed warning and direction to the saints and so he does. One passage in particular will attract our attention, because it refers directly to our subject, and gives explicit direction for the conduct of the saints in a state of things which has so ripened since he first, by the Spirit, spoke of it, 2 Tim. 2:17,22. Heresy had come in, and the faith of some was overthrown. Here the apostle brings out distinctly the difference of the two aspects of God's people now on the earth, of which we have spoken. The foundation of God standeth sure: and these are the two devices of the seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His. That is the sure security of God's purpose: then man's responsibility, as naming the name of Christ, they should depart from iniquity. But this is not all. The actual condition of the house, the Lord's house, as confided to men, not merely its nature, is looked at. "But," the apostle continues, "in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor." We are to expect vessels to dishonor in the house. The direction of the apostle is to purge oneself from these, and to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. The general result will be found in 2 Tim. 3, the form of godliness, but not the power; and 2 Thess. a falling away which introduces the man of sin.

These various passages of Scripture give us a pretty clear insight into the way in which the assembly is contemplated in Scripture. We have first, the body according to the purpose and work of God. Its members quickened with the Head, raised up and sitting in heavenly places in Him. This, in full result, will be the body of Him who is Head over all; the fullness thus of Him that filleth all in all. Next, we have the body manifested on the earth by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and outwardly expressed by union in partaking of the Lord's Supper. Hence, those doing this together are so far looked at as the body; all saints being, how-ever, associated in thought. With this, water-baptism has nothing to do. We are one body with an ascended Christ, baptism never

reaches ascension; it is confined, in its signification, to death and resurrection. Thirdly, we have the house in the thought and purpose of God, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets of the New Testament; it grows up a holy temple to the Lord. This embraces the whole assembly, and is not yet complete. But the union of Jews and Gentiles under the gospel in the assembly, formed the habitation of God on earth through the Spirit. This is treated as a fact; but it is not said in Ephesians, what would become of it. It is not a work of divine power, quickening individuals out of death, and then uniting to Christ by the Holy Ghost; but new relationships formed by a divine work, which are entered into. The assembly takes the place of Israel as the dwelling-place and habitation of God. Now, doubtless at first those who entered, did so by the power of God. But it was a position on earth in which man was responsible, not union with the Head in heaven. Fourthly, we have the building of this house, in fact, by the labors of man; Paul, the wise master-builder; and the danger of others not building with good materials. Fifthly, we have a great house with vessels to dishonor in it, from which the faithful have to purify themselves; along with this, perilous times, when professing Christians would have the form of godliness and deny the power of it, and were to be turned away from; and, lastly, an actual apostasy (the true saints being caught up to heaven.), and so the revelation of the man of sin, judgment closing all. Two passages should be referred to here, 1 Tim. 3:15, and Heb. 3:6. The latter passage refers to the care of Christ over His house, and looks on to the house being owned in its true sense, and according to the divine purpose hereafter. God would have a house, a dwelling-place, and though the heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain Him, yet dwell with men. This dwelling of God with man reposes on redemption, by which they are made His own in a divine right, and unalterable title not merely by creation. He did not dwell with Adam, not with Abraham; but, when Israel was re-deemed out of Egypt, and become His people, He dwells there; redeemed them in order to dwell there. See last two verses of Ex. 29, compare 25. When the house was empty, swept, and garnished, the Blessed One came and could say of His body "this temple." Then the Lord formed the assembly for a dwelling-place; nor does this blessed truth cease, even now, no more than the other fruits of redemption. In the new heavens and the new earth, the tabernacle of God (the assembly) will be with men. Meanwhile, it was formed on earth, a habitation of God, through the Spirit. In Heb. 3, the apostle, as in all the epistles, was warning the Jewish professors against turning back and giving up the beginning of their confidence. If they did they would form no part of Christ's house, over which He Himself was. He had, indeed, built all things as God, but in a closer relationship, He had His own house; and of this, as a divine building, those who abandoned Him, of course formed no part. 1 Tim. 3, views it in a somewhat different light. The point on the apostle's mind is not Christ over His own house, but the servant's responsibility in God's house. The assembly of the living God is that house. There is the place where the truth is professed, and its profession maintained in the world and no where else. If anything calling itself the assembly- of God loses the profession of fundamental truth, it ceases to be an assembly of God. On the other hand, the servant of the Lord has to learn, when the truth is professed, how to behave himself as in the assembly of God; that is, the house of the living God. That is its character, and our responsibilities are according to this character.

What has been said, will, I apprehend, by drawing his attention to the passages, sufficiently introduce my reader into the thoughts of Scripture on this subject. Many most important consequences may be drawn; but this, as yet, I reserve. We have the general idea of the Assembly of God upon the earth. This Assembly, founded consequent on the exaltation of Christ

on high, has a double aspect, considered in its normal state. It is the body of Christ, looking at in its union with Christ on high; the house of God, if we consider it as the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, sent down consequent on Christ's exaltation. In these characters, the Epistle to the Ephesians presents it to us; in either case, it is first of all viewed as composed of true believers, and will in result be composed of such. In general, the building of the Assembly, viewed as going on to its ultimate result, is Christ's work founded on the power of His resurrection; and Satan's power cannot prevail against it. It is never called Christ's Assembly but here (Matt. 16) (particular assemblies are, Rom. 16:16), and is viewed as one built by Himself, and in result secured by His power. He considers it in its reality, without dwelling on its privileges, or what the outward temporary form of it remains in man's hands. The body of Christ is spoken of as being on earth; but always assumed to be composed of living members, in whom the Holy Ghost works in power. Scripture does not say that a man may not have this power, without being a member of the body (for Scripture, 1 Cor. Heb. 6, and many passages analogous in the gospels and even in the Old Testament, suppose that he may); but, in speaking of the body, the members are all supposed to be living saints. The house is first viewed according to its institution and result in blessing; but, at the same time, human building is spoken of, and in result on earth a great house, in which vessels to dishonor have their place, as well as vessels to honor; though we are called to purge ourselves from them.

I would refer the reader, in order to complete this review, to the fifth of Ephesians; where the love of Christ towards the Assembly, viewed as the object of divine counsels and the bride of Christ, with allusion to Eve's relationship with Adam, is unfolded; first, in its whole character and results He loved it, gave Himself for it that He might cleanse it for Himself by the word, and present it to Himself (as God did Eve, when formed, to Adam), glorious and spotless: secondly, in His tender care over it, He nourishes and cherishes it as a man would his own flesh. In the fourth chapter, we find the gifts coming down from Christ as Head; these gifts being represented as the members themselves ministering, first, to the perfection of the individual members; and then, with a view to the work of the ministry and the edifying the whole body, by the supply of every part. I would recall the triple unity heretofore spoken of. The body, the Spirit, and the hope:-The one Lordship of Christ to which faith and baptism correspond. Then, one divine being, God and Father of us all, who is above all, and every where, and in us all. -Wonderful privilege! There remains the question, What has historically become of the Assembly thus formed? and what form did the thoughts connected with it take in the minds of Christian men? Of this in another paper, the Lord willing.

" Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and any righteousness shall not be abolished."

The House of God, the Body of Christ, and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

In essaying to accomplish the task which I had under-taken, of giving, in its main element at least, an historical view of the doctrines progressively held regarding the Church, the assembly of God, I was, I confess, hardly aware of the poverty of the resources to which I should be reduced when once I left scripture. As doctors, I had no great confidence in the fathers; I had consulted them; at any rate, too much for that. But I thought that, on the subject of the Church I should find not surely what had the truth and depth Of scripture, it would have been alike unjust and wrong, but, at any

rate, an energy of thought and apprehension, which, if flowing in a channel traced out by human thought, and occupied with an earthly establishment of divine things, would still rise above temporary questions and difficulties, and have an elevation not to be reached by views arising out of them; and, by which the actors of the moment sought to meet them. I judged that a corrupt and human state of things had been clothed, by a discoverable process, with titles and privileges which belonged to a divine creation. My faint recollections of Tertullian and still more of Cyprian, and in general of Church-history, colored, perhaps, by habit and general opinion, led me to this; and to suppose that there existed at first a mere practical apprehension of the Church, as seen before them; and thereafter a gradual corruption, and larger use of now-collected scripture; a positive, soon an habitual, and, last, doctrinal application of divine prerogatives to human failure, such as we see in full display in Romanism. But the fathers are petty even in error. There is in general nothing to relieve the poverty of their local and occasional preoccupations; and when divine life had seized, as in St. Augustine, some deep and blessed truths, which could not mingle with corruption, and gave some enlargement of view even as to ecclesiastical subjects, practical corruption was now at such a height that the whole produced a confusion, which has, at least, the moral dignity of not passing over evil, or, still worse, not seeing it so as to maintain a hierarchical system which gives importance to self, or which habit has made respectable.

Still, the fathers will give us their own history, which I will briefly follow, and in it the opinions of active men in their day.

The present system of Romanism must be sought else-where. It is simply, as regards our present subject, the use made of general principles met with in these fathers, and forged passages added to their writings, to carry out, by political ability, a scheme which has connected the exclusive appropriation of the claims and privileges of Christianity with the most constant opposition to its truth, its spirit and its practice; and made what claims to be exclusively the Church of God the seat of Satan's power. As to Catholicity, it is well to remember that it is a simple fable. As, when the royalty of Israel became corrupt, the kingdom became divided; so, when the professing Church became entirely corrupt, and the papal pretension became a definite matter of history, God took care that the Church ceased to be Catholic, and the very term Roman Catholic, for any one who knows the use of words, carries falsehood on its face. The pretensions of the papacy revolted the Greek patriarch. What set up Rome destroyed Catholicity. The most ancient churches and the imperial city became an antagonistic body to it. Roman pretensions, the political influence of Rome, were greater; its evil and unscriptural antagonism to, and supremacy over, civil power, which is ordained of God, marked it more distinctly as the seat and throne of wickedness; but Rome never was Catholic. The act by which it was born, its dawn of supremacy, destroyed forever Catholicity. The providence of God has not allowed Catholic corruption. At this moment, the majority of professing Christians and most ancient churches are out-side the so-called Catholic, that is, universal Church. No such thing exists as a Catholic, i. e., universal Church. The claims of each portion of Christendom to be a Church or assembly of God, must be tried, not by its own pretensions, but by scripture, and then they are easily disposed of, unless corruption and Christianity are identical. But I return to the history of the doctrine. The fathers may be divided into three classes, Apostolic, Grecian, and Western. We may also distinguish the Alexandrian, though they write in Greek; but they hardly enter into the sphere of our inquiry, though one considered such comes under the class Apostolic, Barnabas, who, however, affords us no light on the subject

of inquiry. He, with Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas, constitute, what are commonly called, the Apostolic fathers; but, since the publication of the canon of Muratori, Origen's supposition that the latter was the Hermas mentioned by Paul is maintained by none; I shall speak of him, therefore, after Justin. Justin and Irenaeus will give us those next succeeding the post-apostolic age. Tertullian, Cyprian, and later, Jerome and St. Augustine, may furnish us the doctrine of the Latins; and Chrysostom, instar omnium, the views of the later Eastern churches. Origen and Clement, Alexandrian or philosophical Christianity; Leo and Gregory the Great, Roman views of the matter.

As regards any spiritual or elevated view of the Church of God, as we see it portrayed in the Ephesians, or even the earthly manifestation or development of it in the power of the Holy Ghost, as in 1 Cor., it must not be looked for. The declaration, that salvation is not to be found out of the Church, and that if a man was not in the body, he could not be connected with the Head, and the application of this necessity to a large corrupt hierarchically governed body on earth, in order to condemn all who were not subject to it, and all who separated from it, through conscience or self-will; this will be found, as schisms flowing from will, or a conscience tormented by the horrible corruption that characterized the Church, took place. But the thought of the presence of the Holy Ghost animating living members, or his unfolding the riches or fullness of blessing, flowing from living union, never crossed their minds.

Of the Apostolic fathers, Barnabas, as I have remarked, furnishes us with no light. His object is to spiritualize Moses. All the ordinances of the law are mere figures. Their taking even circumcision literally was all wrong. Clement does not help us much more. He refers to the Old Testament hierarchy as a motive for order in the Christian services; but does not apply the analogy to a Christian hierarchy. Still, we see how already the mind of the Church was sunk below the urgent taking, by contrast, these analogies out of earth, and raising the, thoughts of saints up to heaven and heavenly things, which we find in the Hebrews, the object of which is to detach from all earthly Jewish hierarchism, and show its fulfillment in Christ in heaven, to which the partakers of the heavenly calling belong. This is the more remarkable, as Clement was familiar with the Hebrews, to which he refers and the present form of it in Greek was by some attributed to him. His epistle, the best of those of the Apostolic fathers, serves to show the sudden and utter declension from spiritual apprehensions which followed the departure of the apostle of the Gentiles. It helps us thus to understand the state of the Church, though it teaches nothing doctrinally about it. It is an amiable effort to make peace at Corinth, where they had turned off some of their elders. But a heavenly, spiritual and elevating use of Jewish forms is unknown to it. He brings us back to earth where the Hebrews had taken, us to heaven, though he refers to Hebrews. I have dwelt thus much on this, because it is the true key to all that follows.

Ignatius next draws our attention; and some important elements of history are here afforded us to consider; and, first of all what a proof of the propensity of the orthodox in these early days to commit pious frauds. What a mass of toil has been imposed on sagacious Ushers, very orthodox and much read Pearsons, and keen Dailies, to unravel what is genuine and is not genuine of the martyred bishop. We have universally acknowledged forgeries, longer interpolated editions, shorter stoutly defended ones, and then Syrian MSS. adduced to prove that five more out of the eight, admitted by many to be genuine, are also forgeries, and that the greater part of the three genuine ones has been added by the forging hand. It is a poor foundation to build on. It is curious

enough, and is to the credit of his sagacity, that Usher declared the letter to Polycarp, which is admitted to be genuine, to be spurious; the style was so very different from the others then supposed to be genuine.. He saw the difference, and that both could not be from the same author; and, assuming the others to be genuine, rejected this. What the Syriac leaves of the others, as far as matter and style of thought goes, does not militate against that to Polycarp. For myself, while not pretending to be learned in such matters, I do not doubt, in spite of Hefele and Jacobson, that Cureton has come to the right conclusion. The plea made, that what is found in the Syriac MSS., was an abridgment made for the use of the monks of the convent for pious uses, seems to me without the smallest foundation, as there are three distinct letters, and not the substance of eight or of three either, and nothing monkish in them. They are parts of the three larger, not the substance of three made a pious treatise of. I take, therefore, the Syriac edition as genuine. Their local origin confirms this; but for my present purpose it is not very material. In Ignatius's letters, even in those as I believe not genuine, or in the interpolated portions of the genuine, the Catholic church is not the subject, nor Catholic unity, but local unity in subjection to the bishop, -unity with him. He is to be viewed as God, the presbyters as Christ, the deacons as the college of the apostles. I take the strong expressions of the whole eight in the form defended by many. The point insisted on is the union of one local flock with one local bishop, and in everything. He who leaves that is outside everything. Diocesan episcopacy does not appear in Ignatius; in truth, it was unknown in that age.

In the epistle of Smyrna, on the martyrdom of Polycarp, the holy Catholic (universal) Church in every place is spoken of, the particular church is spoken of as Παροικια, Παροικουσης sojourning. The Catholic Church which is in Smyrna (sec. 16). Christ is shepherd of the Catholic (universal) Church in the whole world. Except the fact, that the whole existing Church in the world is one universal one, there is little doctrinal to assist us in this epistle. It is received as genuine; how far it is to be considered free from interpolation must rest upon the general confidence which one has in these remains of antiquity, where the system of pious frauds and fabricated gospels and writings was so abundantly at work. I know of no suspicion cast upon it.

This is all the testimony of the apostolic fathers on the point. Polycarp to the Philippians affords no additional light. He was a connecting link in point of time between those who succeeded the apostle and the third generation of Christian writers.

First of these Justin presents himself, but he affords us little light on the doctrine of the Church; he views it as embracing men in one, in contrast with Judaism. He applies Psa. 45 to the Church (Dial. with T., 287 b), saying, that the Word of God addresses her as a daughter, as one soul, one synagogue, one assembly. He quotes (Dial. with T., 261 a) Is. lii., according to the seventy, to a similar purpose. That all the apostles would be as one body, as is to be seen in the body with many members, all one, however, and are called and are one body, and adds, For, also, the people and assembly, many men in number, as being one thing, are called and named with one name. The Exp. Fid. goes farther and quotes Eph. 2 and 2 Cor. 6:16, speaking of the temple of Christ. But this is not of Justin. The Church in Justin is the external body or gathering on earth which he sees as one, as he does the apostles. This is the more striking, as he alludes clearly to 1 Cor., has it in his mind, but does not go further than the fact of one set of people on the earth called Christians.

In Hermas, in the treatise called The Pastor, we find largely developed views on the subject of the Church. I apprehend it is pretty generally agreed that he was brother to Pius II., A.D. 1464. He is, it appears, quoted by Irenaeus. His writings were read in many churches, though not exactly as scripture; yet almost quoted as such by some writers, though not of weight on such a point, as Origen, who says he considers him inspired. But the acceptance of The Pastor will show whereabouts the primitive Church was. The modern professing Church speaks of the earlier Christians being a guide to truth, inasmuch as they were nearer the apostolic source, because it believes as little in the need of the Holy Ghost's power, and of his working, as the early Church did, or less. St. Paul had the power of the Spirit of God. He knew by it that after his decease grievous wolves would enter, yea, and that within the Church perverse men would arise. The incapacity of the early Church to discern is plain from the reading of these visions etc. of Hermas, and the respect in which they were held. I have little doubt that they were well-intentioned, and that there was a personal desire of godliness in the writer's soul. But they are ill-conditioned and unseemly fables, fostering the most disgraceful practices of commencing superstition and asceticism, and teaching doctrine heretical in itself, and unworthy of all the dignity of divine things. But we shall get historically a then accepted view of the Church by their means. Passing over the unseemly introduction, the Church is for him simply a building in the world. It begins by forgiveness, not repentance (Command. 3). After that repentance is allowed once. The name of the Son of God is necessary, but all depends on conduct afterward (Sim. 9:13, 14), yet he allows people to be saved who are rejected from the Church (Vis. 3:8). But this is contradicted (Sim. 9:14). He speaks of the Church's becoming one body when purified, and the evil ones cast out. But there are one understanding, one opinion, one faith, and the same charity. The nations have believed and received the seal of the Son of God (baptism), they have all been made partakers of the same understanding and knowledge; and their faith and charity have been the same. And they have carried the spirits of certain virgins of whom he speaks, that is, of different graces, together with his name. After they agreed thus in one mind, there began to be one body of them all; however, some of them polluted themselves, and were cast off from the kind of the righteous, and again returned to their former state and became worse than they were before. Angels build the Church. I do not enter into details of green rods becoming dry, or splitting, or partly dry, getting green again; or, rich men being round stones who must be squared and lose all their riches to be able to be put into the house, and the casting out of stones from the building, when viewed by the Lord, save to remark that the whole is a matter of outward profession, of present moral state, and of this earth, a heavenly body, or a head in heaven, or the Holy Ghost, who unites us to Him and His work, is wholly unknown to him. His doctrine is as follows. The master of a vineyard confides a vineyard to a servant, who is to stake it, and he will thereupon be set free. But he does more, and weeds it. On the master's returning to visit it, he is very content, and takes counsel with his son, and with the angels, how he should reward him, and, as the chosen body into which the holy Spirit which was created first of all served that spirit, nor ever defiled it, it was made heir with the son.

He explains the son to be the Holy Spirit, and the servant to be the Son of God. Yet he explains elsewhere the rock higher than the mountain on which the house (the Church) was built by the angels to be most ancient, and yet a new door which he had become in time. I apprehend, though not openly stated, that his doctrine as to Christ was the common patristic one of his age, that Christ though Eternal, as the word-mind in God, only became a person (προφωρικος) when God was about to create the world.

Some have sought to prove him orthodox. Bad as his doctrine is, I hardly feel it needful to prove such poor and unscriptural nonsense unorthodox. What is material to us is to see that the Church is for him a mere outward visible thing, built on the earth, into which men are brought, and often afterward cast out, becoming worse than before. Christ is a foundation on the earth of this outward thing, He is no living head in heaven. That was wholly lost. It was not unnatural that scriptural spirituality not being there, that wonderful thing, the new thing in the earth produced independently of Jew and Gentile, national difference and all earthly power should occupy and possess the mind. They saw the house, viewed it, in its origin as built of God; but made no difference between the divine principle of its constitution, God's work to establish that, and man's actual work in it (on which the apostle is so distinct),-see only the latter, confound the human with the divine, and, in the case of Hermas, attribute it to angels.

Irenaeus sees the Church, in contrast with heretics, as an external thing in this world. That in which the apostles were set, the Church at Jerusalem, is that from which all Churches draw their origin (3:12, 5). The Spirit dwells in it: the communication of Christ is in it (3:24, 1). They who do not receive Him, nor are nourished by the Church, they do not receive that brightest fountain flowing from Christ. The Spirit of God and every grace are in the Church; but it is always the external body contrasted with heretics, particularly the Valentinians. In one place he speaks of Christ as *caput ecclesim*, but only as the Father is *caput Christi*; showing he has no sense of the union of the body with Him.

In pleading against the heretics, he uses the faith of the sees which the apostles had founded, as a proof of the truth they had taught; the particular Churches are witnesses in his point of view. It is on this occasion that he gives the list of bishops at Rome.

The fullest statement, perhaps, on the subject of the Church, is in 3:25, 1, where he says, the Church has with constancy kept the faith it had received; that this office was committed to it, that all recipient members may be vivified (the Latin is excessively obscure: *ad inspirationem plasmationi, ad hoc ut omnia membra vivifiantur*); and that the communication of Christ, that is, the Spirit, was there. He refers then to gifts (1 Cor. 12); adding, for where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church; and the Spirit is truth. In the Church are the gifts, apostles, prophets, doctors, and the whole remaining operation of the Spirit, of which none are partakers who do not run to the Church, but deprive themselves of life. He says, the Spirit is as an admirable deposit in a vase, always youthful, and making youthful the vase in which it is; and then goes on to speak of the life-giving office committed to it. But all this shows entire confusion on the subject which occupies us. The Spirit is in a vase, of which it maintains the youth; that is intelligible, if true; but he adds, that the recipient members may be vivified. Are they, then, members before they are vivified? And if he mean the maintenance of life, something gives it previously, not the Church, and the argument against the heretic fails. The fact is, the members have life, not the Church; but this would not do for his argument. The dwelling in a vase is all well, because the vase has not life, and his speaking of its making it youthful is a delusion. That the presence of the Spirit preserves it from decay, is a question of which the affirmative cannot be assumed, save through the confusion of the living body and the dwelling-place. In man, the breath of life is the life of the whole body and of all the members; and the Spirit may, in a vague way, be so looked at as corporately animating the whole body, when viewed as such in union with Christ; but, then, it is not that it may give them life, as the heretics cannot, because then they the so-called

members are looked at as dead, i.e. as no part of the body. Hence the figure is changed, and even so is faulty; they are not nourished as by the mother's breast unto life. Where did they get it to be nourished? and is the Church a thing apart from the members who compose it? "Where the Spirit is, the Church is," is not strictly true; for He is in individuals; but for Irenaeus' purpose it may be so taken; and where the Church is; the Spirit is. But the Church, as the body, does not communicate life; it has it speaking in figure; for, in truth, life is in individuals. Further, the dwelling-place and the body being confounded together, no thought of the Head is in Irenaeus' mind; but the indwelling of the Spirit in the house is life. Indeed, the body, save by comparison with man's creation, is not spoken of; but the external thing taken to have the power of life in it, in virtue of the Spirit's dwelling there, in contrast with heretics. There is the conscious blessing of living faith; but by confusion of all scriptural thought of life, house, and body, or rather the neglect of this last, the ground is laid for the worst pretensions of Romish apostasy.

That the Holy Ghost keeps young the vessel in which it dwells, is never thought of in Scripture; indeed, the contrary is taught. That it maintains eternal life in the saints, members of the body in union with Christ, is quite true. But we see that the Church in contrast at first with heathens, and now with heretics, i.e. the earthly corporation, is absorbing, in the mind of doctors, the privileges of the body, while the scriptural idea of the body and union with the Head are lost; and as the external thing was already corrupt, and soon became more so, the way was laid for appropriating the privileges to the extreme of corruption. But, as I have said of all, Irenaeus does not get beyond a reference to present circumstances and difficulties; uses what doctrine he has as to the Church to meet them; and does not enter into it for its own fullness and blessing. Hence the thought of the Head is lost. That must have brought truer thoughts and ideas; but when the thought of the Head was lost, the Church had no longer the definite idea attached to it of the body of Christ. The prerogatives and privileges belonged, then, infallibly to the corrupt external thing, and especially for him who had faith in the grant of them; and that Irenaeus, I do not doubt a moment, had. But let the reader note, that the heavenly Head of a living body does not in any way enter into the thoughts of Irenaeus; nor our being in Him, and He in us. Could the Pope, for example, be that? Even in speaking of Adam, he makes Adam the Church; and the breath breathed into him is what animates. No Eve is here, no Adam to represent Christ. All these truths are lost. There is only the Holy Ghost in the external thing, and that supposed to communicate life-as to which indeed, also, all is confusion.

Clement of Alexandria treats little of such subjects: he only tells us, as respecting temples built with hands, that the Church is the congregation of the elect. But the elect, with him, means nothing here. In a passage in the Stromata (vii. p. 885), where he is describing the Gnostic, or Christian according to knowledge, he says, he does not indulge his flesh. The rest are like the flesh of the holy body; for the Church is allegorically the body of Christ-a spiritual and holy choir, of which those who are called only by name, but do not live according to knowledge (*εκ λογου*), are the flesh; but this spiritual body, which is the holy Church, ought not to consist with fornication but fornication against the Church is living like Gentiles in the Church. We see thus the corruption come in, and how theoretical mysticism gets out of it.

In replying to heretics p. 899, he says, that the most ancient and true Church is the one, the others recent and adulterers from it; that God approves what is only the true catholic Church, founded on the two Testaments, nr rather the one in divers times, in which God by His will gathers by one Lord

those who are already ordained to it (τεταγμενους), whom God has predestinated, having known that they would be righteous before the foundation of the world. Before, his conscience was working; here, he is theorizing against heretics.

The baptized are washed, illuminated, perfect, etc.; and so stated in a passage which shews, as do his writings, very little respect for, or knowledge of, the person of Christ: to say the truth, if converted at all, philosophy had far more influence over him than Christianity. In poor, wild, persecuted, but sincere Origen, we see confusion and unbridled imagination indeed; but, in spite of all, marks of genuine living faith. But Origen furnishes us with little which throws direct light on the progress of Church opinion, though he may have largely influenced it. He studied Scripture, and was not occupied in the government of the Church indeed, his own diocesan would not ordain him, but drove him away. In interpreting Scripture, he gives on these points pretty much the contents of the text itself as it is, only the spouse in the Canticles is the Church; the tabernacle represents everything in detail; the ark is the Church; Noah was in the highest story-that is, Jesus, the true rest - at the top; ill-conditioned Christians, like the unclean beasts, at the bottom.

His spiritualizations are elaborate; and, with the simplicity, have the foolishness of a child. He was a great stickler for free-will. On the other hand, in replying to Celsus, to prove the union of the Word with man, he takes up the Church as Christ's body-He animating and giving motion to what was otherwise lifeless and inert, and each member only moving as set in movement by Him, as the life and soul of it as a whole. He calls it, also, the bride and the body of Christ. He applies even the temple of His body, in John, to the Church; but here he states, that it will be one when it is brought to perfection in resurrection; till then, it is like the scattered dry bones in Ezekiel, comparatively dry, scattered in persecutions. Here, also, he calls it the body; and, after Peter, the house built of living stones; and then goes on to apply the numbers of overseers, builders, etc., of Solomon's temple, and dates connected with it, to mystical senses. In a word, we find a large consideration of Scripture by one well versed in it, and hence far more divine thoughts flowing from it; but with this an unbridled imagination, and very little founding in, or even acquaintance with, fundamental truth.

These two last, with Barnabas of an earlier date, are the Alexandrian or intellectual school. We may now turn to more practical Latins, occupied with things -business, not ideas.

Tertullian and Cyprian first present themselves, and bring us back to the history of the dogma. The first, however, helps us but little as to the notion of the Church. All, as I have said, are occupied with their particular difficulties and the evils of the day. He gives no view of the Church. He once says, it is the house of God. But his great and incessantly repeated topic is the churches, not the Church; though he once says, they are one Church. He dwells on the succession from the apostles, or apostolic men, securing the truth, asserting they are one in doctrine (he speaks of conferences in Greece maintaining this). When he speaks of passages in Ephesians which relate to the Church, it is only against Marcion; and uses them to skew the Creator was the supreme God, and that flesh was not despised. Some judge this treatise was after he left the body called the Catholic Church in that day; as was probably another remarkable statement of his, that the authority of the Church alone had made the distinction between laymen and ordained persons; that all Christians are priests; and wherever two or three are gathered, even laymen, there is a Church-they can celebrate the Lord's supper, and baptize. In sum, his teaching is the value of

apostolic Churches, as securing sound doctrine: it was merely a Roman legal reasoning against heretics.

Cyprian insists much on the unity of the Church; but it is in opposition to the schism of Novatus and Novatian. Hitherto, unity had been assailed by heretics, and the defenders of catholicity had carefully denied their being of the Church, as they had not the faith which could be proved to be that of the apostles. A new thing now arose in the professing Church. Its corruption was so great (as, indeed, Cyprian himself testifies), that rigid discipline was insisted upon; and in default of it, as they judged it was called for, persons admitted to be orthodox separated from it, and the authority of the bishop was called in question. Hence Cyprian's idea of unity is simply local unity with the bishops; and of all bishops as being together one bishop, one episcopacy, he quotes the promise to Peter (Matt. 16:16). Bishops have all like honor and power; yet Christ begins from one, that the Church may be shown to be one. The episcopate is one, of which a part is held by individuals as a part of the whole. The Church, also, is one, which grows out into a multitude. He compares it to light and the sun, to a tree and boughs; if one of them be broken off, it is lost or dies. Such is the Church of the Lord exclusively. Her light, her branches, extend far; but there is unity of light and of body. There is one Head, one origin, one body, one mother (*De Unitate Ecclesie*, 106, seqq.). We are born of her, nourished by her milk, animated by her spirit; the spouse of Christ cannot be corrupted, she is incorrupt and chaste. He cannot have the rewards of Christ, who leaves the Church of Christ; he is a stranger, profane, an enemy. He cannot have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother. There is a great deal more to the same effect. He compares it to Noah's ark, to Christ's vest, Rahab's house, the house where the paschal lamb was eaten. God makes men of one mind in a house. In God's house, the Church of Christ, men live in unanimity (see *Epistle to the Lapsed*, xxxiii. 66). He again refers to Peter; thence, through the course of times and successions, the ordination of bishops and the principle of the Church has had its regular course; so that the Church should be founded on bishops (*Ep.* xlix. 93,95). Cornelius, bishop of Rome, says, in the correspondence, there is one bishop in the Church; the Catholic Church is shown to be one, and cannot be split and divided. The tares are in the Church; we are not to leave, but to seek to be wheat; and he quotes 2 Tim. 2:20, vessels to dishonor, but says nothing of purging ourselves from them. The Lord alone, he says, can break the earthen ones. (On the confessor's return, Cyprian, *Ep.* liv. 99, 100). They cannot be with Christ, who are not with his spouse and in the Church, referring to Eph. 5:31. Still all refers to Novatus, who had separated because of loose discipline, as he judged, with the lapsed (96).

As the one Church is divided by Christ in the whole world into many members, so one episcopate is spread abroad by the concordant number of many bishops. 112 refers to the exhortation in Eph. 4 The tares, he says, the apostles were not allowed of the Lord to discover; they pretend to separate (2 Tim. 2:20). They pretend to despise and throw away these wooden and earthen vessels, whereas it is only in the day of the Lord they will be burnt or broken with a rod of iron (168). The Church does not withdraw from Christ; and for Cyprian, the Church is the people united to the priest, and the flock adhering to its pastor, even if the multitude go away-when, says he, thou oughtest to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if any are not with the bishop, they are not with the Church; since the Church, which is catholic, is one, not split nor divided, but connected and joined by the glue of priests mutually adhering to one another. All this, it will be seen, is directed against Novatus at home, and Felicissimus who headed

a party against him, and Novatian at Rome. He says, the Church cannot be corrupted; yet he declares, that, morally, bishops and all, it was thoroughly heathenish and worldly; so that the persecution of Decius was only a most gentle dealing of God with it: it cannot be corrupted, but it was full of tares and vessels to dishonor.

I have the rather gone into Cyprian's statements, because he is known as a great writer on the unity of the Church; and his system, for the short time of his own activity, characterized the Church at large pretty sensibly; but it died with the energy which created it. He added the idea of a united diocesan episcopacy forming a single episcopate in many members, to Ignatius's idea of the unity of the flock to a local president. Though he uses the Scriptures, the idea they- give of living members united to a Head in heaven, does not seem to cross his mind as a truth in itself. But he attaches the importance and claims of that of which the apostle speaks, to a body which, he admits, is full of the tares of Satan's sowing, and of vessels to dishonor. But it is to be left so; that is, we have now in view outward unity (that is, really, for the clerical authority of priests who stick together like glue), the attaching the credit of Christ's spouse and body to a vast mass of admitted corruption and evil. Augustine will give us another phase. Yet his views of personal religion and election involve him in the greatest contradiction and difficulty. They are, however, important; for if Cyprian has formed hierarchical views short of Romanism, Augustine has in a great measure been the source of reformed doctrines, save in the point of justification by faith, on which, certainly, the Reformation was somewhat clearer. But his difficulties, if they were not to be wept over for the sake of the Church, would really amuse, from the way he is perplexed. Like all the rest, though searching Scripture for himself as a, godly man, he is occupied in his reasonings with the circumstances of the moment. In his case, it was the Donatists. A quarrel having arisen in Africa, as to the episcopacy of Donatus' predecessor, a very large party indeed was formed, with a very considerable part of the episcopacy. It was alleged, that Cecilianus was ordained by one who had been unfaithful in Diocletian's persecution, having given up the sacred books-a traditor. They chose Majorinus, to whom succeeded Donatus. The others complained of a fanatical love of martyrdom. The Donatists appealed to Constantine; and, after two appeals from the, first sentence, they were condemned and violently persecuted, which they returned by violence and, as is alleged, by assassination; so bright is the history of the primitive Church! But another circumstance must be mentioned here. Cyprian and most of the Eastern bishops had re-baptized those baptized by heretics. Rome, and those under its influence had opposed this. Cyprian and the East, however, held good; but, in the course of time, the Roman opinion prevailed in the West, and it was orthodox to receive heretical baptism. In the East, it was generally rejected for a long while after this. I refer to this, because it was a great source of Augustine's perplexity: he received the Western view. But then he had to acknowledge, that by Donatist baptism those who were not in the catholic Church received forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost. This, of course, was a terrible difficulty. I will now give his statements, in which the conflict of his views will easily appear. They gave formal rise to the thought of an invisible Church. He is very fond of insisting on one text, and citing it repeatedly everywhere; thus Eph. 5, as to the unity of the body and Head, spouse and Husband.

Because, therefore, a whole Christ is his head and body; therefore, in all the psalms let us so hear the words of the head, that we may hear the words of the body (Ps. 57. 754, C. D.) Hence, all nations in the Church are like the Day of Pentecost. It is always with him unus homo caput et

corpus, one man, head and body (Ps. 18. 122, C.) Hence, when statements in the Psalms do not suit Christ, as God, or even as man, he says, I dare to say Christ speaks, but Christ speaks be-cause Christ is in the members of Christ (Psa. 30.2 II, A.)

He says (vol. ix. Ed. Ben. 687, B), no one ever arrived to salvation itself and eternal life, unless he who has the head, Christ; but no one can have the head, Christ, save he who is in His body, which is the Church. Then he does not reject the Donatists for all their deeds; that would be straw; but not hurt the wheat, if they held the Church fast. Nor does he accept the Church for any good, or opinions of men. What is done right in the Catholic [Church] is, therefore, to be approved, because it is done in the Catholic [Church] We acknowledge, he says, the Church, as the head, in the holy canonical Scriptures. He insists on searching the Scriptures. They speak of a universal Church. This cannot be the Donatists of Africa. He then seeks to justify persecution, when rightly used. But here, as I have intimated, he was greatly puzzled, because it had been decided that the baptism of heretics was valid. Hence, his adversaries alleged that the baptism of Donatists was accepted, and that, consequently, he must admit that they conferred the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost, as was ' believed to be the case in baptism, and that their admission into the Church of those baptized by them was owned; that is, the Donatists were the Church too. He replies, many who are publicly outside are better than many, and good Catholics. But God also knows his predestinate ones-knows what they will be. But we, who judge from present things, say, His dove does not own them, and the Lord will say, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity. I answer, he says again, Do the avaricious or other wicked persons forgive sins? if you regard the sacrament, yes; if himself, no. We own what is of Christ, but it does not profit; but when the evil is corrected, then it will. One baptized, in heresy does not become the temple of God, nor is a baptized avaricious man the temple of God either, unless they leave the evil. (This puts one in mind of the assembly's catechism). Still, he says (ix. 168 B.C.) they are generated to God, but by that which they (the Donatists) have in common with the Catholic Church; separated from the bond of charity and peace, but found in one baptism. And not only they who are in open separation do not belong to her, but those who are mixed up with her unity are separated by a very bad life. He takes the case of Simon Magus, and says, he who has no charity (cui defuit) is born in vain, and, perhaps, it were expedient for him not to have been born (!). He is greatly puzzled, also, by " Receive ye the Holy Ghost," and that, as he quotes it, then follows " baptize all nations in the name," etc.; " and whose sins ye remit," etc. He answers by saying, " He who hates his brother abides in death," but schismatics do. And what is being re-born in baptism but being renewed from one's old state, but he whose old sins are not put away is not so; and if not re-born has not put on Christ; and if he has not put on Christ, he is not to be considered baptized in Christ. But it was replied, as many as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ. He acknowledged one baptized in Christ has put on Christ. It was then naturally alleged that he owned their baptism; therefore, that they were regenerate; therefore, their sins put away. He answers them only by Simon Magus; forgiven, yet having no part or lot in the matter. Then (271, B.C. and foll.), in the ineffable prescience of God, many who seem outside are within, and many who seem within are outside. Of all those, he says, who, as I may so say, are intrinsically and secretly within consists that garden enclosed, the fountain sealed, etc.; but he supposes them by heretics or others baptized into the ark (218, B). The water of the Church is faithful, saving, and holy to those using it well, but out of the Church no man can. /t cannot be corrupted; so the Church is incorrupt, chaste, pure, and therefore avaricious men, etc., do not belong to it, of whom Cyprian himself testifies,

there are not only without but within (466, A). If thou groaning seest such crowds (of wicked) around your altars, what shall we say? that they are anointed with holy oil, and as the apostle clearly establishes with clear truth, they will not possess the kingdom of God. Discern, therefore, the holy visible sacrament, which can be in good and evil; for those, for reward; for these, for judgment; from the invisible unction of charity, which belongs only to the good. But the true Church (578, A) is not covered or hidden, nor cannot be (466, B); hence, Donatists are it not. The Lord has compared the Church to a net. The bad fishes are not seen under the waves by the fishers, but on the floor, judgment, are manifested evil ones. So the separation of the fishes was only when the net was drawn out. Thus, before the fan is applied they are mixed in the Church (48, C.) The 7000 did not separate from Israel.

According to Augustine, the Old Testament saints belong to the Church (vi. 454, 455, 480, C.; v. 25, C.D.)

The confusion and contradiction are evident; and the conflict of a mind, who having, learned what true holiness was, and the electing grace of God, had an outward system to maintain, and made the outward corrupt thing the incorruptible body of Christ, though groaning at seeing crowds of wicked around its altars. Jerome is much more vague; he holds Old Testament saints for members of the Church (Corn. on Epis. to Gal. iv. 1, vii. (i.) 446); applies the tares to the Church-and the ark of Noah as receiving all sorts; so 2 Tim. Gold, silver, wooden and earthen vessels in Church he uses against the Luciferians, a strict sect against Arians, more strict than the public Catholic body (ii. 195). The day of judgment will settle it. Yet none are saved out of the Church. The Church is universal, and cannot be the Luciferians. He complains bitterly of its state. He applies Jer. 23:11,12, to the Church; assuming it to be Christ's house (iv. 999). He takes Christ, our Head, only as a common Lord; so, when he says Christ is the Head, it is Abraham, Phinehas, etc., are spoken of.

Chrysostom affords us little; he was a preacher, eloquent, a practical man, resisting public evil with earnestness, and died in banishment, deposed from his see, The Church is Christ's body (Horn. xxx. on 1 Cor.), and this is clearly developed. According to him, baptized by the Spirit refers to baptism, and so drinking into one Spirit to the Lord's table. The former he refers to regeneration, and by one Spirit into one body. One by, which, and one into which, he says; but he was much

more occupied with the actual state of the Church; he complains they have only signs or symbols of what they had at first, as two or three speaking.

But during all this doctrinal discussion, another system had been forming itself. The emperor who first professed Christianity had transferred the seat of empire to Byzantium, from him called Constantinople. This had a double effect. It left the Roman prelate in a position of far greater political consequence, which became still greater when the barbarian inroads made the imperial power evanescent in Italy, though where it remained, in Ravenna and even Milan, there was independence of Rome, with which, through Turin, historians seek to connect the Vaudois. At any rate, it was for centuries independent. The other effect was the making the see of Constantinople, which had not been even metropolitan, and was not of apostolic foundation, of such public importance, that it sought to rival Rome-as the city was called Nova Roma. For the reader must understand, that the boasted primitive Church was a sea of raging politics, avarice, and ambition; the genera] councils, assemblies of bishops, called by the emperor to quiet the violent and

sedition disputes of ecclesiastical and doctrinal parties, which disturbed and tore up the empire. Strange to say, councils held when the Church was at liberty from the secular power are not held to be general. In much later years the popes held them. At first, the emperors alone called them; indeed, in the council of Nice, the emperor, who had had some experience of ecclesiastics in Donatist matters, managed it all; the holy fathers brought their written complaints, or libels,..against their episcopal brethren, and put them into his hands; he took them, exhorted them to peace, and burnt them all; approved, we are told, those that were right; flattered them all, rather grossly indeed; exhorted them, and, bringing all but a few to agree, settled the contest, and then banished the few refractory ones. In this council, the place of Rome is very obscure; she was represented by two presbyters, perhaps by a bishop, Rosins. It is also alleged the pope was absent from old age, I suspect rather from policy; at any rate, as we find in the letters of Leo on the council of Chalcedon it was made a precedent of, but it is not to be doubted she would have had the precedence of rank (alas the word 1) had she been there. It is, indeed, for this point that I have introduced the matter. Alexandria, Antioch, Rome were, till the seat of empire was transferred to Byzantium, then subordinate to the metropolitan at Heraclea, the three great ecclesiastical centers as the chief cities: Antioch, the ancient capital of the great Syrian monarchy; Alexandria, of the Egyptian, or Ptolemies, and the most famous seat of learning and commerce in existence: Antioch withal, alleged to be founded by Peter, and to have been his see; and Alexandria, too, through his disciple Mark. Rome still more being the metropolis of the world, and, as alleged, founded by the two apostles Peter and Paul. I am not making myself answerable for all this tradition, which, 'in many points, is extremely doubtful, but it had full influence at the time we are speaking of. As long as the emperors were heathen, the influence of these sees was increasing from various causes; but still the independence of the bishops maintained to a very great degree, particularly in Asia Minor and Africa, where Ephesus (afterward made metropolitan) and Carthage held respectively a large share of influence. In the matter of rebaptizing heretics, these two provinces maintained, in the third century, their entire independence of Rome, and Cyprian used very strong language indeed. But Alexandria swayed practically over Egypt and Lydia; and Antioch over Asia, till Jerusalem became, in subsequent times, a patriarchate; Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, I may add, and the British Christians were also free from Rome's metropolitan sway, which extended over the suburbicarian provinces, now the estates of the Church, the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and Sardinia. But there was no great see in all the West to counterbalance Rome; and it gradually extended its influence over Gaul and Spain and Illyricum (which remained, however, a contested sphere till much later times), by appointing some leading bishopric or metropolitan in Gaul, not the regular local metropolitan, as its legate.

By this, and some cleverly interpreted and extended canons of a packed Sardican council, appended to the canons of the Council of Nice, and a, forged addition to the sixth of Nice itself, the influences of princes, and an unceasing practical use of good opportunities, until the West came under its influence. The almost total destruction of the British Churches (which had been founded from the East as their way of keeping Easter proved) by the Saxons, and the conversion of these latter by persons sent from Rome, brought England under its rule, though the Northern Church, which had meanwhile extended itself to middle England, only submitted to Rome after the controversy of Whitby, between Wilfrid and Colman, about 654. It was only at the Council of Trent, and with the strenuous resistance of the Spanish prelates, that the bishops were declared to derive their authority from the pope. The supremacy of a general council over him was decreed

and acted on in the 15th century at Constance.

I have just run through the history of the western or Latin hierarchical prelacy, to complete it. I return to the general history of patriarchs. The profession of Christianity by the emperor, and establishment of the capital at Constantinople, raised up, as we have seen, a rival to Rome. But the Greeks disputed about words; the Romans pursued unceasingly their end—the establishment of hierarchical supremacy; advancing a claim which no one knew, using opportunities to act in it, which others afforded them; and then making the ancient claim the proof of an ancient right. Another circumstance favored this. Constantinople sought to extend, and extended its influence over the eastern empire, by arbitrating in disputes between bishops and between metropolitans. In the council of Constantinople, Rome, as old Rome, was allowed the first rank; but Constantinople, as new Rome, the second. At that of Chalcedon, Constantinople was given the same rank, ἰσὸν πρεσβείᾳ, as being the emperor's city. But this pressure of Constantinople on Antioch and Alexandria, threw these rather into the arms of Rome. Leo speaks of the three sees of Peter in a remarkable manner; and in the endless theological disputes of the East, the quiet and steady good sense of the Roman West, made home a continual arbiter as to doctrine. This, as in the case of Leo, a really able man, and, I am disposed to think, with right intentions, but, as a true Roman—always seeking political influence—gave them a decisive weight in all these questions. In Leo's person, it took somewhat the form, in his letter to Flavian, of dogmatical authority. Still Constantinople and Rome contended for influence; and one had it in the West, because there was no emperor; the other in the East, because there was. But evil bore its fruits in judgment. Constantinople, in the person of John the Faster, put forth the claim of aecumenical bishop, on charges brought against the patriarch of Antioch, which were tried at Constantinople. Pope Pelagius annulled all the proceedings on this account; but John used it again when he acknowledged the accession of Gregory. Gregory denounced him as a forerunner of anti-Christ, and then took the well-known papal title of servant of the servants of God. Though Rome, he would have it believed, on the authority of the council of Chalcedon, had a title to be called universal Pope, he refrained through humility. But it did not end here. Gregory pursued his efforts to hinder the pretensions of Constantinople, and renounced communion with it. Maurice, the emperor, who resisted the influence of Rome, was murdered with all his family, and his murderer congratulated by Gregory in the most fulsome way. Photius, the new emperor, in return for this, made a decree, that as Constantinople had claimed to be head of all the churches, Rome should be primate of all the holy churches. This recalls somewhat to mind the disputes, on a smaller scale, between York and Canterbury; which resulted in York being primate of England, and Canterbury, primate of all England. In Ireland the same question arose between Dublin and Armagh; the point being, whether Dublin could have the cross (which preceded the archbishop) carried up-right within the jurisdiction of the see of Armagh! Dublin is now primate of Ireland, and Armagh of all Ireland. And this is Christianity! To pursue the sad history. In the eighth century, the territory called now the Estates of the Church, or the greater part of them, were given to Rome by Charlemagne, though he re-served his imperial rights; and the Pope became a temporal prince. At the same time, however, the Grecian or Eastern emperor took away southern Italy, Sicily (the kingdom of the two Sicilies), and Illyricum; depriving the see of Rome of vast estates it held in the former. Hence, of course, bitter animosity. In the ninth century the emperor, refusing to restore the Estates and authority, the Pope took up the cause of Ignatius, patriarch of Constantinople, whom the emperor had deposed, and they excommunicated each other. The emperor was murdered;

and his murderer and successor recalled Ignatius. Meanwhile, the Pope and the patriarch contended for supremacy over the newly-converted Bulgarians, and then Rome was accused of heresy. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople, was re-stored on Ignatius's death; the Pope agreeing, if Bulgaria was subjected to him, which was agreed to and not executed. A legate was sent from Rome to Constantinople, cast into prison, and then, becoming Pope, said Photius was properly judged and degraded before. In the 11th century, Cerularius, of Constantinople, charged the Pope with various heresies. Leo IX, ex-communicated all the Greek churches. The emperor, who needed his influence in Italy, sought to heal the controversy, and Papal legates were sent to Constantinople; the Greeks would not submit. The legates excommunicated the Patriarch and his adherents; and the patriarch excommunicated the legates and theirs.

And thus, the final schism of West and East took place. In this century it was that the Popes, who, after the gradual increase of their power, had become infamous in their conduct, so that the Romans had deposed them, and the Emperor of Germany named new ones-and then there had been two fighting for the place-enforced, in the person of Gregory VII, called Hildebrand, universal celibacy on the clergy. It had been long nominally required; but the great body of them being, in fact, married, were now forced to put away their wives: and though Gregory died an exile from Rome, he succeeded in depriving the emperors of the right of confirming the election of the Pope, and established the celibacy of the clergy. Another very important change commenced in this century was the election of the Pope by the cardinals, instead of the whole clergy, nobles, and people. The confirmation by the emperor was, however, reserved, and of the people; that of the emperor was set aside by Gregory VII, indeed, by Alexander II, in whose time, however, there was an Anti-pope. Gregory was chosen by acclamation, and confirmed by the emperor, and then began his work of setting the papacy above all human powers. He claimed from all kings their holding their crowns from him. William the Conqueror, and others, refused; some were glad to act on it-as Naples, Croatia, and, strange to say, Russia.

I am now arrived at the full establishment of the Papal system resisting the imperial right to the investiture of bishops into their sees. The history of the independent Scottish Church is full of interest; it was the great evangelizer of Germany and Switzerland. But Boniface, the apostle of Germany, having put himself under the Pope, and become Archbishop of Mayence, it all fell under Papal influence; or by the vast estates attached to the sees, gave occasion to the question of investiture, as they were real principalities, and held as such.

The Greek church was shorn of its glory by the inroads of the Saracens, before whom Antioch and Alexandria became extinct as to influence; and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the fifteenth century, seemed to close its importance too. But such was not altogether the will of Divine Providence: for the conversion of Russia to Christianity having taken place in connection with the Grecian patriarch, in the tenth century, by the baptism, first of the grand duchess, and then of the grand duke, which was followed by that of the nation; the influence of Russia is now used in favor of the Greek church. They were first under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In the sixteenth century, the Archbishop of Moscow became first a dependent, and then an independent patriarch and in the reign of Peter the Great, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Czar made himself the head of the Church, as in England; and the patriarch and synod became subordinate to his power. The late Russian war had for its earliest pretext the rights of Greeks or Latins to the so-called holy places in Palestine.

Such is what is called Christianity and the Church; my object is not to pursue it as a history, or go farther into detail. The Reformation, in the great and precious mercy of God, brought the Bible forth from obscurity, announced justification by faith, delivering many countries from the yoke of the Papacy; but it left, in all the national churches, the germ of the system, in baptismal regeneration, from which, most indisputably, it was not delivered; and a clerical exclusive right to ministry, denying the sovereignty and work of the Holy Ghost, as still carried on in regeneration and gift; and though many, very many, have freed themselves from the first error, and we see a wonderful energy now at work for deliverance from the second; that energy works to the breaking up of the system. The new wine cannot be put into the old bottles. I have only to speak briefly of the results of this rapid survey.

What I have given is practically the history of the great house; and, at the close, in its worst and most appalling forms, surely not of the body of Christ; yet this, in its very worst form the Papacy, it pretended to be, and that exclusively. Such was the result of confounding the building of God upon earth, placed under the responsibility of man (1 Cor. 3), with the body, composed of living members, united to Christ. We have seen, that the urging of unity by the various fathers was always interested, and bore only on their own position; first Ignatius, unity of a local assembly with its bishop, episcopal thought went no further then. Then, as the inroad of heresies took place, the same apostolical doctrine, held by all, was proved by the uniform doctrine of the apostolic sees; and, as the truth proved the Spirit and the Church, the heretics could not be it, for they had not the truth. The order of this argument is to be noted, however; for it is entirely anti-Roman Catholic; they prove the truth by the Church; while the Irenaeus and Tertullian school, the Church by the possession of the truth. The truth they find from Scripture, or the continuous doctrine of the apostolic sees as a fact. This is not a fact now; for Rome has changed or added in important points, as the addition of filioque in the doctrine of procession; and changes of prayers for the dead, to prayers to the dead; the addition of purgatory; and in many others. Alexandria and Antioch are Monophysites; that is, hold only one nature in Christ.

But to return. At this time, if the Church was referred to, it only was to hold their ground against heresy. In the next struggle, it was only to hold it against schism, and maintain common episcopal rights against schismatic Novatians on the one side, and arrogant Popes of Rome on the other. This was the Cyprian school. Augustine's was partly the same, against the Donatists; but the personal sense of Divine truth in him made all confusion, and led to the invention of an invisible Church known to God. After this, it was merely a struggle for the destruction of the oligarchical power of the body of bishops, first by patriarchal power; and then between Rome and Constantinople for preeminence; the result being, as I have noticed elsewhere, the making a Roman Catholic Church a falsehood, in fact, as it is in sense. For the setting up of the Pope as supreme over the churches (and that by imperial power), which Constantinople had been attempting to be, occasioned an entire breach; and the Church, as an outward body, ceased to be catholic everywhere when Rome attempted to make it Roman Catholic. It was split into two great camps, the Roman and the Greek; the Roman, indeed, the larger; but, after all, dependent on the rulers of the West, as the Greek on the rulers of the East; and now, unable to boast of any superiority of numbers even; for the Protestant secession has made the numbers of professing Christians, outside the Roman pale, greater than those within it. Rome has one thing exclusively-the apostate pretension to power; setting aside the one headship of Christ, and

opposing and falsifying His word; but that is all.

But our concern is with doctrine; and here mark another thing. The blessed unfolding of the truth of the Church was thought of by none. Some used the idea, attributing its privileges to the outward body-- the house (yet thereby denying them; for wicked members of Christ is nonsense); and quoted some scriptural passages as to it, but merely as a means of confounding their adversaries. None, that I am aware, ever laid hold on its blessings to unfold them; they walked by sight; that which had been founded on earth was before their eyes. It was, indeed, the important thing; the great fact of God's sovereign intervention in the world; what belonged to Him in the earth, His husbandry, His building: but, as they did not distinguish the body from the house, this latter only, which was the visible thing, was before their eyes. The consequence was, first, the allowance of the possibility of evil in the body of Christ, which bound men to the continued walking with evil; practically sanctioning it, or forcing them to break with the body: and next, the attributing the title of divine and spiritual power to the evil itself; all under the claim, that the Church was the body of Christ; that if you were not member, you could not have the head. Salvation was there alone. This was true; but it is not true that they are that body, or that Christ has dead members. Further, baptism was held to be, as the introduction into Christ's assembly, which it is; that by which we become members of Christ, and children of God; So the Romanist; so the orthodox Protestant; so, in general, even the Baptist. But baptism has nothing to do with the unity of, and admission into, the body; even in figure. It goes, even in figure, no further than death and resurrection; the individual passage into new life, and death to Adam existence, But the unity of the body depends on the exaltation of the Head into heaven; who, when exalted, and not till then (as He Himself said, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come "), sent down the Holy Ghost, and by one spirit we are all baptized into one body. As Peter declares to his hearers in the Acts: " He, being exalted by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, has shed forth this which ye now see and hear." This was the baptism of the Spirit as we see (Acts 1:5); and it is thus, by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body. In this body there are members in which the energy of the Spirit displays itself in various gifts (1 Cor. 14:11-14). The Spirit does not dwell in the body, but in the house; " builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." The stones are not as such members of Him who dwells in the building. This was all confounded by the fathers.

The result is, the claims of Popery and the confusion of Protestants, as to baptismal regeneration and membership of Christ, with which baptism has nothing to do.

We have noticed another terrible result--the allowance of evil, connected with Christ. The Church is the ark; no salvation out of it. The unclean beasts are at the bottom story; Christ, like Noah, at the top: this is the Origen and Clement doctrine. In a great house, there are vessels to dishonor, wooden and earthen; but, with a rare confusion of thought and Scripture doctrine, Christ will burn or break them when He comes: this is Cyprian. The tares are mixed with the wheat in the Church: this is Jerome and Protestantism. Till, at last, the corruption was so great, that, as Augustine expresses it, they were groaning at seeing crowds of wicked persons surround the Church's altar: there they are to leave them. The resource of His Spirit, is the predestinating prescience of God, and an invisible Church; many better outside the church, than those in; but God will settle it. They are invisibly united in the bond of charity; while those outwardly within, have no real bond; such is often now the resource of high Calvinism, acquiescing in the establishment; acquiescing in evil,

because God will have it all right. Conscience makes men schismatic in form when corruption and evil characterize what is called the body of Christ; and separation from the general mass of Christianity endangers the soul's stability, and its faith in any unity; and often produces, by not seeing the house, an opposition to it, which exposes to wild doctrine and heretical associations.

Such is, alas! the history of the Church, and the process of dogmatical creed, as to it, under the exercises which the state of things produced in connection with the current theory. If the outward assembly was, in fact, the body of Christ, separation from it was schism; and, as far as man's act went-ruin; but true union of the members with the head was really not known. If the outward assembly was nothing, then the whole corporate responsibility was destroyed; and the judgment of the evil servant had no place. There was no corporate responsibility of Christendom, in virtue of the Holy Ghost, having been given to the assembly on the earth. No spiritual conscience could recognize the corruption as the true body of Christ. Some would reform, some separate; and the very idea of the Church in unity, was either lost on the one side, or made perfectly compatible with the grossest corruption, and Satan's power, on the other; and what was so corrupt, called His body, and the claim of Divine authority attached to the administration of that corruption. The notion of an invisible body was invented to conciliate spiritual conscience with such a state of things. Scripture foretells failure; yea, recounts it; and foretells its becoming yet worse; it tells of corruption and perilous times; it tells, finally, of apostasy. But it never speaks of a corrupt body of Christ. It does not deny a corrupt general state of things, which it compares to a great house, and enjoins a man's purifying himself from the vessels of dishonor, and walking with those who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. It tells of a building of God in His purposes; and, in fact, at the commencement, and at the close; but it speaks with equal clearness of man's responsible building. The existing confusion is no difficulty for one who has Scripture in his hand and heart; who owns its authority. The word of God makes all clear-the body united to its heavenly Head in sure and richest blessing-the corruption clearly described and judged; and, in the mixture which is to be expected in a great house, the path for uprightness, and obedience, and purity of walk, clear and distinct. The house, as it should be, well ordered; the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3): when it is filled with vessels to dishonor, as the great house, the distinct command of separation from evil and from them (2 Tim. 2). And the reader -will remark, that it is in this last epistle, when the house is thus spoken of, that the Word of God, the Scriptures, are insisted on as the sure and effectual refuge of the soul in the perilous times of corrupted Christendom.

I add, as a sad but useful appendix, some facts as to the boasted primitive Church. First, as to doctrine. The statements which I have given from Hermas, whose book was read in many churches-quoted by Irenaeus, and believed by Origen to be inspired-is the plainest possible proof of the gross ignorance of the primitive Church, and utter incompetency to judge of doctrine.

But, further; the doctrine of the Ante-Nicene fathers is anything but satisfactory as to the divinity of Christ. Justin peremptorily denies that the one supreme God the Creator, can appear as a man in this world; and the doctrine of Christ's not being distinct, as a person, till creation was about to take place, though not without an exception, no one acquainted with them can deny to be general, as expressed by ενδιαθετος and προφορικος. From their desire to meet the heathen's ideas, and the influence of Platonic philosophy, their teaching on the λογος, or word, and what is expressed by the word Trinity is extremely loose and objectionable, to say the least. But if loose and unsound on so fundamental a point-on that which is the very truth itself, and foundation of all truth-the person

of the Lord Jesus Christ, on what can we trust them? The final judgment is treated by one as a means of purifying the imperfect. And Augustine speaks of the Lord's Supper as thanks-giving for the good; propitiation for the bad; and, though it cannot help the wicked dead, a comfort to the living (i.e. by deceiving them). Elsewhere he says, it may allay their pains in hell. As to the grace of God, it was hardly known amongst them.

The reader will remember, I am not speaking of souls and their personal faith, but of doctors. None are more untrustworthy on every fundamental subject, than the mass of primitive fathers.

Now, as to practice, Cyprian, in his treatise " De Lapsis," gives the following account of Christian morals, about two hundred years after Christ, while the empire was yet heathen. He says, " that they were treated mercifully in the persecution; so that it was an investigation or trial of them (exploratio), not a persecution; and that they must not be blind to the causes. Where-upon lie then describes the state of the Church.-- Individuals were applying themselves to increase their patrimony; and forgetful what believers either had done under the Apostles-or ought always to do-they were bent, with an insatiable ardor of avarice, on increasing their fortunes. No devout religion in priests; no un-corrupted fidelity in ministers (deacons); no compassion in works; no order in morals. The beard plucked away among men; the face painted among women; the eyes adulterated, after God had made them (post Dei manus); the hair colored with falsehood; cunning frauds to deceive the hearts of the simple; a deceitful will in circumventing brethren. The bonds of matrimony joined with unbelievers; the members of Christ prostituted to heathens.. Not only rash swearing, but, besides even perjury, despising those set over them with proud haughtiness; speaking evil with poisoned lip; mutual discord with pertinacious hatred. Many bishops, whom it behooves to be an exhortation and an example to others-their Divine commission despised-become com-missioners of secular affairs; and leaving their sees and deserting the people, wandering through other provinces, hunt the fairs and markets, trafficking for gain. No help to hungry brethren in the church; the desire to have money largely; seizing on estates by insidious frauds; augmenting interest by multiplied usury.

Such is the picture of Christian morals afforded by a bishop who had lived in the midst of them.

I may next give Augustine's account of saints' festivals, after the emperors were Christians. He had resisted, in a very godly and courageous way, the people coming and getting drunk in the church; having preached against it, and only few being present. There were many murmurs in the mass of people against it. Their fathers, they said, were very good Christians, and they did it; and why should it be put a stop to now. He pressed Christian precepts on them: and adds,-however, lest those, who, before our time, either allowed, or did not dare prohibit, the manifest crimes of an ignorant multitude, should seem to be subjected to some reproach on our part, I laid before them by what necessity those things seemed to have arisen in the church; namely, after so many and so vehement persecutions, when peace having arrived, lest crowds of heathens, desiring to come under the Christian name, might be hindered by this, that they were accustomed to spend festive days with their idols, in abundant feasting and drunkenness, nor could easily withhold themselves from their most pernicious and very ancient indulgences; it seemed right to our ancestors, for the time, to wait on this part of infirmity, and that other festive days, instead of those they left, should be celebrated in honor of the holy martyrs, at least, not with the same sacrilege, although with like luxury. And, then, shows how they hope, by connecting them with Christ, to wean them off by

precepts; that what was granted them that they might be Christians, when they were Christians, they might reject. (Aug. Lit. ad Alypium, xxix. Ed. Ben.)

It is hard to say whether the fact, or Augustine's excuse for it, is the worst. It was, however, the real motive. As we in England may justly say; as directions were given by Pope Gregory to act on that principle in converting the Saxons. See, for example (Lib. ix.; Epist. 71), his recommendation to Mellitus on going to Britain.

Nor was this way of settling saints' days, local merely. Christmas was fixed at the Saturnalia—a word passed into a technical one for unbridled license - because they could not bridle it, and would Christianize (?) their feasting. The day of purification was substituted for the Lupercalia, which had this character; and so on.

The following is Eusebius's account of the state of the Church, which had brought on the persecutions which preceded his time:- Rulers raging against rulers, and people in tumultuous conflict with people; lastly, when unutterable hypocrisy, and dissimulation had gone on to the highest pitch. Then divine judgment began, he says, measuredly, as it delights to do, and first with trial among soldiers; but when they went on then to act like Atheists, and added one wickedness to another; when our most esteemed pastors, despising the bond of piety, burned in contentions, one with another, increasing only in strife, and threats, jealousy, enmity, and hatred, one against another. Then, he says, according to the saying of Jeremiah; the full tide of trial broke in. Such was the primitive Church of the third century (Euseb. viii. 1).

Jerome will tell us if they had improved when the empire became Christian. Here is his account of the clergy. Valentinian had passed a law forbidding the clergy getting inheritances by watching the death-beds of persons who had property. Here is Jerome's account of the state of things. Jerome says, he does not complain of the law, but of its being necessary. It shows, in truth, as all such laws do, a general public state of things. "The caution of the law is provident and severe; yet even so, avarice is not restrained. We mock at laws by means of trusts, and as if emperors' decrees were greater than Christ's; we fear the laws and despise the Gospels. It is the shame of all priests to study their own wealth. Born in a poor house, and in a rustic cottage, I, who could scarce content the loud cry of my belly with millet and coarse bread, now am nice about fine flour and honey. I know the kinds and names of fishes. I am knowing as to on what shore a shell-fish is gathered. I discern provinces by the savor of birds, etc. I hear, moreover, of the base service of some to old men and old women without children."

He then describes, in language too disagreeable to translate, the disgusting servile attentions of the clergy at the bed-side of the sick, and continues: "They tremble at the entrance of the physician, and with faltering lips inquire if they are better; and if the old person is somewhat more vigorous, they are in danger, and, while feigning joy, the avaricious mind is tortured within; for they fear lest they should lose their pains, and compare the vigorous old person to the years of Methuselah" (Ep. lii. ad Nepotianum).

Augustine, at the same epoch, complains, that in his day, if any one would live godly, he was mocked, not by heathen simply, but by professing Christians. He complains, that the devil had sent so many hypocrites in monks' habits on every side, going round the provinces, sent nowhere, fixed nowhere, standing nowhere, sitting nowhere; others hawking members of martyrs, if they are of

martyrs; others, etc.-all exact either the expense of a gainful need, or the price of a pretended sanctity, (De Opere Monachorum).

These extracts will give an idea of the state of what is called the primitive Church. Greater research and examination would only increase the evidence; and, as to doctrines, in a way calculated to distress every sober and godly mind. This does not prove there was no hidden religion, no true faith; but that the authority of what we possess of the primitive Church is worse than nothing as to doctrine, and its general practice in both clergy and laity a disgrace to the name of Christ. What I have given will give its traits. It is all I seek here, that the consciences of my readers may know what the primitive Church was, and not be under any delusion through the speciously-sounding title. There was no time when there was so little orthodoxy, as before the Council of Nice, I speak of the fathers and doctors, unless in the universal Arianism of the reign of Constans and some other emperors. For the Catholic Church, pope and all, veered round with the emperor like a weathercock. Athanasius died condemned by the Council of Tire; Arius in the communion of the universal Church, only he perished the night before he took his place-his foes say by the judgment of God, his friends by poison.

I add a short note referred to in the body of the paper, as to the epoch of the dogma of Papal supremacy. The first I find, in the midst of much vague deference and admission of rank, who formally makes the Pope the one and sole center of unity, is Optatus of Milevi. In his second book (not having his works, I quote from the Centuriatores. Magdeburgici) he says, "The episcopal chair was first conferred on Peter in the city of Rome, in which he sat as head of all the apostles; whence, also, he was called Cephas, in whom alone the unity of the chair should be kept by all, nor the apostles lay claim each to one for himself (singular sibi quisque); so that he should be a schismatic and a sinner, who should establish another in opposition to the one single chair." But this is said in opposition to the schism of the Donatists. When the African synods, in Augustine's time, had condemned the Pelagians, they sent their decrees as usual to the bishop of Rome. Innocent I tells them, they had manifested a proper sense of the submission due to the apostolic see, whence all episcopal power flowed, and must ever flow, as from one single fountain-head, to fertilize the whole world by its manifold streamlets. He had, he said, of his own authority condemned these heresies, and severed their authors from the Church. However, the following Pope, Zosimus, approved the statements of Pelagius, as sent to him from Palestine, and condemned all the previous proceedings against Pelagius. But, under Augustine's influence, a Council of Carthage, A.D. 418, condemned and anathematized Pelagius, and decreed, that if any one shall presume to appeal beyond sea (i.e. to Rome), let none among you receive him into communion. They sent to the emperor who condemned and banished him from Rome, and then Zosimus condemned, too, what he had approved; and, the Africans being content, Zosimus claims Peter's universal jurisdiction as before, and all goes on smooth. Augustine, in his treatise on the Gospel of John, expressly declares that Christ was the rock on which the Church was built-on the rock which Peter had confessed. Elsewhere, if I remember, in his Retractations, he says, people may take it otherwise if they prefer it.

Leo, an able man, connects the two thoughts with much cleverness of manner. I quote them, as they will give an idea of the way Roman pretensions were put forward in his age

" For the solidity of that faith which is praised in the prince of the apostles is perpetual; and as what Peter believed of Christ ever remains, so what Christ instituted in Peter ever remains." He then quotes Matt. 16:16 in full. He continues: " The disposition of the truth, therefore, remains; and the blessed Peter, persevering in the received strength of the rock, has not deserted the undertaken helm of the Church. For he is in such sort placed before the others, that, while he is called the 'rock' (petra), while he is pronounced to be the foundation, while he is made doorkeeper of the kingdom of the heavens, while he is set up as arbiter of what is to be bound and loosed, what is defined by his judgments being to remain in the heavens, we might know, by the very mysteries of his titles, what his association with Christ is, who now transacts more fully and powerfully the things which were committed to him, and executes every part of the duties and cares in Him and with Him by whom he has been glorified. If, therefore, anything is rightly done and rightly discerned by us, if anything is obtained from the mercy of God by daily supplications, it is of the works and merits of him in whose see his power lives and his authority is pre-eminent. For, beloved, that confession which inspired the apostolic heart by God the Father, rose above all the uncertainties of human opinions, and received the firmness of a rock, which may be shaken by no impulses obtained thus. For, in the universal Church, Peter daily says, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' This faith conquers devils," etc. (Ser. iii.). Again, on the assumption of Peter (Ser. iv.): " All are kings by the sign of the cross, all consecrated priests by the unction of the Holy Spirit," etc. 'But Peter was chosen,' etc., " that, although in the people of God there are many priests and many pastors, yet Peter should, as by proper title belonging to himself (proprie), rule them all whom Christ also rules as prime and chief (principaliter), a great and wonderful community (consortium) of His power, beloved, has the divine esteem (dignatio) bestowed on this man; and if it has willed that anything should be common to other chiefs with him, it never gave but through him, whatever it did not deny to others;" then quotes Matt. 16 again, interpreting thus: " As I am the inviolable rock, I the corner-stone who make both one, I the foundation besides which none can lay any other, yet thou also art a rock (petra), become identified with my virtue (i.e. power and strength, as we say virtue of a medicine or herb), that what things are proper to me in power, should be common to you by participation with me." See also Ser. lxii. (xi. de Pass. Dom.) Again (Epist. x. ad Episcopos per provinciam Viennensem constitutos): " But the Lord willed that the mystery of this function should so belong to the office of all the apostles, as placed by Him first and chief (principaliter) in the blessed Peter, head of all the apostles, and as being His will that from him, as from a kind of head, His gifts should flow into the body, that whoever dared to get away from the solidity of Peter, should understand that he was deprived of any portion in the divine mystery; for He (Christ) was pleased that he, taken into the community (consortium) of [His] individual unity, should be called that which He was saying, Thou art Peter," etc.- " that the building of the eternal temple by a wonderful gift of the grace of God should stand in the solidity of Peter, strengthening His Church by this firmness, that neither human rashness might reach it, nor the gates of hell prevail against it."

Here I close my note. The place given to Peter speaks for itself to every Christian. As to doctrinal claim, it would be needless to pursue the Papacy any further. With its political influence I have here nothing to do: I have sufficiently given its history already.

A most interesting but difficult subject of research in connection with this sketch would be-How far the workings of divine light and conscience were connected with some of the heretical movements

of different ages, even though the craft of Satan may have marred and corrupted the movement of these unguarded souls. And this interest would apply to various sects, so-called, which arose from the sixth century onward, at least as much as to earlier heretical bodies. But the facts are very difficult to estimate, and even to ascertain, and the greatest part of the testimony to be sifted as coming from enemies. Take, for example, as obvious instances. Tertullian and the Paulicians.

(Continued from p.67).

I Bow Me to Thy Will, O God

I bow me to Thy will, O God~
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live, I'd seek
To please Thee more and more.
Thy will the end, the blessed rule
Of Jesus' toil and tears;
Thy will the passion of His heart,
Those three and thirty years.
And He hath breathed into my soul,
A special love to Thee,
A love - to lose my will in Thine,
And by that loss be free.
I love to see Thee bring to naught
The plans of wily men;
When simple hearts outwit the wise,
O Thou art loveliest then!
The headstrong world, it presses hard
Upon the Church full oft;
But then how easily Thou turnst
The hard ways into soft.
I love to kiss each print where Christ
Did set His pilgrim feet;
Nor can I fear that blessed path,
Whose traces are so sweet.
When obstacle, and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,

I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee.
I know not what it is to doubt;
My heart is ever gay;
I run no risk, for, come what will,
Thou always hast Thy way.
I have no cares, O blessed Lord!
For all my cares are Thine;
I live in triumph, too for Thou
Has made Thy triumphs mine.
And when it seems no chance nor change
From grief can set me free,
Hope finds its strength in helplessness,
And, patient, waits on Thee.
Man's weakness, waiting upon God,
Its end can never miss,
For men on earth no work can do,
More angel-like than this.
Lead on, lead on, triumphantly,
O blessed Lord! Lead on,
Faith's pilgrim sons behind Thee seek
The road that Thou hast gone.
He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweetest to him, when
It triumphs at his cost.
Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong;

If it be His sweet will!

[The above is slightly altered from an old hymn.]

Let Us Hold Fast Our Profession

We all know, and acknowledge the value of having a fixed purpose, which gives a character to our life and ways. Our need demands a purpose, which promises to meet it sufficiently and perfectly; and the more distinctly the purpose is apprehended and embraced, the more all our acts must bear characteristic impression of it. - Our God, therefore, knowing this need of ours, provides us with a purpose; but does so, by attracting us to His purpose, for us, as the goal of all our hearts need or seek; and thus makes it our purpose too; purposed of Him for us, and presented by Him to us, as appointed, and as the provision of His love, to satisfy our utmost need or expectation. The sense of need, first engages us with the value of the purpose, and the purpose is enhanced, when we find that it is not only a measure for our need, but that it is also according to the measure of the love of God for us. God's purpose must be reached, ere our necessities can be satisfied. The purpose of the prodigal, in seeking his Father's house, was to relieve his famished state; but, when that was attained, he found out, that the purpose of the Father (even that the unworthy son should enter into the common joy with Himself), was also accomplished, and until he had reached this, his own need was not entirely or fully met.

In every revelation which God made to man, His purpose or call always defined the perfect blessing, which He designed for man, and this alone could meet his condition. Man may never (as indeed it has happened), have fully responded to this call; but, according as he was fixed on it, followed it, and partially reached it; so was his blessing; nay, every faithful soul, in every dispensation, embraced his calling, and the purpose of God; and, proportionate to his pursuance and enjoyment of it, was his testimony and strength. Ignorance or misapprehension, as to the true nature of the purpose or calling, must necessarily affect the walk and spirit of the professionists of it. My profession is strictly in accordance with my aim or purpose; if I decline from or misapprehend the latter, the former must suffer; and if I "hold fast my profession," it is easy to comprehend my purpose, for my profession is nothing more than the assertion of the principles, which the attainment of my purpose would establish. God's purpose, respecting us, is our calling, as He reveals it. We hear the calling, and adopt it, and if we adhere to it; we "hold fast our profession;" if not, we lose sight of our calling, and are manifestly irresponsive to it. In every dispensation, God's purpose of blessing for man is unfolded, and man's testimony, and victory over surrounding difficulties, were always proportionate to his embracing it, and "holding fast his profession," according to it.

To Adam, God announced that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; his profession, accordingly, must be, that he expected such an event, and hence, instead of perpetuating the reproach on his wife, as, in strict justice, he might have done; he called her name, Eve, "the mother of all living." So that Adam's profession, when, driven from Eden, he entered on his exile, was, that the source of his fall, would, through God's grace, be the source of his life. He believed and acknowledged the purpose of God, which Cain, on the other hand, would not accept; and, in doing this, Adam merely assumed the position, which God, in His grace, proposed to him. Death might fall on every creature in Adam's sight, but his profession was registered in the name

which he had given to her who had introduced death.

So also in Abraham; his profession was, that he was a stranger and a pilgrim, that he " looked for a city which path foundations, whose builder and maker is God," and he held fast his profession, because he believed in the purpose of God. The moment he swerved from the one, he was, necessarily, inconsistent in the other. Lot lost sight of the purpose, and, in a little time, bore no evidence of the profession; but, in judgment, lost the blessing, which the maintenance of the profession obtained for Abraham. We cannot evade the responsibility of holding fast our profession, on the plea of weakness; for it is not an assumption on the part of man, nor a legal demand on him, but a practical acknowledgment of the pre-ordained, pre-determined purpose of God respecting him; and if this acknowledgment be refused, it amounts to disbelieving and disregarding the counsel of God, for our blessing. It is, I repeat, the path of testimony and blessing. Lot forfeited both in Sodom. Abraham was honored with both, though less surrounded with natural advantages. If Lot had held fast his profession, it would have pre-served him from the snares of Sodom. He, no doubt, would have felt it trying to maintain his ground, as a stranger and pilgrim; and he might allege, that he had not strength enough to do so, but, surely, abandoning his profession, did not increase his strength. On the contrary, it is very plain, that if he had maintained (however feebly in spirit), the profession which led him from Charran, in company with Abraham, he never would have been found in Sodom, or, consequently, have shared in its judgment. To adhere to a profession, where ourselves, and every one can mark our inconsistencies,- is harassing and humbling; but still, there is safety therein, if there be godly intention to fulfill it; whereas, there is none if we surrender it; and, what is worse, such surrender is a practical refusal to acknowledge God's gracious purpose, respecting us. The calling is always in accordance with the purpose, and our obedience to the one, indicates our appreciation of the other; the more the calling is pressed on me, the more are my ways measured by the rule of it; being measured, I am humbled, and, necessarily, cast on God, not to refuse His calling, but to obtain strength to uphold it.

Israel sang of themselves to the Lord, after they had passed the Red Sea: " Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance." They thus celebrate the purpose of God, respecting them; their profession, accordingly, as long as they believed His word, was, that they were not for Egypt, but for Canaan; and, come what will, to Canaan they must go; for, in the Wilderness, a land of drought, it was plain they had no rest. Their calling was to "go up, and possess the land; " their profession, that they were set on this, and nothing else; their song declared how they had accepted it, as the truth of God, in which they rejoiced. Every step they took in the Wilderness, towards Canaan, told how they " held fast their profession; " how they had heard the word mixed with faith. To require an inspection of the Promised Land before they attempted to possess it, was a falter in their profession, and it proved fatal to them. They had lost faith in the word which once infused such spirit into their song, and difficulties (which in this evil scene must exist) are reported by the spies, the majority of whom are as unbelieving as the people themselves. When faith falters, and great difficulties are foreseen, man must be discouraged, and the more so, if he be in the path of God's calling, for the work of God, can only be accomplished by God. The difficulties were too great for man, without faith; though sure to be surmounted with faith. The calling to " go up and possess" measured their faith, and being measured and confounded, they turned back to Egypt, in the spirit of their minds, re-canted their song, and ignored the

profession they had made.- But what was the penalty? Their carcasses fell in the Wilderness, and they were "destroyed of the destroyer;" they despised the pleasant land, and it was closed against them. And we find in 1 Cor. 10, where the various failures of Israel are recounted for our warning, this murmuring or faltering of faith at Kadesh Barnea, is adduced last by the apostle, although it occurred early in their actual history. I believe this to be so given designedly, showing the moral order in Corinthians, as we have the historical order in Numbers.

When they turned their backs on Canaan, and God's purpose respecting them was disbelieved and undervalued, nothing more could be offered; therefore, to let go their profession, was the most fatal and final step of all.

In the Book of Hebrews, two subjects are prominently brought before us: the one, the object, the channel of blessing, Jesus Christ; the other, the place where He is; to which, through grace, we are called according to the purpose of God. The object is at once presented to us; and, in the place, i.e., "on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Our calling is to be heavenly; our profession, answering thereto, is, that we are heavenly. Christ, who is our life, is heavenly. Heaven is His place, and the place of our life. It is not merely that we are expectants of heaven, but we are partakers of the heavenly calling. The calling or word to me is, not "to go up and possess," but, that if I hear His voice, I enter into rest. I enjoy God's rest; that is, my soul finds there is an end, an eternal end, to works, in the rest accomplished at the right hand of God, by Jesus Christ our Savior.

I find many difficulties in maintaining this ground, though (like Israel), in the "beginning of my confidence," none may have appeared. But why decline from the beginning of my confidence? Have I received the word not mixed with faith? Have I assumed, a profession which I cannot uphold? Amos 1 to turn back like Israel? No! My calling is higher; my resources are greater. The word, or calling (for so I understand "the word of God" in Heb. 4), measures my walk and spirit, as it did Israel of old. It tested them, as to whether they were for Egypt or for Canaan; it tests me, as to whether I am heavenly or earthly. When Israel was measured and exposed, they were confounded and turned back to Egypt; when I am measured and exposed (and surely nothing measures my walk and spirit so much as the inquiry as to whether it corresponds with the heavenly standing), it is with God I have to do. "But" (many would say), "I don't make so high a profession, for I could not keep up to it." Such a statement, I repeat, is a misapprehension of the simple fact, that our profession is but our response to the purpose of God respecting us, and which we are called to in His grace, and through grace alone are connected with.

If it be said, again, that the difficulties are so great, and I am so earthly, and the word of God is always measuring and exposing me: quite true; but are we measured and exposed, in order to drive us from our profession? Nay, verily; but to lead the soul, thus exposed and rebuked, to sanction the dictation of the Word, for it is with God we have to do; and this we find out by the very exposure which the Word produces; and there the sympathies of "Jesus the Son of God, passed into the heavens" meet us, and sustain us in the path which He Himself traversed, until we rest where He rests, above and beyond every difficulty. The word to us is "to enter into His rest." This is the purpose of God respecting us. Our profession is, that we are entering into rest; and Jesus Christ is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession.

The Word always measures and tests how and where we fail in walking according to its voice. It searches, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It discovers my wanderings by expressing its injunction. I am thus made to feel my wanderings., and to accept the dictation of the Word, and am on the path of Him whose meat and drink was to do the will of God, and who triumphed over every obstacle in maintaining and fulfilling it. I am in the spirit of His mind when I accept the call of the Word, having repudiated my own course which the Word condemns; and, once on the path He has trod, I am met by His sympathies to sustain me in it.

"Perfection" (i.e., association with Christ where He is) is our utmost attainment; but our profession is, that we are "going on to perfection." We cannot adopt any other; for none other would be according to the purpose of God, or to His glory; and (let me add what is very important) any other would obstruct us, however sincerely we might wish to enter on it. Whereas, while adhering to the profession, though constantly inconsistent with it, we, though humbled, are always owning the blessedness of what we are aiming at; and being condemned by our own profession, must always rejoice whenever we advance at all according to it. My profession is, that I am heavenly; my walk and ways continually testify that I am not heavenly. Amos 1 to accept what I am practically, or what God calls me to and reckons me? If I am not heavenly, I have no conscious connection with Christ; I know nothing of rest, nor of priesthood, nor of refreshment, nor of communion, nor of worship, nor of proper testimony here. If I know Christ on the right hand of the Majesty on high, I know Him as One who has accomplished all works to bring me nigh unto God; and knowing Him there, I have rest; and if I know Him not there, I have not rest. If I know Him not there, I know Him not as a Priest; either as Aaron in sympathy, or as Melchizedek in blessing and glory (for on earth He would not be a Priest). If I know Him not there, I know not worship; for it is through Him I have boldness to enter into the holiest of all. If I know Him not there, I have no equivalent for my devotedness here; for I could not "take joyfully the spoiling of my goods" here, if I did not know that I had in heaven an "enduring substance"; nor would "looking unto Jesus" help me in my conflict, unless I know Him as set down at the right hand of the "THRONE of God"-the place of confirmation and strength of faith for saints, as is the "Majesty on high" that of acceptance for sinners. If I did not know Him in heaven, I could not have communion with Him; for "we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle." "Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son." "These things I write unto you, that your joy may be full." If I know Him not in heaven, my testimony here must be valueless; for it is necessary that I go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach.

In a word, if I give up the profession which is responsive and responsible to the call, I surrender the declaration of my incumbency to walk according to it. If, on the contrary, I "hold fast my profession," though ever and anon reminded of my inconsistencies, the very fact of my persisting to make the profession convicts me of approving of what it requires, and condemns me for any departure from it. I may be publicly humbled, but my profession is according to the purpose of God, and I cannot shrink from assuming it. Being humbled, I desire and labor the more to walk according to it, so that the very persisting in the profession which tests my walk and ways works a remedy for the inconsistencies which it exposes. Confession of the mouth has a wonderful effect in producing a consistent co-operation in acts, unless when there is designed deception. No purged mind likes to see his acts inconsistent with his confession or profession (one word in Scripture).

What the mouth utters with integrity, the honest soul would always like to confirm in act; but many honest souls shrink from profession, because they are conscious of the responsibility involved; again proving no moral value of the exhortation, " Hold fast your profession."

One word more. Israel sent out spies, discovered the obstacles, and were discouraged. This is always the effect of examining what is before us without God. If we have God with us, we need not know what is before us; and all prescience of the future without Him must have the same effect on us as it had on Israel, viz., discouragement and willfulness. Instead of seeing cities walled up to heaven and sons of Anak, as did they, we are exhorted to see Jesus, the Son of God, passed into the heavens; our eye is to be engaged with Him who has passed beyond every difficulty, and from thence ministers of His own strength, to lead us onward and upward unto Himself; not to help us merely IN this world, but to help us OUT of it. " For this cause I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified thoroughly." Our sanctification must be of the same character as His. His was not moral, for that was not necessary for Him, but positional, and, consequently, as our moral sanctification is association with Him, it must be positional also.

Let us, then, " hold fast our profession." We are heavenly; humbled we must be at being so unheavenly; but the more humbled we are at our unheavenliness, the more we shall renounce it; and as we renounce it, and walk in the light of the Word, we shall learn, rejoice in and be sustained by, the sympathies of Christ, and so pass practically into true heavenly association with Him.

Life

Life is a sacred thing. God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. Life belongs to God. Man lost it at the beginning, through disobedience, and it then returned to God. Adam as soon as he lost it, was taught to know that he could' never, of himself, regain it. Cherubim with flaming sword were set at the gate of the garden, to keep every way the way of the Tree of Life. He received life through the word of truth, the Gospel of a bruised and yet victorious Jesus, a dead and risen Savior; but in himself he had it not, and of him-self he never could regain it, and as surely never transmit it to us. It returned to God-and we who have it, have it by gift from Him through the Lamb who has put away sin, and whose is the Book of Life.

The same mystery of forfeited and irrecoverable life, is afterward told to Noah, but by another ordinance than that of the cherubim guarding the way of the Tree of Life.

Flesh was given to Noah to eat; but the blood was not given him with the flesh. The blood was the life; and by this prohibition, man was still taught to know that he had forfeited life, and could not recover it (Gen. 9). And this same ordinance, that blood was not to be eaten, was continued under the Law, and to the same intent (Lev. 17).

We therefore, as either in Adam or of Adam, ought to be full of thoughts of death in ourselves. But the Lord Jesus Christ is to be full of thoughts of life in Himself. He must be so. And the Gospel by John gives blessed proof that He was so.

In chap. 1 the Spirit in the Evangelist recognizes this; for, speaking of Jesus, He says, "In Him was life."

In chap. 2, the Lord Himself recognizes this, saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"; and He spake of the temple of His body.

In chap. 3, He anticipates His being lifted up on the Cross, for the end of imparting "eternal life."

In chap. 4, He takes knowledge of Himself as the One who carried for sinners the very fountain of eternal, everlasting life.

In chap. 5, He speaks of Himself as working in the track of the Father, as the source and communicator of life.

In chap. 6 His thoughts are all about life. It is His subject throughout His discourse to the people.

In chap. 7, He stands, as at the head of the river of life, ready to turn its abundant, overflowing streams through the bellies of all thirsty ones who will come to Him.

In chap. 8, He declares Himself to be the Light of life, and announces the victorious character of that life which He carries and imparts; saying, " If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death."

In chaps. 9 and 10, which close His public ministry, commenting, as it were, on what it had been, He says, " I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

In chap. 11, a retired scene of service, after His more public work and testimony are over, we find the same mind in Him, expressed, too, under very striking circumstances, and in a very striking and fine manner.

All around are full of thoughts of death. It was at Bethany, and the grave of Lazarus. Disciples, Martha, Mary, the friends of the family, all alike are talking of death. But Jesus has no thought but of life. This is in full, fine character. In order to display the life that He carried, He had remained two days in the place where He was, till the sickness at Bethany had ended in death; then He goes (as God Almighty to Sarah, in Gen. 18) as the Quickener of the dead, and both declares Himself and shows Himself " the Resurrection and the Life."

This surely crowns the evidence of what I suggested, that all through this Gospel by John (i.e., in His ministry as recorded there), the Lord Jesus was full of thought of the life He carried in Himself for us sinners. And so, in consistency with this, at the end of the Gospel, the Evangelist (speaking again, under the Holy Ghost, as he had at the beginning), speaks of life connected with Jesus. " These things are written," he says, at the end of chap. 20, " that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."

Life is, indeed, the Lord's great subject in this Gospel. And, in further proof of this, we may observe, how in every chapter (which we have already considered), He presses through every hindrance, which the spirit of the world, the ordinance of Israel, the law, flattery or enmity, or anything else which He finds in action and energy around Him, puts in His way, in order that He may bring forth this Life, and dispense it to sinners. Thus:

In chap. 2, the mother, in a worldly spirit, would have Him show Himself; but He refuses.-In chap. 3, Nicodemus would honor Him as a Teacher; but Jesus again refuses.-In chap. 4, He passes through partition-walls which ordinances had set up, that He may carry the waters of life beyond them.-In chap. 5, He again breaks down a standing witness, or a pillar, in the city of the Jews, revealing (though the Jews were seeking to kill Him), that the hour had come when the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God and live.-In chap. 6, He presses through the offers of the multitude, refusing the crown at their hands, that He might give Himself to them as the Bread of Life.-In chap. 7, He resents the spirit of the world in His brethren, as in chap. 2, He had resisted it in His mother, but takes His place as the Lord or the Giver of Life.-In chap. 8, He passes by Mount Sinai, refusing to act in judgment, for He was the Light of Life.-In chaps. 9 and 10, He takes His place outside the camp, telling us that all His people are to be found there also, there finding life in its abounding. -In chap. 11, He passes through His personal love to Lazarus, that He may allow death to do its work with him, and then display Himself as Life in victory.

Thus He urges His way through all kinds of hindrances, attractions and flatteries, fear and enmities, the spirit of the world, ordinances and partition-walls, all are set aside, that He may be known in the one character, as He who came to do the work of life in a world whose sin was reigning unto death.

God, coming into this world, where death is thus reigning, has come as the Living God, as the One who purposes to overthrow the power of death, and to give life again, life in victorious strength, to

those who had been the captives of that power.

Accordingly, the faith that apprehends Him, the faith that reaches Him, the faith that is of the operation of God, knows and receives Jesus the Son of God, in that character, as the Giver of Life.

Peter represents or utters this faith in Matt. 16.16, and the Lord at once seals him as taught of the Father. And this is "the Rock." The Rock is God in victorious life, and the Church is built upon Christ as such Rock, as the Lord of Life in victory over all the power of death, and, therefore, the Church is unassailable. The gates of hell cannot prevail. They have been already broken asunder by Him who is the Church's Head and the sinner's Security. Life in Adam was to be tested. It was tested, and yielded to him who had the power of death. But the life that we have from our Rock has been proved to the uttermost, and stood triumphant in resurrection-strength. So that the life we get is eternal infallible life. It is a life which cannot be reached by any assault from the power of death. The murderous stones may disfigure Stephen's present tabernacle, take it down roughly, or tear it in pieces: but his life in Christ is untouched by all that-his spirit takes its journey homeward-there to await a clothing worthy of itself, eternal like itself, the house not made with hands, the building of God.

But, again, I say, we have life constantly kept before us, in this Gospel by St. John. But it is variously, as well as constantly, presented; presented in different attributes or conditions. Thus:-

1. It is shown to us as being the fruit of sin put away.
2. It is shown to us as leading into light.
3. It is shown to us as abounding or overflowing.
4. It is shown to us as in victory.
5. It is shown to us as being imparted (in its full or final power) to the body.
6. It is shown as leading us into relationship.
7. It is shown as enabling us, if the Lord please, to remain here till He returns.

These are fine attributes or conditions, in which the life, received from Jesus, the Son of God, is presented to us.

1. That life is the fruit of sin put away is a necessary truth; but it is shown here by this, that He who carries it for us, is " the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." (1)
2. That this life leads into light is declared in the words, " in Him was life, and the life was the light of man"; and it is illustrated in every soul that is quickened in the course of this Gospel; for each of them finds his rest or his home in the divine presence, and that is " the light."
3. That this life is abounding or overflowing, the Lord declares himself, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (10)
4. That it is life in victory is seen in the empty sepulcher.
5. That it is imparted to the body, we have from the words, " I am the resurrection and the life."

6. That this life takes us into relationship, making us sons of God, or giving us to know God as our Father, is clear from those words, "because I live, ye shall live also - at that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." (14)

7. That this life might continue in our present body, till the Lord return, is implied in His words to Peter concerning John, "if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee." (21)

What fine attributes of the life we receive from the Son of God, are these!

It is, surely, a life imparted, a gift of sovereign grace, made communicable to us by the sacrifice of the Cross, which put away sin; but being imparted, it is thus blessedly and preciously conditioned. But it is a gift. The Cherubim, at the gate of Eden, as I have alluded to already, had a flaming sword to keep every way, the way of the Tree of Life. Adam, at that moment, was a pardoned sinner. He had heard and received the word of salvation, and the Lord God had clothed him with a coat of skin, made by Himself. But all this did not give Adam either title to the Tree of Life, or power of him-self to reach it. The flaming sword, as thoroughly stopped up Adam's way to the Tree, as it did Cain's. Man, as man, is on one side of the sword, and the Tree of Life on the other. Life is no more within the reach of one man, of himself, than of another. All are alike in that respect - dead in sins, and children of wrath by nature. Therefore, the Lord says to His disciples, in John 13, "As I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say unto you." That is though they were disciples, and at that moment, sure of heaven, yet of themselves they could no more go where He was then going, than a reprobate unbelieving Jew could.

Now, this word of Christ was like the sword of the Cherubim, keeping an Adam as surely apart from the Tree of Life, as a Cain. Jesus would go and prepare a place for His disciples - as chap. 14:3, tells us- but they could no more reach that place, by title or power of their own, than the Jews, who had rejected Him. We are to receive of the Tree of Life (Rev. 2:7); but we have no power to press our way back to it.

The Lord Jesus, however, was the very opposite of this; His condition was not what ours is, in this great matter. The same passage, in John 13, tells us this. "Now is the Son of Man glorified," He says there, "and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." He speaks of Himself as One that is to be straightway glorified, glorified at once, needing no preparation to be made for Him. With Him, there was both title and power; life and glory, were His, by personal right, and by moral title. He had never forfeited the Garden of Eden. He walked as one that was actually outside of it, all His days; amid the thorns and briars, the sorrows and privations, of a self-ruined world. But this He did in grace. He took such a condition upon Him, but He was not exposed to it. He was not on one side of the Cherubim, and the Tree of Life, or the Garden of Eden, on the other. In His history, there is no sword in the hand of an angel to keep the way of that Tree, as there is in man's or Adam's history - but, on the contrary, when He had accomplished His temptation, angels came and ministered to Him (Matt. 4:11). He stood where Adam had failed and fallen - so that angels came with services to serve Him, and not with a flaming sword to withstand Him.

This is precious, as honoring and distinguishing Jesus, the Son of Man. But my present subject is not so much His excellencies, as the life we get from Him. May we prize it more, and learn to love the blessed Giver!

Manifestation of God

See Ex. 33; 34 John 1-10

"He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek

And yet, surely, this diligent seeking of God is to be conducted by us in our true character. We are not to seek Him as wise ones, or as righteous ones, as those who are either competent to know Him, or worthy to reach Him, of themselves. Our diligent seeking is to be in such character as, without disguise or doubt, we bear in His presence. The schools may make Him their subject to discuss Him, but that is not the seeking of faith, When faith would seek Him, it is a sinner that is seeking Him-and He is found of such. The revelation is then made; and the soul, in more or less brightness, walks in the light of the Lord.

And this light in which the sinner that has sought Him walks, is full light. God must come forth in all His goodness ere a sinner can walk with Him. Partial revelation of Himself will not do for a sinner. It would keep him still at a distance. It must be "all His goodness," His full glory, "the glory of God in the face of Jesus." This, but this only, will do for a sinner. And that is the light of the Lord. It is the revelation of Himself. And blessed is the thought, that God fully revealed, and a, sinner thoroughly convicted, may meet, and do meet, and that for eternity.

The woman of Samaria in John 4 was convicted. But she continued in the light that had convicted her - and thus, her vessel being opened, she was ready to receive what Christ was to her, and had for her. "I that speak unto thee am He," said Jesus, shortly after - and her heart was filled, and filled forever.

This may suggest the general character of John's gospel to us.

"The Word " is the characteristic title of the Son in that gospel; because He is the One who declares God, and reveals or manifests the Father.

Accordingly, when returning, in spirit, to the Father, as at the end of His ministry, in chap. 17, and laying down that ministry as now fulfilled, He says " I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." And accordingly, also, at the end of His days, on earth, in chap. 18, He says, when answering the Roman governor, " to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

For, the Lord is not a judge, but a witness, in this divine gospel by John; not a judge of man but a witness of God. And that is by far the higher character. God is His object and subject, as I may say. To declare Him, to manifest the Father, is His business. The law may publish rules of righteousness, making man its object; the prophets may tell of divine counsels making God's purposes and plans and government their object; but God Himself is Christ's object-to declare Him or to reveal the Father, is the purpose and business of the Son.

And this revelation of God, which is thus the business of the Word made flesh, is, really, the important thing in the moral history of this world. But the thought of man's heart is different. Man makes himself principal; even religious man does so. To have his heart regulated, his ways ordered, his character improved and cultivated, and the good estate of the scene in -which he has his daily being, maintained and advanced, this is the great end or object, according to the religious thoughts and moral energies of man. As we may see in chap. 9. The disciples say to Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind." They were thinking of law and of retribution, making man the principal in the religious speculations of their mind. But the Lord's answer shows us which was principal with Him. "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." According to this, the regulation of man, or the ordering of the world in moral retributive power, was not the great thing, but the revelation of God.

Here, however, we are to introduce ourselves to another truth.

In this revelation of God, which the Lord Jesus thus made principal in the moral history of the world, the sinner's salvation is involved. It would not be a manifestation of God, if it did not suit itself to the need of sinners. There are secrets, divine secrets, secrets about the blessed One, which would be kept back in any dispensation, but that of grace to sinners. God would have no sphere for the making of Himself fully known, but in a self-ruined world. So that, while in John's gospel, the Son is "the Word," or the declarer of God, we find Him fulfilling that ministry in the midst of sinners, and none else. He refuses to shine in any glory but that of the light of life. He will be a judge in due time, He will be a king in due time, He will skew Himself to the world in the appointed day of power-but all this, in John's gospel, He refuses. He was the light of life. The glory that was in Him was full of grace and truth, a glory suited to sinners, and He would not be a judge or a king, a doer of wonders according to His mother's wish in John 2, nor an exhibitor of Himself to the world, according to His brothers' wish in John 7. He was the light of life, and that only. His business was to declare God, to manifest the Father, and that must be, in grace to sinners.

This is simple, and shows itself with self-widening certainty and clearness in John's gospel.

But being this, being the light of life, He is " the light of the world" also. He is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He passes partition-walls. He is not merely in the' midst of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as in Matthew, but He is for " as Many as received Him." He does not, in John, say, as to a Syro-phoenician, " Let the children first be filled;" but at once revealing Himself in fullest, richest grace to a sinner of the Samaritans, He says, " I that speak unto thee am He." And He will abide two days in a village of that people, finding in Sychar of Samaria the home most suited to Him on earth, next to Bethany of Judea. For Bethany or Sychar, Samaritans or Jews, will do equally well for Him who is the light of life, the light of the world, the Savior of sinners.

But further. If God thus reveal Himself, it is the way of faith to look and to listen.. Faith desires, and receives this invitation. " Abraham rejoiced to see my day," says the Lord, " and he saw it and was glad."

In Ex. 33, Moses exhibits the yearnings of a soul 'after a full manifestation of God. The moral ruin of man, that is of Israel, was at that moment under his eye. But before that moment, he had been a

witness of the glory of God at the foot of the fiery hill, where the law was delivered. And he had likewise been with the elders of Israel in the presence of the God of Israel, on the hill, after the sending of the national or conditional covenant (chaps. 20 and 24). But he now craved more. Neither of these manifestations of God gave God to him in such a character as suited sinners, or that condition of ruin which now formed the scene before him. The fiery hill presented God as the righteous exacter of righteousness. The hill of the presence of Jehovah, where the Lord of Israel was in His majesty, presented God as in the terms and bonds of a conditional covenant with His people. But such things would not do for Moses now. The breach of the law, the sin of Israel, made other things needful-but such things he blessedly believed were to be found in God, and that neither the foot of the fiery hill, nor the top of the mount itself, had given him all that God was. God, he knew, was not yet fully manifested, because the sinner was not yet fully relieved. Blessed this impression on the spirit of Moses was I Therefore, "Show me thy glory," was now his cry. Man, in his ruins, was before him, and God in His full glory must be before him also.

There was something truly beautiful and excellent in this. Moses apprehended that there must be more in God than he had yet reached, because as yet the revelation of Him had not suited itself to man as a sinner, in moral ruin. And the Lord answers this yearning of the soul; for "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." He passes by in his full glory. "All His goodness" passes by; and He satisfies Moses, though Moses still looks on man as ruined, or Israel as a stiff-necked people (see chap. 34:9). He asks for no further manifestation. God in full glory, God in all that He is, was what he needed in behalf of his self-ruined people; and having got that, all that he craved now, was the presence and company of the Blessed One, whom he had now seen and heard.

And, indeed, it is blessed to add, that in this manifestation of God, man is hid. The people were all present, -at the giving of the law, in chap. 20. The elders were on the mount, in the divine presence, occupying their place there as truly and as really as the God of Israel occupied His place, during the great transaction of chap. 24, for Israel was a, necessary party to the conditional covenant. But now, in chap. 31 the people are not present, none but Moses, and he is hid, and God. alone is manifested and declared; and Moses has but to look and to listen, forth from the cleft rock, where like -sovereign grace had assigned him and provided him a place.

Surely, this was a blessed moment in Old Testament times. Moses craved and got, in spirit, what the Son of the bosom, the Word made flesh, who is the light of life, has now brought to us sinners, in our place of guilt and ruin. With this difference, however, Moses sought this manifestation, the Son has brought it unsought. Moses got it as for himself, the Son has given it, that sinners, as sinners whosoever will, may walk in the light of it.

And happy still to add, that as Moses found this manifestation of God to be enough for him, so do all those in John's gospel, who come to Jesus, find Him enough for them. Their joy and liberty are secured. Andrew and Philip and Nathanael, and the Samaritan, and the convicted sinner, and the blind beggar, one and all, equally and fully prove this.

"O house of Israel, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

The day broke upon Jacob himself at Peniel; and then his path lay over a plain illuminated and gladdened by the face of God. It was a little heaven to him, a brighter, fairer heaven, than when at

Bethel he saw the angels ascending and descending on the ladder. The halting of his thigh was not cared for, by reason of the face of God. A man may surely be content to walk lamely, if his path be across Peniel.

And let me add, in John's gospel, ruined man is not so much exposed as taken up. A full and perfect state of -moral ruin is rather assumed than proved; and God comes, in the Son, to act in healing light. This is rather what we get there. We see one sinner after another -walking in the light, after this healing manifestation of God has visited him. It is not Andrew and Philip and Nathanael, as they had been in the flesh, but Andrew and Philip and Nathanael, in the life-giving light of Jesus. Flesh is not exposed, so much as renewed man, free and happy, is presented-man freshly called into that knowledge of God which is life eternal, and walking in the light, as man new-made.

Luke 15:8-10

"Count not (vain thought!) upon a lost piece of silver seeking its owner. And count not diligence and the use of the broom to be enough without a light also. Not only do night and dusty floors make candle-light expedient, but by its means a watchful eye can see the light as it is reflected from a piece of lost silver."

1 Peter 2:24.

The true force of 1 Peter 2:24, has been called in question by those who seek not only to make Christ's life vicarious, but His sufferings, during the time of His active service, penal. The thought that all the sufferings of that blessed One have infinite value, and that they were all for us, every Christian heart would close in with adoringly. There may be obscurity of mind connected with it; but the heart is right. But when intellectual proofs are attempted to be given to sustain unsound doctrine on this /point, so as to undermine the true character and value of atonement, and to cast a cloud on divine righteousness, it is desirable, then, to maintain the truth. I do not hesitate to say that those who speak of the appropriation of Christ's living righteousness to us for righteousness, and hold the sufferings of His active service, to have been penal and vicarious, have, in no case, a full, clear, and Scriptural gospel. I am sure many who, from the teaching they have had, hold it, are as far as my own heart could desire from the wish to weaken the truth of atonement and the value of Christ's blood-shedding, without which there is no remission. They have not seen the deep evil lying. at the root of a doctrine which speaks of vicarious sufferings, and bearing of sins to which no remission is attached. I am quite ready to believe that the most violent accusers of the doctrine which looks to the sufferings of Christ upon the cross as the alone atonement and propitiation for sin do not wish to enfeeble its value. But we may inquire into the justness of all views which we, do not judge to be scriptural, and press too with confidence what we find in scripture. I do not believe in the penal and vicarious character of Christ's sufferings during His active service, nor do I believe in the appropriation of His legal righteousness to me as failing in legal righteousness myself I am satisfied that those who hold it have not a full, true, scriptural gospel; by some it is used for the maintenance of what is horribly derogatory to Christ. I have known many valued and beloved saints who bold that Christ, under the law, satisfied by His active fulfillment of it for our daily failure under it. I believe it to be a very serious mistake, though I may value them as His beloved people still. I believe in His obedience to the law- I believe that all His moral perfectness, completed in death, was available to me as that in which He was personally agreeable to God, and a lamb without 'spot and blemish. But these are not the appropriation to me of legal righteousness. But I am not now purposing to go over all this ground; I merely maintain the ground on which I stand, and the doctrine which I hold as scriptural, and as of immense importance to the church just now. I would do it meekly, patiently, that souls may be delivered from error and bondage into the liberty of the truth of God, which is the only real power of godliness; but I would do it firmly and constantly. In the attempt to maintain the doctrine of Christ's bearing sins all His life, the translation of the text I refer to has been called in question. I am satisfied that it is perfectly correct. As an element in this question, I would now examine it. The English version is, "Who His own self bare our sins in His

own body, on the tree." A simple person would, surely, in reading Peter, refer to His sufferings in death. Thus, in chap. 3, I read: " For Christ hath, also, once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' No one denies that Christ suffered, during His life, sufferings which found their perfection in His death, besides the wrath-bearing, character of it; for He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. But the question is, "Was there sin-bearing during His active service, or was He kept up as the Lamb to bear sin?" It turns on the word "bare" *ανενεγκε*. It is alleged that if it meant "bare," it must be *υπενεγκε* or *εβαστασε* or *ελαβε*. All this is a mistake. A sacrificial word is, I do not doubt, purposely used, but *αναφω* means "to bear, or undergo," probably because sacrificial victims, which were offered up, were supposed to bear sins; at any rate, it does mean "to bear, undergo, sustain." The truth is, determining the meaning of a word by etymology, in a cultivated language, is the most absurd thing possible. It is interesting as philological research, but as determining the *usus loquendi*, it is ridiculous. I might say "hell fire" must mean "covering sins"; for it is the same word as "to heal," used also provincially for roofing; for the same reason, hence, that the fire of hell was purgatorial or remissory. It did originally mean a covered place, *hades*, and hence, gradually, everlasting punishment. *Αναφω*, does mean to offer in sacrifice; it means "to recreate oneself, to remember, to cough up, to return, to cast the sin on another, to weigh or consider," etc. The question is, does it mean to bear, to undergo the pain and burden of, and, when used sacrificially, can it be separated from the altar of sacrifice. I say it does mean "to bear, undergo the pain and burden of anything"; and when used in connection with sacrifice, cannot be separated from actual offering up to God. First, that it means "to bear or undergo." I must turn to the dictionaries for this, and the passages in which it is used. They leave no sort of question. It is only systematizing, and not the facts in the Greek language, which can lead any one to deny it. I turn to Stephanus. I find *αναφερειν*, *ferre*, *perferre*, *pati*, ut *Christus dicitur*, *ανενεγκεν* *peccata nostra* (1 Peter 2:24; Heb. 9:21). Cit. e, Thucydides *φθονους και διαβολους, πολεμον*, quod *durum sit reddere ferre pericula potiusque verti debeat subire pericula*; better "to undergo," that is, than "to bear"; the general sense of "undergoing the burden and pain of," is evident; and that is our point here. There is a reference in the beginning of the article to Aristides; I suppose, Aelius Aristides, the rhetorician, which I cannot verify. So Pape auf sich nehmen, ertragen, "to take on oneself," "to bear," *κινδυνους*, Thucydides. *Φθουνους και διαβολους, πολεμον*, that is, "envy, calumny, war," Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. He adds, New Testament. Liddel and Scott give "to uphold, to take on one, Latin *sustinere*; quoting Aeschylus (*αχθον*) and Thucydides. It is thus perfectly certain that the word means "to bear the burden of anything, to undergo." The etymological sense of "to bring up or back" is a mere absurdity here. We have now to examine the scriptural use of it in connection with sacrifice, and in particular the passage in Peter. *Amerce*, is a sacrificial word. It is used here, if we are to take it as it usually is taken, as referring to Isa. 53:12, for *nasa*, *נָסָא*, which means "to lift up, to bear, to forgive," and here confessedly "to bear." It is alleged - for I have considered diligently what is alleged against it-that it cannot mean "to bear passively with" (*נָסָא*) as would be the case with *ανενεγκε επι το*. This is a mistake: Aaron was to bear the names of the children upon (*נָסָא*), his heart (Ex. 28; 29). So with the judgment, in ver. 30. It is said that Isa. 53:4, is translated *ελαβε*, by divine inspiration, and hence it could not be *ανενεγκε*, in ver. 12. But this proves, if anything (for the word may be translated differently in different places according to the sense, but if it be the Spirit's purpose to make the difference here it proves this,) that he would not use a sacrificial vicarious word in ver. 4, but would in ver. 12; that

is, that the " bearing," in ver. 4, was not sacrificial, but is in ver. 12; for Heb. ix. 28, that Christ was once offered εις το πολλων ανενεγκειν αμαρτιας, are the very words of Isa. 53:12. So that if this is of any value, we have not an inference that it cannot be used in one place because it is not in another; and that Peter, if he had quoted it, would have used another word for " nasa" in ver. 12, because Matthew did in ver. 4 (an argument, when said to be from inspiration, which I decline characterizing), but a direct proof that inspiration will not use a vicarious sacrificial word as to Christ's living sympathies and sorrows; but that it will, and does, use it when it speaks of bearing sins when offered up to God. And now, leaving argument, which I am glad to do, what is the scriptural use of αναφερω, in connection with sins and sacrifices, with or without επι το? The following instances will show: Num. 14:34, και ανοισουσι τηω πορωειαν υμων. The use of it in this passage is the more noticeable, because, save in Lev. 20:19, the word always used for bearing the consequence of our own, or a father's, sin (and under the old covenant, this is the same thing) is λαμβανω, in the Sept. In Lev. 20:19, it is αφοισουσι. In Ex. 28:29, it is ληψεται τα ανοματα επι το λογιον; and for the same words in ver. 30, it is και οις ει τας κρισεις επι του. Indeed, the argument as to λαμβανω, may justly be carried much farther, for λαμβανω is regularly used for bearing the fruit of one's sin, bringing sin on oneself in its consequences. It is not bearing it vicariously, but as a consequence on oneself. The only apparent exceptions that I am aware of, and they are only apparent, are Lev. 16:22, the scapegoat; and Ezek. 4.4, 5, 6; but the first is ληψεται εις γην αβατον, " He shall carry them into a land not inhabited," and in the case of Ezekiel, it was clearly not (■■■■) vicarious, but representative (■■■■) and the same as the ordinary case. In a word, αμαρτιαν λαμβανειν, is not used for vicarious bearing, but bearing the consequence of one's own fault, coming under the effect of it oneself, poenas luere. But what is important, is to see the actual use of αναφερω, when used with sacrifice. Num. 14:34, and Isa. 53.11, are plain proofs that it is used for bearing sins penally. But now, as to sacrifice. The reader must bear in mind that the act of having the sin on the victim is not in itself the expiation. That puts the victim in the answering place. For the other, death and the judicial action of God must come in to put it away. It must be slain and offered on the altar. As it is said, "by means of death." Christ had to take our sins on Him, and therefore die; give His life a ransom for many. Every one, therefore, believes He had taken them on Him before He gave up the ghost. The question is, did He take them on Him in order to suffer on the cross, and suffer the penal judgment of them there, as the victim was brought up to the altar, then the sins confessed on His head, and then the victim itself, thus made sin, slain, and burnt? Or was Christ born into this penal state, suffering it before He actually gave Himself up to be offered on the cross? Was He under the penal consequences of sin in the sufferings of His active service, was that penally from God; or in the sufferings of the cup He took to drink upon the cross from God? I believe the latter, that it was after the victim was presented as an offering to the altar -in Christ's case we must say presented Himself as a spotless victim to the cross-that the penal sufferings for sin were on Him, because our sins were on Him, and that it is to this bearing of sins alone that the passage in Peter applies. Christ offered' Himself without spot to God. Jehovah laid, then, the iniquity upon Him. He who knew no sin was then made sin. Did the Lord lay the iniquity upon Him before He offered Himself without spot, a proved Spotless lamb? One who knew no sin was made sin when He had bowed to His Father's will to drink that cup.

Offering has, in scripture, a double character. It is used for presenting the victim, or indeed any offering, ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■, heevi or hikriv, " to cause to come nigh"; but αναφερω επι το, is not used

for this, though in grammar, I know not why it should not be. It is for hard causes in judgment in Deut. 1:17, ανοισετε αυτα επ' εμε, " You shall bring them to me." But not for offering that I can find. If the reader take the first chapter of Leviticus, he will find for these words προσφερειν or προσαγειν, to bring up. This was the presenting the offering which was to be a victim. But as soon as the victim, or part of it, is spoken of as burnt on the altar (Lev. 3:5), then it is ανοισουσιν αυτα επι το θυσιαστηριον, so in ver. 9, the general idea of offering is προσοισουσι, hikriv, and in ver. 11, the burning of it on the altar, ανοισουσιν επι το. And this is the regular use of it in Leviticus, and elsewhere, as Ex. 29:18, 25; 30:20; Lev. 2:16; 3:16; 4:10, 20, 26, 31; 6:15, 35; 7:21; 8:16, 19, 20, 27; 9:10, 20; 16:25; 17:6; Num. 5:26; 18:17. This last has the same force, but there is not επι το θυσιαστηριον. That is αναφερω επι το, is the technical expression for consumption or offering up to God by fire, when on the altar, in contrast with bringing up to the altar. When επι το is not used, it has practically the same force when used of offerings- that is, offering to God; but αναφερειν επι το has the proper peculiar force of bearing them as a victim on the altar, under the consuming fire of God, not of bringing up to it. It answers to hiktir, not to hikriv. It is impossible that the use of language can be made plainer by the facts of that use. There is another word for which it is used, which confirms this, ■■■, halo (Gen. 8:20; 22:2; so Ex. 24:5; Lev. 14:19,20), where the reader will remark, comparing ver. 13, that in both cases of the sin or trespass-offering and the burnt-offering, they are killed before they are offered in this sense of the word. In Christ both went together, He died on the cross; but it is of importance to remark it here, because it shows that hala as well as hiktir is not bearing the sins up to the altar, but the being offered (in consuming fire) on the altar to God. The word is used in some passages generally as a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, the sense being assumed to be known; but this shows the strict sense is, the ascending up to God as a sweet savor under the proving and consuming fire -not the bringing up sin to the altar. And this is so true, that as these burnt-offerings were of a sweet savor, so no offering not made by fire was a sweet savor: Compare Lev. 2:9 and 12, determining the use of this word in the most positive way they were to bring it up (takriv) as an offering, but they were not to offer it (yakala) as a sweet savor, very justly as to the sense translated " burnt" in the English. It was not to be made to ascend as a sweet savor, that is, to be burnt and mount up to God as such. The general use may be seen in Num. 28:2; Deut. 12:13, 14; 27:6, is a proof that the notion of επι το, i.e. επι, with an accusative (see below) is not so absolute, but proves that ανοισει, in any case, does not mean necessarily bringing up to, for here it is used with the genitive. Judg. 13:19, again shows distinctly what αναφερω επι το means (here επι την, because it was a rock), for it is added, " For it came to pass, that when the flame went up," behaaloth, " from off" the altar. The victim was offered on the rock, and in the going up of the flame. That is what hala refers to, not the bringing up to the altar. Additional cases will be found in Kings and Chronicles, David's and Solomon's offerings; but it is only repeating similar cases, which confirm, but are not needed, to prove the point. The words for which αναφερειν επι το θυσιαστηριον are used, namely, burning, or causing to ascend on, the altar, and the uniform use of them prove distinctly that the force of the word is the bearing under consuming fire on the altar, and not bringing sins up to it. I may quote another proof; strongly confirming the use of this word in 2 Chron. 29:27. Verse 24, the victim was killed; ver. 27, Hezekiah commands it to be offered ανενεγκειν επι το θυσιαστηριον. I add, on this occasion, it is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar. It is used for bringing victims to the house; but this I quote because there it is not επι. The sins were not yet upon them, they were the spotless victims that were to become sin-bearers, and sweet savors of offerings made by

fire, ἀναφέρειν ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστηρεῖον is never used for bringing or bearing sins up to the altar; what it is used for has been fully shown. But the supposition that ἐπὶ, with an accusative, means actively bringing up to and then rest is a mistake. There may be grammatically the idea by implication that that which is ἐπὶ τὸ is not always and naturally there; but as a matter of fact, it does mean resting on a place or thing at the time spoken of. Thus Matt. 13:2, " All the multitude stood," ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλόν. So Matt. 14:28, " Ye shall sit on twelve thrones," ἐπὶ δώδεκα θρόνους. Acts 10:17; 11:11, ἐπεστησόν ἐπὶ τὸν πύλωνα ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν. Winer's Grammatik (section 583) may be seen for this use and the use of ἐπὶ, with a genitive for motion. See a singular example in Lev. 3:5, the pieces of the peace-offering on the burnt-offering, ἐπὶ τὰ; on the wood, ἐπὶ τὰ; on the fire, ἐπὶ τοῦ: this may be from the fire being always there belonging to the altar, whereas the wood was brought there: οὐσιν will be understood then before it. In many cases, I have no doubt that the real cause of the accusative is this; when the preposition of the compound verb implies motion, there will be the accusative, though the whole sense will be rest. I do not think you would ever have εἶναι ἐπὶ τὸ with ἐφίστημι ἀναφέρω you will have the accusative; so εἰστήκε ἐπὶ τὸ, in contrast with Christ's sitting in a boat on the sea; but Mark, ἦσαν ἐπὶ γῆς. But this is grammar, and I pursue it no farther. It remains only to adduce the cases of ἀναφέρειν, in the sense of bearing or offering. We have first Heb. 7:27, " who needeth not daily as those high priests to offer up sacrifice for this he did once when he offered up himself." Now, 'here it is perfectly certain that it has nothing to do with the victim bearing sins up to the altar, but with what we have seen to be its usual and uniform sense, the High Priest's offering it on the altar, where it was a victim - so, also we have distinct proof that it is no vicarious life, for He 'did it once when He offered up Himself, and it was for sins. When, consequently, it may have a more general meaning of giving Himself up to be a, victim, we have the word- used for that in Leviticus, προσφέρω, Heb. 9:16. Hence we have in ver. 28, " once offered (προσενεχθεὶς), to bear (ἀναφέρειν) the sins of many." Thus He was once offered, and offered to bear sins as thus offered, of which it said that He had not to offer Him-self often, for then He must often have suffered; but now He has appeared once in the consummation of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself- that is His offering, His suffering, was the sacrifice of Him-self. His being born was not His sacrifice. He offered Himself, one who was a man, though by the Eternal Spirit, or there could be no offering; that is, He was a man before He offered Himself, His own blessed voluntary act, the perfect act of Christ, though, in obedience, and Himself already the spotless lamb. He was thus the man, the spotless one, offered to bear the sins of many. This, there can be no doubt, refers to Isaiah 53:12.

We have, further, James 2:21, " When he had offered up Isaac on the altar"; and 1 Peter 2:5, " Offer up spiritual sacrifices," which give no proof, save that the last shows this, that it was the offering up to God, which is very important in this way, that' it shows it was not the bringing up the sins when laid on the victim's head to the altar. The offering of the victim to God is προσφέρω, the consumption on the altar was its offering up as a sacrifice to God, this is ἀναφέρω. The notion of bringing up a living victim to the altar is unknown to scripture; the animal was slain when he had been offered (προσενεχθεὶς), slain by whom it might be, and the blood sprinkled on the altar, and the fat, or the whole victim burnt; the altar had to do with death and the judgment of fire, and there was the sacrifice - a living victim bringing up sins to the altar, is a thought foreign to and contrary to Scripture, when the victim had been presented, and the hands of the offerer had been laid upon it, it was slain at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Death was the way sin was dealt with in the victim (we know Christ's death was on the cross, as well as the full drinking of the cup of

wrath) the thought of bringing sins up livingly, as if He offered Himself and His sins, is an impossibility. No; He offered Himself, and bare (ἀνενεγκε) our sins, when offered (προσενεχθεις), as a dying victim. Death was the wages of sin. Thus I return to 1 Peter 2:24, with the full evidence of scripture and the Greek use of the word. All the scripture order of sacrifice, and the language of scripture, confirming it, that the simple-hearted reader may rest in all confidence in his English translation, "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." The word "bare" has a sacrificial character; but that no Christian reader ever doubted in this passage.

I do not see, I confess, how any scriptural locution could be made more certain. I doubt that any other could have so ample and absolute a proof of its actual meaning; and refutation of the meaning attempted to be put upon it, and the desired change in the authorized version.

"Who [Christ] did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that, judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Peter 2:22-24).

Philemon

The very beautiful and interesting Epistle to Philemon does not require much comment: it is an expression of the love which works, by the Spirit, within the Church, in all the circumstances of individual life.

Written for the purpose of awakening sentiments in Philemon, which certain events had a tendency to extinguish in his heart, this epistle is more suited to produce those feelings in the reader, than to be the object of explanation.

It is a fine picture of the way in which the tenderness and the strength of the love of God, working in the heart, occupies itself with every detail wherein that love might be wounded, or that might be an occasion for its growth and manifestation. In this point of view, the epistle is as important as beautiful; for this development of tender and delicate consideration in the midst of the apostle's gigantic labors, and of the immense truths that formed the bases of relationship between all creatures and God in Christ, gives a very peculiar character to Christianity, and shows its divine nature; since He who reveals the most profound truths, and co-ordains them in the circle of divine thought, does so as speaking of a known thing, as communicating His own thoughts; and can (being the Spirit of the God of love) fill the heart with considerations which love only can suggest, with a dignity which manifests their source, and with a delicacy of application which shows that whatever be the grandeur of His thoughts, He is at liberty to consider everything.

When the human mind is occupied with elevated subjects, it feels their weight, and bends under the load; it is absorbed; it has to abstract itself, to fix its attention. God reveals His own thoughts; and, vast as they may be to the human mind, they flow with the clearness and connectedness that is natural to them, when He communicates them by His chosen instruments. The latter are free to love; for the God who employs them and inspires them is love. It is a more essential part of their task to present Him thus, than even to speak of the deep things. Accordingly, when they are moved by that love, the character of Him who sends them is demonstrated as that of the God who is the source of love, by a perfect consideration for others, and the most delicate attention to those things which their hearts would feel.

Moreover, this love develops itself in relationships formed by the Holy Ghost Himself, between the members of the body of Christ; that is to say, between men. Springing from a divine source, and always fed by it, Christian affections assume the form of human regard, which by exhibiting love, and the opposite of selfishness, bear the stamp of their origin. Love, free from self, can and does think of all that concerns others, and understands what will affect them.

Onesimus, a fugitive slave, had been converted by means of Paul in his bonds. Philemon, a rich man, or at least one of easy fortune, received the assembly in his house (his wife being also converted), and, in his measure, labored himself in the Lord's work. Archippus was a servant of the Lord, who ministered in the assembly; perhaps an evangelist: at any rate, he took part in the conflicts of the Gospel, and was thus associated with Philemon and the assembly.

The apostle, in sending Onesimus back, addresses the whole assembly. This is the reason that we have here, " Grace and peace," without the addition of " mercy," as when individuals only are addressed by the apostles. His appeal on behalf of Onesimus is to Philemon; but the whole assembly is to interest itself in this beloved slave, who was become a child of God. Their Christian hearts would be a support and a guarantee for the conduct of Philemon; although the apostle expects pardon and kindness for Onesimus, from the love of Philemon himself as a servant of God.

Paul (as was his custom) recognizes all the good that was in Philemon; and uses it as a motive to Philemon himself; that he might let the feelings of grace flow out freely, in spite of anything that the return of Onesimus might excite in the flesh, or any displeasure that Satan might try to re-awaken in him. The apostle would have that which he desired for Onesimus, to be Philemon's own act. The enfranchisement of his former slave, or even his kind reception as a brother, would have quite a different bearing in that case, than if it had arisen from a command on the apostle's part; for Christian affection and the bonds of love were in question. He gives due weight to the right he had to command; but only in order to abandon it, and to give more force to his request; and at the same time he suggests, that the communion of Philemon's faith with the whole Church and with the apostle-i.e. the way in which his faith connected him, in the activities of Christian love, with the Church of God and those appointed by Him to labor in it, and with the Lord Himself-which had already shown itself so honorably in Philemon, would have its full development in the acknowledgment of all the apostle's rights over his heart. (In ver. 6, we must read, "every good thing which is in us")

It is beautiful to see the mixture of affection for Onesimus - which shows itself in an anxiety that makes him plead every motive which could act on the heart of

Philemon-with the Christian feeling that inspired him with full confidence in the kindly affections of this faithful and excellent brother. The return of his fugitive slave was, indeed, likely to stir up something in his natural heart; the apostle interposes his letter on behalf of his dear child in the faith, born in the time of his captivity. God had interposed the work of His grace, which ought to act on the heart of Philemon, producing altogether new relationships with Onesimus. The apostle beseeches him to receive his former slave as a brother; but it is evident (ver. 21); although Paul wished it to be the spontaneous act of the master whom Onesimus had wronged, that the apostle expected the enfranchisement of the latter. Be that as it may, he takes everything upon himself for his dear son. According to grace, Onesimus was more profitable to Philemon, as well as to Paul, than formerly, when the flesh had made him an unfaithful and valueless servant; and this he should rejoice in (ver. 11). Paul alludes to the name of "Onesimus," which means " profitable." Finally, he reminds Philemon that he was indebted to him for his own salvation- for his life as a Christian.

Paul, at this moment, was a prisoner at Rome. God had brought Onesimus there (whither all resorted), to lead him to salvation and the knowledge of the Lord, in order that we should be instructed, and that Onesimus should have a new position in the Christian Church. It was, apparently, towards the end of the apostle's imprisonment. He hopes, at least, to be soon released, and tells Philemon to prepare him a lodging.

We find the names again in the Epistle to the Colossians. There the apostle says, "Onesimus, who is one of you"; so that if it be the same, he was of Colosse.

It seems likely, because there is Archippus also, who is exhorted to take heed to his ministry. If it be so, the fact that he speaks thus of Onesimus to the Christians at Colosse, is another proof of his loving care for this new convert. He lays him thus upon the hearts of the assembly, sending his letter by him and Tychicus. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, there are no salutations; but the same Tychicus is its bearer. Timothy is joined with Paul in the address of the Epistle to the Colossians, as well as in this to Philemon. It was not so in the Epistle to the Ephesians; but in that to the Philippians, to whom the apostle hoped to send Timothy ere long, their two names are again united.

I do not draw any conclusions from these last details; but they furnish ground for inquiry into details. Each of the four epistles was written during the apostle's captivity at Rome, and when he was expecting to be delivered from that captivity.

Finally, that which we have especially to remark in the Epistle to Philemon, is the love which, in the intimate center of this circle (guarded all round by an unparalleled development of doctrine), reigned, and bore fruit, and bound the members of Christ together, and spread the savor of grace over all the relationships in which men could stand towards each other-occupying itself about all the details of life with a perfect propriety, and with the recognition of every right that can exist among men, and of all that the human heart can feel.

Position As Christians and Prayer in Relation to the Holy Spirit

It is of the utmost moment to all the people of God to ascertain whether the Holy Ghost has returned to heaven since Pentecost, and has to be sent again on every fresh occasion of blessing, or whether He remained, and still remains on earth with us, since that great event. And such is the important subject now under our consideration.

More than eighteen hundred years ago, a small company of the disciples of Jesus were accustomed to meet in an upper chamber for prayer and supplication, in expectation of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of their blessed Master, to be shortly accomplished (Acts 1). They were feeble and fearful (John 20:19,20), and quite unenlightened as to the purposes and counsels of God respecting the calling of the Gentiles and the Church, having still, for the most part, Jewish views and feelings (Acts 1:6), with prejudices, which nothing but the action and direct authority of the Spirit of God afterward sufficed to overcome (Acts 10:45-47; 11:15-18). Besides this they had no power to preach or declare the Word of God, and were specially directed by the Lord Himself to wait until this was conferred on them, by the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:4,5,8); nor could they, until that event took place, be formed into one body, the Church (1 Cor. 12:13), and its order, organization, and privileges, were unknown to them.

This state of things continued until the descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, which is thus de-scribed:—"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them " (Acts 2). Thus was fulfilled the promise of Christ, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever (John 14:16.)

The terms of this promise were that the Comforter should come to abide with them, in accordance with which we see, on the day of Pentecost, not only the "cloven tongues as of fire," resting upon each individual, emblematical of the gifts and powers which the Holy Ghost conferred, but His own personal presence in their midst, indicated by the sound as of a rushing mighty wind, which, coming from heaven, "filled all the house where they were sitting." Thus was the advent and presence of this Divine and Almighty Agent announced to them all, in an unmistakable way. Thus they knew that though the Son had returned to heaven, another Divine person of the blessed Trinity had descended to earth to remain with them, according to the promise of Christ, forever.

His presence changed the aspect of everything. Courage and confidence succeeded to fear; weakness was exchanged "for power; and boldness in public testimony for Christ for what had before been only in private; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance. Besides which, the Church is now first spoken of as an existent body that could be added to (v. 47), the unity and love which characterized its members becoming conspicuous to all (44-46) whilst those who were enrolled, exhibited the living agency of the divine Spirit of truth in continuing steadfast in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers; four all-important things, which show distinct and instructed organization and

spiritual power.

We have, in addition, the conversions which took place under the ministry of the Word by the Apostle Peter, on one day three thousand being brought in (Acts 2:41), and on another two thousand, after the healing of the impotent man (Acts 4:4). But these conversions were not the out-pouring of the Spirit which had been previously exhibited in the apparent form as of a rushing mighty wind, and of tongues of fire which rested on the believers; but they were the blessed effects of the Holy Spirit's presence, making itself felt, subsequently, upon the hearts of sinners. These things ought not to be confused; the former was the coming or descent of the Holy Ghost, the latter is only one result of it, though a very blessed one. He comes to the disciples to dwell among them, and show His power. He acts when present in the Church, on the world out-side, and that by means of a testimony given by the lips of the apostles who were filled with the Holy Ghost.

In Acts 4 a scene presents itself of great importance in our present inquiry. An attempt is made by the leading authorities of the Jewish nation, to put a stop to this work of God, by threatening the apostles, and commanding them not to speak any more in the name of Jesus. This leads to prayer-prayer to God to carry on His work, to convert, and save, and bless, in the very way which Christians now desire to see it effected. It seems like the first great prayer-meeting of which we have any account, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, though held without any previous concert. But for what do they ask? not that the Holy Ghost may come, or be sent, for they know Him to 'be there with them; but that boldness may be given them to speak the Word of God in face of all opposition, and that the name of Jesus may be magnified by the display of its power Among men. The answer came at once. " And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness."

The presence of that divine Comforter who had come at Pentecost, and filled all the house where they were sitting is now sensibly felt by the house being shaken where they were assembled, and they are all filled with the Holy Ghost, and speak the Word with boldness. With great power the apostles give testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, great grace rests on all, with unity of heart and mind, and self-renunciation for the good of others who were in need, whilst believers are added to the Lord, multitudes, both of men and women (v. 14) and those who bring their lie into the presence of God the Holy Ghost, to whom Peter declared the lie to have been fold, are struck down by divine judgment. From this we may gather what our prayer should be, whether for ourselves, or for sinners around us.

If the Holy Ghost had returned to heaven, then should we indeed have to pray that He may be sent again, and that He should come down to us again; but to what a condition of weakness and desolation would the Church then be reduced! How could she then bear testimony to the world? How uphold the name of Christ, or the truth of God on earth? Without a Comforter, a divine person to sustain the people of God in the world, they would be indeed as the Lord said He would not leave His disciples, orphans or comfortless. But it is not so; our position is not that of the disciples when they were waiting for the Holy Ghost to come, with all the feebleness as we have seen that resulted from His not having yet been given (chap. 1) but rather that which is represented in chap. 4, and we may well take this prayer for our guidance at the present moment, and ask for the same things. That we may be filled with the Spirit, and speak the word of God with boldness, that grace

may rest on us, that love may abound as then, and that the name of Jesus may be magnified in His being made known to many hearts that have never tasted His grace.

Blessed be God, the Holy Ghost is not gone back to heaven, that he needs be asked to come again; He dwells still in the Church, and in the heart of every believer.

That this is so, is evident from the promise of our blessed Lord, that as the result of His intercession that other Comforter should be given, who should " abide with them forever." These words, "forever," distinctly set aside every notion that would imply the Holy Ghost's ever leaving us. As long as the Church remains on earth, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is her companion and support and guide. He is given to lead her into all truth, and to take of the things of Christ, and sinew them to her, and so to glorify Christ in the hearts of those that are His.

But besides this, in John 16. His action on the world-the subject we are now speaking of-is thus set before us in the words of our Lord, " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged." Here the coming of the Comforter is said to be the result of Jesus going on high, and He is said to be sent, not to the world, but to the disciples. " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." But when He was come, and dwelling with the people of God, He would reprove the world of its condition in the sight of God-of sin in the rejection of Christ-of righteousness in Jesus alone who had left it and gone to the Father-and of its ultimate judgment.

Is not this what has been going on ever since Pentecost? Has it not been in consequence of the presence of the Spirit of truth here that this divine and gracious operation has been carried on, and souls have been converted and brought to believe on Christ as their righteousness before God? It was His presence here in the Church, our Lord tells us, that was to accomplish this, and the conversion of souls which has continued, and been going on more or less ever since, is therefore owing to the continuance of that blessed presence on the earth, and His consequent acting on the souls of men.

How, then, it may be asked, are the times of revival that have occurred at different periods in the history of the Church to be accounted for?

To this the reply may be readily given from the passages we have referred to, that not only the existence of the Church itself, but all blessing that has come to the Church since Pentecost-all its guidance through the difficulties and dangers of the world, and its support against the power of Satan-all spiritual ministry (1 Cor. 12:7,8,11) for the edification of the saints-all the spread of the gospel, and the maintenance of the truth of God on earth-all the testimony borne to the efficacy of the blood of Christ or the power of His name before God (John 15:20)-all tile revivals that have ever occurred-all the conversions which have taken place, whether few or many, whether suddenly or more gradually-all is due to the great fact of the presence of the Holy Ghost here on earth. Just as a reservoir in a town supplies all its different parts with water, so needful for the support of natural life, so does the Spirit of God here present maintain all the functions of spiritual life in the people of God, and afford an abundant and ever present supply for their necessities, and

the wants of sinners, where there is dependance and the prayer of faith to draw it out.

Surely it ought to encourage us to know that we have this divine and blessed Person here with us as an abiding source of strength and consolation. He cannot fail in His care for the Church, and He has but to put forth His power, and the work is done. And it may well stimulate our souls to look to God, that as He has done so much for us in giving us this divine and almighty Comforter, so His power may be displayed for our blessing and the awakening of sinners.

All this, however, could not take place, as we know from John 7:37-39, until Jesus was glorified. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)."

From this we learn that the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in individual believers, and be the source of their joy in the truth, and power in witnessing for Jesus, is the result of Christ having taken His place at the right hand of God, after having glorified God by His death in the putting away of sin (John 13:31, 32-17:4). The Spirit comes to be in the souls of believers the witness and seal of the efficacy of that blessed work which Jesus accomplished on the cross-His presence in each believer proves that sin has been blotted out by the blood of Christ - that it is now gone from us because it is gone from Him who for our sakes took it on Himself, and that we are now as clear of it in the sight of God as He is (Rom. 4:25.-viii. 34.-Col. 2:10). He could not have been raised again if it had not been completely and entirely put away; and His taking His place on the throne of God, is the triumphant clearance of every believer from every charge which could be laid against him, whilst it makes his acceptance as perfect as that of Christ Himself in the glory of that throne. The Spirit of God now unites him to Christ as part of His body, and therefore gives him to share in His position and privileges.-Eph. 1:6, 13, 19, 22, 23; 1 Cor. 6:17, 19; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22.

Besides this the veil which the justice and holiness of God interposed between Himself and sinners-which hid God from man, prevented his approach to God, and hindered the outflow of divine love- has been rent by the death of Jesus. The Holy Ghost has come here to witness that that death has broken down every barrier which subsisted between God and man, and that the blood being carried into the holiest of all, the way in there is now manifest; and the Gospel and the coming of the Holy Ghost witness that God's love suffers nothing to stand between Himself and sinners, the blood of Christ being provided for their reconciliation to Him, and the veil of the temple rent " from the top to the bottom." Compare Mark 15:38, and Heb. 9:8, 11, 12.-10:19, 20. Thus the meaning of the words of Christ becomes apparent-" The Holy Spirit was not yet," so far as the blessing of man, and His presence with men was concerned, because that Jesus was not yet glorified; and again- " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

This Scripture, however, shows us that this blessed Person acts as the agent of the Father and the Son, by whom He has been sent, and whose purposes of love He has undertaken to carry out; and so much is this the case, that of His communications it is said in the same passage, (v. 13) " He shall not speak of (or from) Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak;" and " He shall glorify Me;" for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

We have thus seen that the Scripture speaks of the presence of the Holy Ghost down here in a twofold way, as having taken up His residence in the Church collectively, and also in each individual believer; that being the second part of the promise of Christ to His disciples in John 14-" He shall be in you." This latter truth is not so much insisted on here, being more generally admitted, though the way in which His " influence" is often spoken of by Christians, makes it too evident that they but little enter into the reality of the truth that the body of the believer is "the temple of the Holy Ghost," (1 Cor. 6:19).

It will be evident to every one how strengthening to faith and encouraging to prayer, and every other effort for the conversion of sinners, the sense of the abiding presence of the blessed Comforter must be; and how weakening, as well as erroneous is the supposition that the Holy Ghost has gone back to heaven, and has to be brought down again by prayer, whenever any fresh and extended blessing is desired. Nor can it be denied that the petitions which are constantly heard, for the Holy Spirit to " come," or " descend," are utterly inconsistent with the thought of His being here, and show that those who utter them are unconscious of His presence, or they certainly would not ask for it. The same might be said for the most part, of the frequent use of the word " outpouring," of the Spirit, inasmuch as it is generally used to express all that took place at Pentecost, which was far more than the conversion of sinners, though that, as we have seen, accompanied it.

From these things also we may believe, that when Christians are assembled like the disciples of old (Acts 4) to seek for blessing from God, and the extension of the work of God around them-in the name of Christ, and in dependence on the Spirit of God-His presence will be there to preside amongst them, and to guide them in their prayers, and show them what to do. And if His presence is looked for as a sovereign and divine person, it will lead us to leave things in His hands, to order and direct for the common profit, and for the glory of God.-1 Cor. 12:11.

Besides this, the conviction of the indwelling' of the Holy Spirit in each believer will strengthen the soul in its supplication to God; for, says the Apostle, "we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." And it is in our hearts that He does this, as the next verse shows. " And He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints, according to (the will of) God (Rom. 8:26,27).

The Sovereign Rights of God Respected; the Well-Being of Man Secured

The Revelation of God, in His Word, solves a problem which, more or less, has occupied mankind in all ages; but in our times, peculiarly so. The necessity of authority and the supremacy of rule, has been intuitively admitted. The source of it has been disputed. To whom power ought to be confided is a vexed question; but that law or authority we must have-having its validity in the consent of the mass, or in the sanction of the few, or otherwise - is agreed upon by all. The world heaves with the struggling in men's minds, to arrive at conclusions; the Theories advanced are as diversified as the climate, and as variable as the seasons; the well-being of our country is assumed as positive data for conclusive judgment; the sorrows of another, in like manner; the world is inundated with speculations, and, far worse, is groaning under trials which man seeks to mitigate by attributing to one cause or other, the failure of everything; to have, in his turn, his theories canvassed, and his conclusions contradicted. Mankind has existed some six thousand years, to awaken the present generation to the fact, that if they had glimpses of good, they were impotent to follow it. If, in the pages of history, the eye rests with pleasure upon the social condition of some favored portion of the globe-it is recalled to remembrance, along with the fact, of man's helplessness to retain it: if good, it degenerated; if bad, it grew worse. There is one lesson to learn from the experience of the past; and that is, to cease expectation from man in the future. The purposes of God, as revealed in His Word, with the revelation of His character, enable man to do so. Where God is known, He is to be confided in; He, who created man's nature, knows best what is suited to it; He, who endowed man with such excellent faculties, knows best how to respect them; He, who feeds the ravens and clothes the grass of the field, was not likely to be less mindful of man, who was created in His own image. When the Rights of God are respected; the well-being of man is secured.

The Bible is such a revelation of God, as is befitting God; and such a revelation of man, as answers to man. Men are represented in the Bible, as being what they are; mankind is found to be such as God's Word represents it. When God created the world, the world needed God to sustain it; when God had created man upright, man needed God to sustain him. Independence of God ruined man, separated him from his only strength; and as a vessel without rudder may still float upon the waters, yet her course is shapeless, and she is at the mercy of every contingency of wind or tide, so with man, when his heart no longer responded to God; when God had no longer authority over man's heart, then man failed in his conduct to man. When Cain failed to acknowledge the rights of God, the consequences were fatal to Abel. He slew his brother. Disrespect of man to God, led to the murder of man by his fellow. God had a property in Abel; he was made for His pleasure. Cain not only did violence to fraternal relationship, but he disregarded the right of God upon Abel.

Man is instructed of God to have regard to man. The judgments of God-as, for instance, in the Deluge-fell upon man, because of the violence which was upon the face of the earth. The whole

earth was filled with violence; the Deluge swept away an intolerable generation, whose existence was misery prolonged, and who had turned the earth-which God gave man to dwell in-into a nursery for crime and oppression. After the Deluge, in His regard for man, God committed judgment into the hands of man. Whosoever shed man's blood, by man should his blood be shed; and the reason is given, for in the image of God made He man. We are taught by God, who made us, to have respect to one another. God has a property in man. For His pleasure we are created; and God's title respected, is a safeguard for man's life being respected. Government was committed to the hands of man for protection of man; disregard of God entailed sad consequences. The whole earth was of one speech, and they united together against God. Had they succeeded for a time, so much the worse for man. But God interfered, and confounded their language and strength. for evil. Still, idolatry had crept in; as in Josh. 24:15. The knowledge of the true God was lost, and man disregarded. God reveals Himself to Abraham and the knowledge of God separated Abraham from idolatry around. Was Abraham a worse man for acknowledging Jehovah? Did man suffer the more, now that God was revealed? When Lot was taken captive, how speedily Abram sought his deliverance! When, again, Lot was in Sodom, how, by intercession, Abram succored him. When God was about to destroy Sodom and its inhabitants, how careful was Abraham on their behalf! And when he acknowledged the claim of God on the life of his son his only son Isaac, was Abraham a sufferer? God probed, to the quick, the heart of His servant; and when it was found true to his Maker, God did the more clearly show how the parental instincts which He had bestowed, were by Himself respected. He provided a Lamb for an offering. God would make Himself known to the seed of His servant, and make them His people; it should be proved in the earth which rejected its Creator, that they were foolish in doing so; it should be found truest wisdom to acknowledge and own Him. They went down into Egypt seventy in number, and came forth a mighty people. They were delivered from bondage in a manner worthy of Him who delivered them. The Egyptians had gods of their own, and they held men in bondage. They gloried in the achievements of science, yet their minds were enslaved. They raised mighty monuments to honor the dead, and goaded to exertion by tortures, the living who built them. They had demons of cruelty for gods, and they treated men cruelly. Man's truest liberty is secured, where the claims of God are honored and regarded.

For illustration of this more closely, let us glance at that revelation of God to man in one aspect of the law of the Ten Commandments, as given to Moses. The revelation of His rights contains the declaration of His character. The creature never could have supported the honor due to God his Creator. Revelation from God could alone be the basis of true knowledge of God. Man, as man, might judge of the nature and claims of man; God, as God, only could understand His nature and claims as God.

What passed before man was created, is given to us in the account of Creation, and could only be given to us by One who had being before man. The first chapter of Genesis, of necessity, antedates the existence of man, and is a record given by God, the Holy Ghost, of His works before man was fashioned. Hence, the value of Scripture, the wonderful importance of revelation. God Himself condescending to instruct man in His ways, and give him the history of His creation. We possess, in the first chapter of Genesis, the manifestation of the being of God, who created us; and, in the majesty of His communication, we instinctively recognize our Creator. The heavens and earth are not more harmoniously combined, than is the succinct narration of it; and no wonder,

for the Spirit of God originated both. The fall of man; the wickedness of man before the flood; the daring impiety after it, on the plains of Shinar; the call of Abraham out of an evil, corrupted world, to the knowledge of God who made heaven and earth. The preservation of his posterity in Egypt, and their deliverance out of it by the hand of Moses; their passage through the Red Sea in safety, whilst their enemies were overwhelmed in its waters, were but necessary preliminaries to their meeting with God at Mount Sinai, where He would reveal Himself further, and proclaim His sovereign rights as Creator, as the best safeguard for the well-being of His creatures. The invisible things of Him that created them, manifest, clearly, His eternal power and Godhead. "The God of Glory appeared unto Israel;" from Him Moses received the lively oracles to give unto them. The Laws He gave unto Moses manifest, clearly, His moral perfections. As Creator He cared for the moral well-being of man created. Yet we must remember when and how this revelation of Himself occurs. It is not made to man as standing in his primeval integrity. In other words, not on the ground of Creation. God made man upright! Sin entered: man is separated from God. Now, God reveals Himself to man on the ground of Redemption. Ex. 20:1, "And God spake these words, saying: I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." The creature having lost its relationship by disobedience to his Creator, is taken up on the ground of a redemption. The price of that redemption is found in the grace of God Himself. He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy. Creation-standing, of necessity, was in the perfection of Him that created. Redemption, out of an evil condition, necessarily presumes that such had existed. Absence from God led to ignorance of God. Redemption to God (even of Israel, as a nation) needed instruction; and this instruction is vouchsafed in the revelation of God as placed before us in the law of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, in one aspect of it. For the first table of the law brings before us the sovereign rights of God; and these respected, involve the wellbeing of man. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me:" is the majestic annunciation of His sovereignty. God would share His glory with none other.

"Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, or any likeness that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." God is God, and made all things for His glory. No figure could represent Him; no likeness could be made of Him. What He is in Himself-almighty, omniscient, omnipresent-no creature can adequately portray. In His revealed character is man's confidence. To compare God to any created thing, is to rob ourselves. "I am what I am." The heavens declare God's glory; the firmament showeth His handywork. "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20). Life, breath, and being, are but the expressions of what He is-proofs of what He can do. To set up the creature for God-idols made of stocks and stones-to give to God the properties ascribed to idols-which have their original in a corrupted imagination-and then to bow down to them and worship them-what is this but to make the creature the foundation of Deity, instead of the Deity the foundation of the creature! What unheard-of miseries have sprung from this source! What are the annals of pagan idolatry, but annals of evil incarnate? Man investing his idol with the evil character of his own heart in personal embodiment, and then shaping his ways in the light of this evil. What fearful results! the degradation of Deity, the degradation of man.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh His name in vain." Again, we have God jealous of His glory. The heart that owned Him,

must learn to honor Him. As Omnipresent, nothing escapes His eye; as Omniscient, He understandeth our thoughts afar off. When we speak of Him He hears; when we act for Him, He sees. Reverence for His majesty, forbids alike the frivolous use of His name, or the blasphemous taking of His name in vain. The glory of the Creator demands the reverence of His creature.

" Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God!" Yes, the Sabbath of God; and, because His, the rest-day of man. Not the working-man's day, but the day of God for the working-man, and the cattle too. Could anything more illustrate the fact, that in the sovereign rights of God respected- the well-being of man is secured.

Now follow rules for man's government. Obedience to parents: "Honor thy father and thy mother." Regard to human life: "Thou shalt not kill." Prohibition on the one hand, protection on the other. Man may not kill; man may not be killed. Regard to the holiest of ties: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Regard to property: "Thou shalt not steal." Regard to character: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." "A good name, is better than precious ointment." And, lastly: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

How manifestly we have to do with the living God who made us, in. this declaration of the glory due to Himself, and the regard for His creature man! How well our nature is apprehended, our sympathies and affections, bow thoroughly understood; and in these statutes, how paternally cared for! God, the Creator, understands the wants and feelings of man, His creature. - The Lord Jesus illustrates His Father's care when teaching His disciples: " Consider the ravens, for they neither -sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them." How much more are ye better than the sparrows!"-" Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall under-stand the loving-kindness of the Lord."-Psa. 107:43.

1.-the Volume of the Book. Exodus 21:5,6; and Psalm 40:6-8

"If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his Master shall bring him unto the Judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post; and his Master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever" (Ex. 21:5,6). In this passage, we see, in the case of the Hebrew servant whose ear was bored through with an awl in token of his engagement to serve his Master forever, the principle of willing loving obedience; and this is commonly, and rightly, I believe, thought to explain the following word of Christ in. Psa. 40, " Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened, or digged (see margin): burnt offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart."-The truth is, our blessed Lord him-self was tile antitype of the Hebrew servant of Ex. 21, devoted as he was to God's service, the one who offered Himself as a victim, to die on the cross for the redemption of sinners. This, then, being the case, may we not gather from hence, what "volume" it is of which the Psalmist here speaks? To my mind it is a simpler idea than is commonly thought. " THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK," wherein these things are written of Christ believe to be, not the volume of the eternal counsels of God, as some have supposed, but THE BOOK OF THE LAW, bearing reference, as it typically does in this Ex. 21, to our blessed Lord, as the only Hebrew servant who ever did, or ever could, without imperfection or failure, do the will of his Master, within whose heart the law of God was, whose love to His God and Father was such, as to lead Him to give Himself up, without any reserve, to serve Him forever.

2.-Wrath and Doubting

" I will therefore that men (or the men) pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (1 Tim. 2:8). The Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, begins the Epistle whence this passage is quoted, with grace. Contending with those who were upholding the law, he speaks of himself, blasphemer and persecutes as he had been, as a signal example of this-of the Grace of God to poor sinners, without any distinction as to nation or name (1 Tim. 1:3-18). Next, he exhorts, because of this outflow of love to the world, that supplications, prayers, and intercessions, giving of thanks, should henceforth be made for all, and no longer confined, as in the times of the law, to the Holy Land and the Temple. "Everywhere" prayer was to be made (1 Tim. 2:1-8). Thus we have the clue to the closing words of the above passage, "without wrath and doubting; here the Apostle evidently glances at two distinct states of mind, which, in the case of disciples born under the law, and still cleaving thereto, would, in a measure, hinder their sympathy with such a precept as this; "WITHOUT WRATH"-here he hints at the natural opposition of the Jewish mind to the thought of God, showing grace to the Gentiles, as seen in 1 Thess. 2:16, " Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved." "AND DOUBTING"-Observe how in Acts 10, we have an example of this, I mean of one born a Jew, even Peter, not exactly opposing, but doubting, in the case of Cornelius, the goodness of God in converting the Gentiles, and then, mark, on the other hand, how the Lord meets, and sets aside, his misgivings, on the occasion of Cornelius sending for him to teach him the truth, " The Spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing." (Acts 10.19,20).

3.- the Paschal Evening Anticipated

The Passover, according to the Levitical law, was kept by the Jews on the fourteenth day of the first month, at even. It is evident, however, that Christ, in the especial year that he suffered, anticipated the day of this feast; that He and His disciples kept it together the evening before, at the close of the thirteenth day. If it be asked, How He came to do this, and whether, in thus altering the time, He was not breaking the law, which even He, as a Son of Abraham, was bound to obey; we answer, that He was also the Jehovah of Israel, and therefore that He had full title to set aside the law as He pleased. In this case, however, while He seemed to be transgressing, He was in reality keeping, it, that is anti-typically doing so, inasmuch as He Himself was the true Paschal Lamb, so that by this arrangement on His part as to the feast, He was offered up on the fourteenth day, the day appointed by Moses. Thus the type and the antitype met, so that, while the nation, lost and degraded, as they were, were merely observing a powerless ordinance, the faithful among them (though not as yet realizing it themselves, it is true), were spiritually feeding on Him who had already died for their sins, and who was at that solemn moment of darkness in Israel, lying dead in the sepulcher.

And now, in proof that the day was thus changed, I cite the following passage. " Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas, unto the hall of judgment; and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28). Then again we read, "And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour, and He saith unto the Jews, Behold your King" (John 19:14). Now, here the passover is spoken of as not eaten as yet by the Jews, but as that for which they were making preparation, whereas, as we know, Christ had eaten it already, even before his betrayal. This then explains the following passage, " Now before the feast of the Passover, 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. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; 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 girded himself, etc." (John 13:1-4). Here, observe, that it was after the Paschal supper eaten by Himself and the twelve, but at the same time before the feast kept by the Jews, that He rose from the table in order to serve His disciples. Thus we see how a comparison between the three above passages, namely, John 13:1-4; 18:28; 19:14; clearly establishes the fact, that Christ acted in this case in the sovereignty of His own power, in thus changing the day with a view to the fulfillment of the eternal counsels of God as to the time of His death.

4.-the Greater Sin

" Then saith Pilate, unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin" (John 19:10,11). "The greater sin," here referred to, of which Israel was guilty, in delivering Jesus to Pilate, was that of making use of the power of the Gentiles, in carrying out their designs against the Lord's life. Had they, as they ought to have done, received him as their Messiah, their King, then Caesar, and Pilate, his representative in Judea, would have been deprived of that power which at the time of the Babylonish Captivity, had been given from above to the Gentiles; and Israel, as the people of God, would have recovered their proper place in the earth. But instead of this, they enlisted the power of Caesar against Him. Hence the authority was still left in the hands of the Gentiles, to be used at this critical juncture in fulfilling God's purpose as to the crucifixion of Christ, so that Pilate, however presumptuously, [yet, in a certain sense,] could with truth say to Jesus, " Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee." In all this, we see how this unhappy people were sunk in iniquity. They hated the Just one, they plotted His death, and, more than this, they delivered Him up to the Gentiles, the enemies of God, the oppressors of Israel, those from whose yoke the Lord came to save them. Had it been otherwise, Pilate could have had no power against him; but as it was, that which had been originally given from above to the Gentiles was now to be used on the side of the enemy. In all this, then, we see a fearful aggravation of Israel's guilt, " the greater sin," of which they were guilty-greater than if they had themselves, without the aid of the Gentiles, put him to death. Of this it is that Jesus accuses the nation, or rather, Caiaphas, the High Priest, their adviser and leader in the act of rejecting the Lord, and casting Him into the hands of His murderers.

5.-Love Taking Thought For The Weak.

" Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day" (Matt. 24:20). As to this, passage, observe, that to take flight in the winter would be trying to the body, while to fly on the sabbath day, being a breach of the Levitical law, would bring guilt and distress on the consciences of those whom the Lord had in view in this chapter, namely the Jewish remnant during the great tribulation under the beast (Rev. 13). How considerate, therefore, in Him, how did it show His love, the deep and tender sympathy of His heart, at such a distance of time, to take thought in this twofold way for His suffering people, to counsel them, in such explicit terms, to pray that their persons, and at the same time their consciences, in those days of amazement and terror, might be sheltered from evil! How sweet, how encouraging may this be to us! Let the heart that quails at the prospect of suffering, let the sensitive conscience; take comfort. Here the Lord allows us to pray that that which we feel ourselves ill able to meet, because of weak faith, may be averted. True, we, as members of Christ; and as indwelt by the Spirit of God, have, in reality, power to rise above suffering of every kind. Still, in a passage like this, we see the condescension of love to the weak, the Lord's tender considerate care for the timid tempted. disciple.

Titus

The Epistle to Titus is occupied with the maintenance of order in the Churches of God.

The especial object of those written to Timothy, was the maintenance of sound doctrine; although speaking of other things, with regard to which the apostle gives directions for the conduct of Timothy. This the apostle himself tells us. In the First Epistle to Timothy, we see that Paul had left his beloved son in the faith at Ephesus, in order to watch that no other doctrine was preached there: the Church is the pillar and support of the truth. In the Second Epistle, we find the means by which Christians are to be strengthened in the truth, when the mass have departed from it.

Here, in Titus, the apostle says expressly, that he had left him in Crete, to set in order things that were yet wanting, and to establish elders in every city. Although, more or less, the same dangers presented themselves to the mind of Paul as when writing to Timothy, yet we find that the apostle enters at once upon his subject, with a calmness which shows that his mind was not preoccupied in the same way with those dangers, and that the Spirit could engage him more entirely with the ordinary walk of the Churches; so that this epistle is much more simple in its character. The walk that becomes Christians, with regard to the maintenance of order in their relationships to each other, and the great principles on which this walk is founded, form the subject of the book. The state of the Church comes but little before us. Truths that flow more entirely from the Christian revelation, and that characterize it, have more place in this epistle than in those addressed to Timothy. On the other hand, prophecies concerning the future condition of Christianity, and the development of the decline that had already commenced, are not repeated here. While stating, in a remarkable way, certain truths with respect to Christianity, the tone of the epistle is more calm, more ordinary.

The promise of life is particularly spoken of here, as well as in Timothy. Moreover, this promise distinguishes Christianity and the revelation of God (as the Father) in Christ, from Judaism.

But in this epistle the great boundaries of Christianity are set forth at the outset. The faith of the elect; the truth which is according to godliness; the promise, before the world began, of eternal life; and the manifestation of the word of God through preaching; are the subjects of the introduction. The title of "Savior" is here, as in Timothy, added to the name of God, as well as to that of Christ.

This introduction is not without importance. That which it contains, is presented to Titus by the apostle as characterizing his apostleship, and as the special subject of his ministry. It was not a development of Judaism, but the revelation of a life, and of a promise of life which subsisted (that is, in Christ, the object of the divine counsels) before the world was. Accordingly, faith was found, not in the confession of the Jews, but in the elect, brought by grace to the knowledge of the truth. It was the faith of the elect: this is an important truth, and that which characterizes faith in the world. Others may, indeed, adopt it as a system; but faith is in itself the faith of the elect.

Among the Jews, this was not the case. The public confession of their doctrine, and confidence in the promises of God, belonged to every one who was born an Israelite. Others may pretend to the

Christian faith; but it is the faith of the elect. Its character is such, that human nature neither embraces it nor conceives it, but finds it to be a stumbling-stone. It discloses a relationship with God, which to nature is inconceivable, and at the same time presumptuous and insupportable. To the elect it is the joy of their soul, the light of their understanding, and the sustainment of their heart. It places them in a relationship with God which is all that their heart can desire, but which depends entirely on that which God is; and this the believer desires. It is a personal relationship with God Himself: therefore, it is the faith of God's elect.

This faith of God's elect has an intimate character in relation to God Himself. It rests on Him, it knows the secret of His eternal counsels-that love which made the elect the object of His counsels. But there is another character connected with it; namely, confession before men. There is the revealed truth by which God makes Himself known, and claims the submission of man's mind, and the homage of his heart. This truth places the soul in a true relationship with God. It is truth according to godliness.

The confession of the truth, therefore, is an important character of Christianity, and of the Christian. There is in the heart the faith of the elect, personal faith in God and in the secret of His love; and there is confession of the truth.

Now that which formed the hope of this faith was not earthly prosperity-a numerous posterity, the earthly blessing of a people whom God acknowledged as His own. It was life eternal, promised of God in Christ before the world was; outside the world, and the divine government of the world, and the development of the character of Jehovah in that government.

It was eternal life. It is in connection. with the nature and with the character of God Himself; and having its source in Him, proceeding from Him, it was the thought of His grace, and declared to be such in Christ, before a world existed as the sphere of the development of His government over that which was subject to Him (a very different thing from the communion of a life by which one participates in His nature, and which is its reflection). This is the hope of the Gospel (for we are not speaking of the Church here), the secret treasure of the faith of the elect, of which the revealed word assures us.

" Promised before the world began," is a remarkable and important expression. One is admitted into the thoughts of God before the existence of this changing and mingled scene, which bears witness of the frailty and sin of the creature-of the patience of God, and His ways in grace and in government. Eternal life is connected with the unchangeable nature of God; with His counsels, which are as abiding as His nature; with His promises, in which He cannot deceive us, and to which He cannot be unfaithful. Our portion in life existed before the foundation of the world, not only in the counsels of God, not only in the person of the Son, but in the promises made to the Son, as our portion in Him. It was the subject of those communications from the Father to the Son, of which we were the objects; the Son being their depository. Marvelous knowledge which has been given us of the heavenly communications of which the Son was the object, in order that we might understand the interest which we have in the thoughts of God, of which we were the objects in Christ before all the ages

That which the Word is, becomes also more clear to us through this passage. The Word is the communication, in time, of the eternal thoughts of God Himself in Christ. It finds man under the

power of sin; it shows how he can have part in the result of God's thoughts. But these thoughts themselves are nothing else than the plan, the eternal purpose, of His grace in Christ, to bestow on us everlasting life in Christ—a life which existed, in God, before the world was. The Word is preached, manifested; i.e., the revelation of the thoughts of God in Christ. Now, those thoughts gave us eternal life in Christ; and this was promised before the ages. The elect, believing, know it, and possess the life itself. They have the witness in themselves, but the Word is the public revelation on which &id; is founded, and which has, universal authority over the consciences of men, whether they receive it or not.

It will be observed, that faith here is faith in a personally held known truth; a faith which only the elect can have, who possess the truth as God teaches it. "The faith" is used also for Christianity as a system, in contrast with Judaism. Here it is the secret of God, in

contrast with a law promulgated to an outward people. This promise, which dated from before the revealed ages, and which was sovereign in its application, was especially committed to the apostle Paul, that he might announce it by preaching. To Peter, the Gospel was committed more as the fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers, with the evangelical events that confirmed and developed them by the power of God, manifested in the resurrection of Jesus.

John presents life more in the person of Christ, and then imparted to us; the characteristic fruits of which he sets forth.

We shall find that the apostle has not the same intimacy of confidence in Titus, as in Timothy. He does not open his heart to him in the same way. Titus is a beloved and faithful servant of God, and also the apostle's son in the faith; but Paul does not open his heart to him in the same manner, does not communicate to him his anxieties, his complainings—does not pour out his soul to him—as he did to Timothy. To tell of all one sees that is heart-breaking and disquieting in the work one is engaged in—that is the proof of confidence. One has confidence with regard to the work, and one speaks of it with regard to oneself, with regard to all; and there is no restraint, no measuring how far one ought to speak of oneself, of what one feels, of all things. This the apostle does with Timothy, and the Holy Ghost has been pleased to portray it for us. In writing to Timothy, the doctrine, above all, occupied the apostle's mind: by its means the enemy wrought and endeavored to ruin the Church; bishops only come into his mind as an accessory thing. Here they have a primary place. Paul had left Titus in Crete, to set in order the things that were yet wanting, and to ordain elders in every city, as he had already commanded him. It is not here a question of the desire any one might have to become a bishop, nor (in that view) of describing the character suitable to this charge; but of appointing them: and for this task, Titus was furnished with authority on the apostle's part., The necessary qualifications are made known to him, in order that he might be able to decide according to apostolic wisdom. So that on the one hand he was invested by the apostle with authority to appoint them, and on the other hand instructed by him with respect to the requisite qualifications. Apostolic authority and wisdom concurred to render him competent to perform this grave and important work.

We see, also, that this apostolic delegate was authorized to set in order that which was necessary to the welfare of the assemblies in Crete. Already founded, they yet needed directions with regard to many details of their walk; and apostolic care was requisite to give them these, as well as for the establishment of functionaries in the assemblies. This task the apostle had committed to the

approved fidelity of Titus, furnished with his own authority by word of mouth, and here in writing; so that to reject Titus, was to reject the apostle, and, consequently, the Lord who had sent him. Authority in the assembly of God, is a serious thing-a thing that proceeds from God Himself; it can be exercised as influence, by the gift of God; by a functionary, when God establishes them by instruments whom He has chosen and sent for this purpose.

It is not necessary here, to enter upon the detail of qualifications that were needed to fill the office of bishop suitably. They are, in the main, the same as those mentioned in the epistle to Timothy. They are qualities, not gifts. Qualities - outward, moral, and circumstantial - that proved the fitness of the individual, for the charge of watching over others. It may, perhaps, occasion surprise, that the absence of gross misconduct should have a place here; but the assemblies were more simple than people think, and the persons of whom they were composed, had but recently come out from the most deplorable habits; and, therefore, a previous conduct that commanded the respect of others was necessary to give weight to the exercise of the office of superintendence. It was also needful, that he who was invested with this charge, should be able to convince gainsayers. For they would have to do with such, especially among the Jews, who were always, and everywhere active in opposition to the truth, and subtle in perverting the mind.

The character of the Cretians occasioned other difficulties, and required the exercise of peremptory authority. Judaism mingled itself with the effect of this national character; it was needful to be firm, and to act with authority, that they might continue sound in the faith.

Moreover, he had still to speak concerning ordinances and traditions, those evil plagues in the Church of God, which provoke Him to jealousy, and which, by exalting man, are opposed to His grace. One thing was not pure, another was forbidden by an ordinance. God claims the heart. To the pure, all things are pure; for him whose heart is defiled, it needs not to go out of himself, to find that which is impure, but convenient, in order to be able to forget what is within. The mind and conscience are already corrupt. They talk of knowing God, but in their works, they deny Him, being unprofitable and reprobate as regards every work really good.

Titus, who was not only to appoint others for the purpose, but, being there clothed with authority, was himself to watch over the order and moral walk of the Christians, was charged (as is the case throughout these three Epistles) to see that every one, according to his position, walked in agreement with moral and relative propriety. An important thing, and which shelters from the attacks of Satan, and from confusion in the Church. True liberty reigns in the Church; moral order secures this; and the enemy finds no better occasion to dishonor the Lord, and ruin the testimony, and throw all into disorder, thus giving the world occasion to blaspheme, than the forgetfulness of grace and holy order among Christians. Let us not deceive ourselves-if these proprieties are not maintained (and they are beautiful and precious), then the liberty (and it is beautiful and precious, and unknown to the world, who are ignorant of what grace is), the excellent liberty of the Christian life, gives room for disorder, which dishonors the Lord, and throws moral confusion into everything.

Often, in perceiving that the weakness of man has given occasion to disorder where Christian liberty reigns, instead of seeking the true remedy, they have destroyed the liberty; they banish the power and operation of the Spirit - for where the Spirit is, there is liberty in every sense the joy of the new relationships, in which all are one. But, while severing every bond, for the Lord's sake, when necessary, the Spirit recognizes every relationship which God has formed; even when we

break them - as death does through the exigency of the call of Christ, which is superior to them all. But while we are in them (outside the call of Christ), we are to act suitably to the relationship. Age and youth, husband and wife, child and parent, slave and master, all have their own proprieties to maintain towards others, a behavior in accordance with the position in which we stand.

"Sound doctrine" takes account of all this; and, in its warnings and exhortations, maintains all these proprieties. This is the instruction which the apostle here gives to Titus, with regard to aged men, aged women, young women, relatively to their husbands, their children, and their whole life, which should be domestic and modest; young men, to whom Titus was to be always a pattern; slaves, with their masters; and then, the duties of all towards magistrates, and, indeed, towards all men. But before taking up this last point, he establishes the great principles, which are the foundation of the conduct of saints among themselves in this world. Their conduct towards magistrates and the world, has a different motive.

The conduct of Christians, as such, in the Church, has, for its basis and motive, the special doctrines of Christianity. We find these doctrines and motives in vers. 11-15, of chap. 2, which speaks of that conduct.

The particular motive for the character of their walk, with regard to the world, we find in the 3rd and following verses of chap. 3.

Chapter 2 vers. 11-15, contains a remarkable summary of Christianity, not exactly of its dogmas, but as a practical reality for men. Grace has appeared. It has appeared, not limited to a particular people, but to all men; not charged with temporal promises and blessings, but bringing salvation. It comes from God to men, with salvation. It does not expect righteousness from men, it brings salvation to those that need it. Precious and simple truth, which makes us know God; which puts us in our place; but, according to the grace, which has overleaped every barrier, in order to address itself, in the sovereign goodness of God, to every man on the earth.

Having brought this salvation, it instructs us perfectly With regard to our walk in this world; and that in relation to ourselves, and to other men, and to God. Renouncing all ungodliness, and all lusts that find their gratification in this world; we are to bridle the will of the flesh in every respect, and to live soberly; we are to acknowledge the claims of others, and to live righteously; we are to own the rights of God over our hearts, and to exercise godliness.

But our future also is enlightened by grace. It teaches us to wait for the blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Grace has appeared. It teaches us how to walk here below, and to expect the appearing of the glory in the person of Jesus Christ Himself. And our hope is well founded. Christ is justly precious to us. We can have full confidence of heart in thinking of His appearing in glory, as well as the most powerful motive, for a life devoted to His glory. He gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify for Himself, a people who should belong to Him in His own right, and be zealous - according to His will and His nature - of good works.

This is what Christianity is. It has provided for all the past, the present, and the future, according to God. It delivers us from this world, making of us a people set apart for Christ Himself, according to the love in which

He gave Himself for us. It is purification - but a purification which consecrates us to Christ. We belong to Him, as His peculiar portion, His possession in the world; animated with the love that is in Him, in order to do good to others, and bear testimony to His grace. This is a precious testimony to that which Christianity is, in its practical reality, as the work of the grace of God.

With respect to the conduct of Christians towards the world, grace has banished violence, and the spirit of rebellion and resistance, which agitates the heart of those who believe not, and which has its source in the self-will, that strives to maintain its own rights relatively to others.

The Christian has his portion, his inheritance, else- where; he is tranquil and submissive here, and ready to do good. Even when others are violent and unjust towards him, he bears it, in the remembrance that once it was no otherwise with himself. A difficult lesson-for violence and injustice stir up the heart; but the thought that it is sin, and that we also were formerly its slaves, produces patience and pity. Grace alone has made the difference, and, according to that grace, are we to act towards others.

The apostle gives a grievous summary of the characteristics of man after the flesh, - that which we once were. Sin was foolishness, was disobedience; the sinner was deceived, was the slave of lusts, filled with malice and envy, hateful, and hating others. Such is man, characterized by sin. But the kindness of God, of a Savior-God, His good-will and charity towards men (sweet and precious character of God) has appeared. The character that He has assumed, is that of Savior, a name especially given Him in these three Epistles- in order that we should bear its stamp in our walk, that it should pervade our spirit. Our walk in the world, and our conduct towards others, depend on the principles of our relationships with God. That which has made us different from others, is not some merit in ourselves, some personal superiority; we were sometime even as they. It is the tender love and grace of the God of mercy. He has been kind and merciful to us; we have known what it is, and are so to others. It is true, that, in cleansing and renewing us, this mercy has wrought, by a principle and in a sphere of a life, that are entirely new, so that we cannot walk with the world as we did before; but we act towards others who are still in the mire of this world, as God has acted towards us, to bring us out of it, that we might enjoy those things, which, according to the same principle of grace, we desire that others also should enjoy. The sense of what we once were, and that of the way in which God has acted towards us, combine to govern our conduct towards others.

Now, when the kindness of a Savior-God appeared, it was not something vague and uncertain; He has saved us, not by works of righteousness which we had done, but according to His mercy, by washing and renewing us. This is the double character of the work in us, the same two points which we find in John, chap. 3 in the Lord's discourse with Nicodemus; except that here is added that which has now its place, because of the work of Christ, namely, that the Holy Ghost is also shed on us abundantly, to be the strength of that new life, of which He is the source. The man is washed, cleansed. He is washed from his former habits, thoughts, desires, in the practical sense. We wash a thing that exists; the man was morally bad and defiled in his inward and outward life. God has saved us, by purifying us. He could not do it otherwise to be in relationship with Himself, there must be practical purity.

But this purification was thorough. It was not the outside of the vessel. It was purification by means of regeneration; the communication of a new life, which is the source of new thoughts, in

connection with God's new creation, and capable of enjoying His presence and the light of His countenance.

But there was a power which acted in this new life and accompanied it. It was not merely a subjective change, as they say. There was an active divine agent who imparted something new, of which He was Himself the source-the Holy Ghost Himself. It is God acting in the creature; for it is by the Spirit that God always acts immediately on the creature; and it is in the character of the Holy Ghost that He acts in this work of renewal. It is a new source of thoughts in relationship with God; not only a vital capacity, but an energy which produces that which is new in us.

It has been a question, When does this renewal take place? Is it at the commencement, or is it after the regeneration of which the apostle speaks? I think that the apostle speaks of it according to the character of the work; and adds, " shed on us" (that which characterizes the grace of this present period), to show that it is an act of the Holy Ghost which continues, in order to maintain by His power the enjoyment of the relationship into which He has brought us. The man is cleansed in connection with the new order of things; but the Holy Ghost is a source of an entirely new life, entirely new thoughts; not only of a new moral being, but of the communication of all that in which this new being develops itself. We cannot separate the nature from the objects with regard to which the nature develops itself, and which form the sphere of its existence and characterize it.

It is the Holy Ghost who gives the thoughts, who creates and forms the whole moral being of the new man. The thought and that which thinks, cannot be separated, morally, when the heart is occupied with it. The Holy Ghost is the source of all in the saved man: he is saved, because this is the case with him.

The Holy Ghost does not only give a new nature, He gives it us in connection with an entirely new order of things (" a new creation"), and fills us, as to our thoughts, with the things that are in this new creation. This is the reason, that, although we are placed in it once for all, this work-as to the operation of the Holy Ghost -continues; because He ever communicates to us more -and more of the things of this new world into which He has brought us. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us; and all that the Father has, is Christ's. I think that the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" embraces all this; because he says, "which He has shed on us abundantly." So that it is not only that we are born of Him, but that He works in us, communicating to us all that is ours in Christ.

The Holy Ghost is shed on us abundantly, by means of Jesus Christ our Savior, in order that, having been justified by the grace of this Savior, we should be heirs according to the hope of eternal life. I think that the antecedent of " in order that," is " the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost"; and that the sentence, " which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior," is an accessory parenthesis introduced to show us that we have the fullness of the enjoyment of these things by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Thus He has saved us, by this renewing, to be heirs according to the hope of eternal life. It is nothing out-ward, earthly, or corporeal. Grace has given us eternal life: in order to this we have been justified by the grace of Christ Thus there is energy, power, hope, through the rich gift of the Holy Ghost. In order that we might participate in it, we have been justified by His grace, and our inheritance is in the incorruptible joy of eternal life.

God has saved us-not by works, nor by means of anything that we are, but by His mercy. But, then, He has acted towards us according to the riches of His own grace, according to the thoughts of His own heart.

With these things the apostle desires that Titus should 'be occupied; with that which brings us with thanks-giving into practical connection with God Himself; and makes us feel what our portion is, our eternal portion, before Him. This acts upon the conscience, fills us with love and good works, makes us respect all the relation-ships of which God Himself is the center. We are in relationship with God according to His rights; we are before God, who causes everything that He has Himself established, to be respected by the conscience.

Idle questions and disputes on the law, Titus was to avoid, together with everything that would destroy the simplicity of our relationship with God, according to the immediate revelation of Himself and of His will in Jesus Christ. It is still the Gnostic Judaism setting itself up against the simplicity of the Gospel. It is the law and human righteousness, and that which, by means of inter-mediate beings, destroys the simplicity and the immediate character of our relationship with the God of grace.

When a man tried to set up his own opinions, and by that means to form parties in the Church, after having admonished him once and a second time, he was to be rejected; his faith was subverted. He sins, he is judged of himself. He is not satisfied with the Church of God, with the truth of God. He wants to make a truth of his own. Why is he a Christian, if Christianity, as God has given it, does not suffice him? By making a party for his own opinions, he condemns himself.

We have, at the end of the epistle, a little glimpse of the Christian activity which the love of God produces, the pains taken that the flock should enjoy all the help with which God supplies the Church. Paul wished that Titus should come to him; but the Cretians needed his services; and the apostle makes the arrival of Artemas or Tychicus (the latter well known by the services he had rendered to Paul), the condition of the departure of Titus from the field in which he was laboring. We find, too, that Zenas, a lawyer, and Apollos, who had also displayed his active zeal at Ephesus and Corinth, were disposed to occupy themselves in Crete with the work of the Lord.

Observe, also, that we have the two kinds of laborers; those who were in personal connection with the apostle as fellow-laborers who accompanied him, and whom He sent elsewhere to continue the work he had begun, when he could no longer carry it on himself-and those who labored freely and independently of Him. But there was no jealousy of this double activity. He did not neglect the flocks that were dear to him. He was glad that any who were sound in the faith, should water the plants which he himself had planted. He encourages Titus to spew them all affection, and to provide whatever they needed in their journey. This thought suggests to him the counsel that follows; namely, that it would be well for Christians to learn how to do useful works, in order to supply the wants of others as well as their own.

The apostle ends his epistle with the salutations, that Christian love always produces; but, as we saw at the beginning, there is not here the same expansion of heart that we find in Paul's communications to Timothy. Grace is the same everywhere; but there are special affections and relationships in the Church of God.

The Work of Grace for and in Man

"Then were there two thieves crucified with Him one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the king of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth" (Matt. 27:38-44).

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 39-43).

The Savior, the Son of Man, was dying: the just One in place of the many unjust; bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. This was His great work for us. But of the two malefactors, between whom He was crucified, both of whom had reviled Him - one became converted, and showed a work of grace wrought in him.

The work of grace for us, and the work of grace in us, are not one and the same thing, any more than the death of Christ for the thief, and the change inside the thief (by the means of which he ceased to be a blasphemer and owned Jesus), were one and the selfsame thing. The former is outside of us, and was in and by CHRIST; the second is in ourselves, though wrought there by grace.

I desire to present a few thoughts which are connected with this most important subject.

And first: what is it which hinders God and a sinner meeting and being together. True: the sinner's will is opposed to God; his heart's affections, too, are alienated from God; and, doubtless, if he, as a sinner, were in the light of God's presence, he would find, soon enough, that the light of God's presence discovers all the sin of the creature. But the difficulty was not in the creature, however sunk, alienated, and deluded he may be, and however unsuited for such a one the holiness and majesty of God's presence may be. There was another question, one of far higher and deeper import, viz., How could God, in His holiness and righteousness, meet a sinner who has, by sin, done dishonor to God? Sin is an insult to God, -to God in His majesty and being, --and the soul that gets into light knows this to be so.

So far as God is concerned, the work of grace in us is never separated from the work of grace for us. From the day of the fall and of man's exclusion from Eden, God wrought in man, but always upon the ground of the work which He 'meant to do for man. And in working thus in man he has

constantly presented some object to the mind, in which the work for man was shadowed forth. The sacrifice offered by Abel; the victims of the patriarchal worship; the sacrifices of the sanctuary, etc., all pointed onward to the work which Christ was to do for man, work by which alone God could be just while justifying a sinner, work which alone can ever satisfy the conscience of a sinner in the presence of 'God about sin. But the work in man preceded the work for man in all these cases. At Calvary, the Son of Man gave Himself a ransom for us. From that day onward, the work of grace for man has had nothing added to it, nothing new from the time that by one sacrifice He perfected forever them that are sanctified. But though the work for man is finished, yet is the work of grace in man quite as needful now as ever. That it is wrought in man by the Holy Ghost, through faith in the work accomplished for man, is true; but it must be wrought in man or man is lost.

The peculiarity of the conversion of the thief upon the cross is, that it is a case in which grace was working in a man to open his heart to Christ, at the very moment that Christ was doing for man that work without which no way was opened for God to bless, nor open for man to come for blessing.

On this account the distinctness of the two things is the more easily seen, and this may help some to see how they should not confound them together, and how impossible it would be for the one to be exchanged so as to be made to take the place of the other.

Justice had brought the two thieves, for their misdeeds, to the violent death of the cross. There, they were surrounded by a mass, who (cared not for them, but who) were gathered to the spot to revile and blaspheme the dying Savior.

The thieves heard the revilings, and adopted them, for they cast the same in his teeth. But an entire change came over one of them. Light broke in upon his soul, and in its case it was the light of life-eternal life.

God had taken His rightful place in the man's soul. The effect is immediate; and, remark-he rebukes his fellow-malefactor: " Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we, indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." When the candle of the Lord searches a man, it is sure to discover sin in him to himself. It must be so; for righteousness and holiness are inseparable from the light of God; and man is unholy. The light detects and shows the unholiness. Yet is there in this experience of the thief also another feeling expressed. He knew sin to be inseparable from himself-he knew it, and yet he sought to put it down with an unhesitating mind. He rebukes his fellow-malefactor for doing the very thing which himself had done just before, and the which he had but just ceased to do.

This was, as man would count it, practically inconsistent. Quite so. Conscience, when it gets into God's presence, and has the light of life, acts in a way which is very inconsistent with human thoughts of consistency and propriety. He was inconsistent as a man, but consistent as a saint. 'Tis strange, that first-dread and hatred of sin which leads us to put our mouths in the dust and to condemn sin in ourselves-part of our being as it may have been. But it is a blessed instinct of the new life, of life divine in a soul: that sin must be condemned, for it is hateful. This true taste of what sin is, is a very different thing from the dread of the consequences of sins. Dread of the consequences of sin and sins may alarm and terrify the soul, and drive it to seek a Savior. But the light of life shining, in quickening power, into a soul, separates between it and the sin itself: gives it

an altogether new estimate of what sin is. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? and we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." How full - both in the general statement and in the particular detail is his confession of sin: what an abandoning and disclaimer of all human righteousness. "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." And it was light, not vague and ill-defined, that shone in upon his soul, but clear and distinct; for it was the light of a contrast between the Christ of God and himself: "But this man hath done nothing amiss." Himself and the Christ were in his conscience, contrasted the one with the other. His language was that of faith; and, little as he knew it, he was, in the hour of the Lord's being forsaken by all, giving the description of Him which will be owned of God to be true of Christ alone. "This man hath done nothing amiss" will he loudly proclaimed as true of Christ alone in the glory; and all of us that will be there will know and own the perfectly graphic, distinctive description, as being His alone. Of Adam's race, not one, from Eden down to the placing of the great white throne not one, save the seed of the woman, of whom it could' be said in truth, "This man hath done nothing amiss."

God; sin; himself; the man that is Jehovah's fellow-these were not only new experiences of his soul, but they marked that he had a new life-and had got into a world of light, where things are seen just as they are. But his faith went further, and he sees not only the personal peculiarity of the sinless one at his side, but, also, that there was in him a heart on which, spite of all the contrast between the Christ and himself, he might cast his every care. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The glories, and the kingdom, and the majesty of the Lord brake in upon his soul-sinner as he was-and yet he saw that in that One there was the only rest, the alone hope for him. This, also, is an instinct of the new nature. It will see and own the contrasts between the Christ and what we are, but it will cleave to him in spite of our misery and His gloriousness, -it will cleave to Him as being all our salvation.

If we are to be vessels filled with grace, we may be assured that there has been a somewhat similar work wrought in us -and we shall be able, to record it as a -work of the Lord in us-a work which puts us just where the Lord's -work in the thief put him, viz., into the position of expecting from the Lord, into a position in which the Lord could show some of the exceeding riches of His grace as He did in His answer to the thief. The thief asked to be remembered in the kingdom: Jesus answered, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Christ had His rightful place in this poor sinner's soul, and no mistake about it, and this place was His from the time that the rocky heart was riven open. But what the thief experienced in his own soul-the blessed work which God was doing in the soul of the poor thief, while it fitted him to receive the grace, could not appear in heaven in place of the blood of the Lamb of God: there it could neither justify God in justifying a thief, nor discover to the thief that which, in the light, is his justification before God. Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Christ was then and there shedding His blood, giving His life, the just one in place of the unjust. And whether that poor thief, or any other sinner, were ever saved or not-He, risen from the dead, and gone into heaven, the way is plainly set forth, in which God declares that he is free to bless the vilest of the vile;-the way, too, in which the vilest of the vile that comes by it finds a way of peaceful access to God. If no one upon earth cared for that new and living way, yet it is a new and living way, and it is open: open for God the Holy Ghost to come down by, and open for man to draw nigh to God, even into the holiest of all in the heavens. The work of grace in us cannot be substituted for, cannot be

put in the place of, this the work of grace for us; the work of grace in me cannot vindicate God's holiness so as to justify Him in moving in favor of me, a sinner. And, clearly, so far as it is a work of grace wrought in me by God, God has moved in my favor to work it ere it ever was wrought. And, moreover, it contains in it, for just the self-same reason, no answer to 'my conscience if it is in the presence of God -nothing that can make for me a perfect conscience.

God has a right to act without man's leave, and in spite of man. None can say unto Him, "What doest thou?" But then He has a character of His own, which He will not deny. And if He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, He does so in a way which thoroughly vindicates His holiness and His justice, in a way which elevates conscience in man, while it gives to it perfect liberty and boldness of approach unto God in the light.

People may argue against justification by faith alone; but they may depend upon it, that if they ever find themselves in the same light of life in which the poor thief found himself, they will find that they themselves appear very miserable, and that there is an attractive beauty about the Christ, who is all the salvation of the soul.

Many may turn faith into a work for themselves to work; but they will find that the Spirit convicts of unbelief; and that all their rest is in the Lord Himself, and in the work He has wrought for poor sinners.

From the fall until Christ died, God renewed souls, and this was at once His instrument of doing it; and the reception of it was the only warrant before Him; the reception of the testimony He might be pleased to give about the seed of the woman that was to come. All His actions supposed that work to be sure and certain. From the day of Pentecost the testimony of God has been about that work itself, and how heaven was opened thereby for the Holy Ghost to come down, and for man to draw near by faith.

Where the testimony of God is received, as, for instance, about Christ as a new and living way (see Heb. 10), the soul that receives it finds its assurance to be in the work itself so presented to it; not in its own feelings, thoughts or experiences about it, but in the work ITSELF. For so has God been pleased to settle it. The light shining in brings with it its own testimony. It places me in the sight of God upon His throne in heaven, where He has placed Christ, who bare sin in His own body on the tree, that He might become the new and living way of blessing from God to man, and of approach by man to God.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as the God who has provided Himself a lamb, that His mercy and His compassion might be evident before all-heaven opened upon them.

That the heart of man is so wicked and so deluded, that it cannot, will not, believe such things of God is true; and in this is seen the awfulness of man's condition. It must meet God, and it hates Him, and loves to nourish hard thoughts of Him. But when the light of life does break in, it is its own evidence. Its entrance may not be understood at first; but the light will be found to be evidence of the subject whence it comes, and will be found to be the light of life.

Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net