

PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 13, 1862

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A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 13, 1862, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

21 Chapters

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Present Testimony Volume 13, 1862

Remarks on 1 Corinthians 3:12-13 and Philippians 3:20-21

Ah how can we the glory tell,
Or say how soon the Lord may come:
Enough for us to know full well
That soon Himself shall call us home.
There, to His glorious likeness wrought,
We shall partake His majesty.
If there be rapture in the thought
What will the glad fulfillment be? -
As through a glass, but faintly now
Our feeble faith discerns the sight; ,
But when before the throne we bow
The dimness will be lost in light.
Then shall we know as we are known,
And see our Savior face to face,
Amid the glories of the throne
That shine through all the heavenly space.
The sorrows of these days of ours,'
And all the gloom that now bespreads,
Will but enhance the grace that pours
Such oil of gladness on our heads.
Faith then will see her trust fulfill'd,
And hope's desires be far surpass'd,
But Love Divine shall ne'er be still'd
Long as eternity shall last., ,
A WORD OF WORSHIP.
Thou art the Everlasting Word,

The Father's only Son,
God manifestly seen and heard,
And Heaven's beloved One;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.
In Thee most perfectly express'd,
The Father's glories shine,
Of the full Deity possess'd,
Eternally Divine!
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.
True image of the Infinite,
Whose essence is conceal'd
Brightness of untreated light,
The heart of God reveal'd;
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.
But the high myst'ries of Thy Name,
An angel's grasp transcend,
The Father only-glorious claim!
The Son can comprehend:
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.
Yet loving Thee, on whom His love
Ineffable doth rest,
Thy members all, in Thee-above,
As one with Thee are blest!
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.

Throughout the universe of bliss,
The center Thou, and Sun,
Th' eternal theme of praise is this,
To Heaven's beloved One:
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That ev'ry knee to Thee should bow.

THE SONG OF FAITH.

" What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."-Psa. 56:3.

God is for me-I fear not, though all against me rise:
When I call on Christ my Savior, the host of evil flies;
My Friend, the Lord Almighty! and He who loves me,
God!
What enemy shall harm me, though coming like a flood!
I know it; I believe it; I say it fearlessly,
That God, the highest, mightiest, forever loveth me;
At all times, in all places, He standeth at my. Side
He rules the battle's fury, the tempest, and the tide.
A Rock that stands forever, is Christ my Righteousness!
And there I stand unfearing, in everlasting bliss;
No earthly thing is needful to this my life from heaven,
And naught of love is worthy, save that which Christ has given.
Christ, all my praise and glory, my light most sweet and fair!-
The ship wherein He saileth is scatheless everywhere.
In Him I dare be joyful, as a hero in the war;
The judgment of the sinner affrighteth me no more.
There is no condemnation, there is no hell for me;
The torment and the fire my eyes shall never see.
For me there is no sentence, for me death has no sting,
Because the Lord who loves me, shall shield me with His wing.

Above my soul's dark waters His Spirit hovers still;
He guards me from all sorrows, from terror and from ill;
In me He works; and blesses-the life-seed He has sown;
From Him I learn the " Abba"-that prayer of faith alone!
And if, in lonely places, a fearful child, I shrink,
He prays the prayers within me I cannot ask or think-
The deep unspoken language, known only to that love,
That fathoms the heart's mystery from the throne of light above.
His Spirit to my spirit sweet words of comfort saith,
How God the weak one strengthens who leans on Him in faith;
How He hath built a city of love and light and song,
Where the eye at last beholdeth what the heart hath loved so long.
And there is mine inheritance, my kingly palace, home!
The leaf may fall and perish, not less the spring will come;
Like wind and rain of winter, our earthly sighs and tears,
Till the golden summer dawneth of the endless year of years.
The world may pass and perish; Thou, God, wilt not remove;
No hatred of all devils can part me from Thy love:
No hungering nor thirsting, no poverty nor care,
No wrath of mighty princes, can reach my shelter there.
No angel, and no heaven, no throne, nor power, nor might,
No love, no tribulation, no danger, fear, nor fight,
No height, no depth, no creature that has been or can be,
Can drive me from Thy bosom-can sever me from Thee!
My heart in joy uleapeth, grief cannot linger there,
She singeth high in glory amidst the sunshine fair;
The sun that shines upon me is Jesus and His love;
The fountain of my singing is high in heaven above.

Observations on the Apocalypse

IN studying the book called "The Revelation,"-I would suggest that particular attention might well be paid to the various positions which in it the Lord Jesus Christ holds. The portion of the contents of the book which stands connected with any one of His positions, may fairly be considered a book, or chapter; with His position as its heading. And directly he. takes (or is presented by the book in) another position, that new position may be looked upon as the heading of another book or chapter. This takes it for granted that He is presented in the book (not only in different offices and in different glories-both of which indeed, as presented in the book, are numerous,-but also) in positions which have a difference the one from the other. Such we shall see to be the case.

To explain what I mean. In chapter i. He is presented as in the position of performing that which, in ecclesiastical language, would be called " making a visitation " to the churches or assemblies, in the province of Asia. This would be the heading, as I judge, to the and to the formal placing-of a people in Israel as holders of the testimony of Jesus,-and of the sifting of the nations by the power of darkness; this and the dealings of the Lamb (though still hiddenly from earth's gaze yet) on Mount Zion with the 144,000 (chap. xv.), and the overthrow of the Harlot and city Babylon, etc., closes with chap. xviii. This would form my " third book." Its heading: the Lord acting for Israel, and showing himself to a remnant, but not openly displayed.

"It may be needful to say a few words concerning the Asia,' which is intended. We may trace two opposite movements going on in the names of countries, analogous to like movements which are continually finding place in other words. Sometimes they grow more and more inclusive, are applied in their later use to far wider tracts of the earth than they were in their earlier. It is thus with the name of Italy.' Designating at one time only the extreme southern point of the central peninsula of Europe, the name crept on and up, till in the time of Augustus it obtained the meaning which it has ever since retained, in- portion containing the detailed addresses to the seven assemblies on earth. The principles of which addresses apply to any upon earth who, at any time, may be partakers of the like faith with them.

Thus, my " first Book" would contain the first three (so called) chapters, and it might be broadly entitled, the Lord's examination of professors of the Christian faith. The main mark of this " first book" is the 'position in which the Lord Jesus Christ is shown in it.

The Lamb upon the throne of the Lord God Almighty would be the second position I should notice; and John, a Christian and a servant, able to be instructed in the opening of the book. Inseparably connected with this position, seems to be the portion which extends on to the close of the ninth chapter. Such is my " second book."

In chapter ten, perhaps, a new position is taken by Him coming down, and that too as an all-glorious angel, to claim the earth, or land, and the sea or nations; and to interpose the name of Him that liveth forever and ever, who created the heaven and the things in it, and the earth and all in it, and the sea and all in it, that there should be no longer delay.

This is preparatory to Jerusalem coming into view (chap. 11.); to the purging of the heavens (chap. 12.);

eluding all within the Alps. 'Holland' is another example in the same kind. Some names, on the other hand, of the widest reach at the beginning, gradually contract their meaning, till in the end they designate no more than a minute fraction of that which they designated at the beginning. Asia' furnishes a good example of this. In the New Testament, as generally in the language of men when the Testament was written, Asia meant not what it now means for us, and had once meant for the Greeks, 'one namely of the three great continents of the old world. (Aeschylus, Prom. 412; Pindar, Olymp. 7. 18; Herodotus, 8. 38), nor yet even that region which geographers about the fourth century of our era began to call "Asia-Minor; " but a strip of the western seaboard containing hardly a third portion of this (cf. 1 Peter 1:1; Acts 2:9;6. 9). Asia vestra,' says Cicero (Pro. Flacc. 27), addressing some Asiatics, constat ex Phrygia Mysia, Caria, Lydia;' its limits being nearly identical with those of the 'kingdom which Attalus the Third bequeathed to the Roman people. Take Asia ' in this sense, and there will be little or no exaggeration in the words of the Ephesian silversmith, that almost throughout all Asia,' Paul had turned away much people from the service of idols (Acts 19:26; cf. 10); words which must seem to exceed even the limits of an angry hyperbole to those not acquainted with this restricted use of the term.")

With chapter 19. all curtain is dropped. The Lord Jesus is not with John in Patmos talking about assemblies on earth.

He is not, as the Lamb on the throne of the Lord God Almighty, opening seals which show his revelation to his servant John of how he would act towards Israel and the nations.

He is not, either, showing himself secretly, but really, to a favored one in heaven, or for a few as upon earth; -but heaven is opened, and He Himself is seen coming forth, as King of kings and Lord of lords, with the armies of Heaven,-this would seem to be his fourth position: His assuming to reign till he bath put down all things under His feet. This is the "fourth book."

The final position is traced out (chap. 21. 1-8), and gives the 'fifth book.'

The person of the Lord is a worthy turning point in the revelation of the subject-matter of such a volume as this. God ever commences with the Son of His love. And each position in which He is shown is connected with a whole chapter, or book of details,-as is natural and to be expected.

The positions I have referred to are five: 1st, Revealing Himself in Patmos to John; 2nd, In the midst of the throne in Heaven; 3rd, Showing Himself yet covertly as connected with things on the earth; 4th, Openly displayed as having taken power to put down evil; 5th, The eternal state.

The revelation of Himself personally in such positions is the first thing to be remarked. Closely connected herewith, though separable from it, are the titles, offices, and glories which' may be connected with each such position. For whether these titles, offices and glories are common to all these positions, or whether each position has a regulating power upon the manifestations in it,-are questions for examination.- And I may remark here, as I pass, that we may examine not only the one thread common to, and running through them all-the personal presence of the Lord as the leading person in the whole-nor again the peculiarities distinctive to each position; but also any correspondence, from whatever circumstances arising, between any two of the parts.

I will give now a few passages from the text connected with the various parts of the subject which have themselves really originated the foregoing remarks:-

1st. The book opens as " The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Now this term " Jesus Christ" contains the distinctive personal name by which John had known Him in the days of His humiliation and it appears here again, the Lord being risen and ascended, and John, a servant and sufferer for His sake in Patmos. The revelation, as a whole, is: " The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ" (ver. 1, 2).

Again, " Grace unto you, and peace, from Jesus Christ," &c. (ver. 5).

Again John wrote as a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ (5. 9) to his fellow sufferers, and was himself at that time in " Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (ver. 9).

One blessed effect of this meeting of John with his Lord, as "Jesus Christ," is found in the burst of praise:

" Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And hath made us a kingdom, priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (ver. 5 and 6).

Yet, remark, that while this is the distinctive personal title of the Lord in the introduction, it is under quite another aspect that his bearing towards the seven churches is given, viz.

" One like unto the (or a) son of man" (ver. 13). And the effect on John here is not an impulsive burst of praise; but a deep sense of his own individual nothingness, " I fell at his feet as dead" (ver. 17); there is sympathy in Him, but responsibility in John, and deep sense of weakness.

" And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the (or a) son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace and many his voice as the sound of man waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the-sun shineth in His strength " (ver. 12).

" And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead" (ver. 17).

Remark, here, that-there is no reference to Him as" the Lamb." Neither in the introduction to the Book, nor in the aspect in which he presents himself to the seven assemblies is he seen as the Lamb. In the former He is Jesus Christ (that is, "Jehovah a-saving, anointed man"); in the latter: like unto a son of man, with the insignia of the "Ancient of days." In connection with the former there was forgiveness of sins and privilege conferred and praise returned (1. 5, 6). " The Lamb" is not seen until chap. 5. on the throne in heaven. The name of Jesus Christ does not occur again in the Apocalypse; nor the name of Jesus until chap. 12. 17, " the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and

have the testimony of Jesus [Christ]." And the next mention of Him as "a son of man" is in chap. 14. 14. "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one set like unto the [or a] son of man."

I will now trace on the references which give the name of "Jesus," " Lord Jesus Christ," etc.

1. " Where also the Lord was crucified" (10. 8).
2. " Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (14. 12).
3. " I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17. 6).
4. " I am fellow-servant of thee, and of thy brethren. that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (19. 10).
5. " Beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God" (20. 4).
6. " I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things" (22. 16).

I add, that we have:

7. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (22. 20).And the expressions-
8. " The grace of the [not our] Lord Jesus Christ, etc." (ver. 21).

And further (to prevent misapprehension) I give the passages in which " the Christ" occurs, viz.:-

1. Chapter 11:15. " The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."
2. Chapter 12:10. " Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of He, is Christ."
3. Chapter 20:4. " They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
4. Ver. 6. " Priests of God and of Christ."

" Jesus" had a life of suffering, a testimony to give, a heart for those that would partake His cup of sorrow, and a mind and will to communicate to such all that He saw they needed to know.

The. Messiah or Christ had a kingdom and priesthood pertaining to Him as such.

To man on earth, a son of man clothed with the very highest glory (chap. 1. 13 & 14. 14) is a-wonder, and may be a terror. In heaven, and in those that have the mind of heaven, the wonder is, not that the Son should have exceeding and eternal divine glory,-but His beauty as being, and that He should be, the Lamb. Man may seek glory in circumstances; and be terrified at meeting, in his search, that which is altogether beyond him to measure, or to stand before. Not so God. His all and His own and His highest glory is presented in the Son of His love, but in Him as the one who, in humiliation, fathomed, and measured, and gave all he right expression-to God's glory;-and to Satan's malice, and to all that mankind had been, or might through grace become.

In tracing down the use of the name " the Lamb," in this book, there is blessedness and sweetness untellable, in finding how it is the very same view of Him which is God's and heaven's chief delight in Him, which is the saints, delight and peculiar treasure, viz, as He is the Lamb; their center and refuge, their glory.

The word rendered "Lamb," throughout the Apocalypse, is **■ρνιον** which is a diminutive, a little lamb-a lambkin, from **■ρνος**, which does not occur either in the septuagint Greek, or in the New Testament.

In the expression "Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:29-36), it is another word which is used (**■μνος**), the same as occurs " Like a lamb dumb before his shearer " (Acts 8:32). and in "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish (1 Peter 1:19).

This word (**■μνος**) occurs four times, as noticed above, in the New Testament;-and about ninety-seven times in the Septuagint, or Greek Old Testament; and as there is no other word used for " lamb," it is the ordinary word used for the lamb when a sacrifice, as in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, &c. In the passage, " I send you forth as lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:3), the word is **■ρην**.

The word **■ρην** occurs in the Septuagint only four times.

Psa. 114:4-6. Little hills like young lambs of sheep.

Jer. 11:19.-I was like a lamb, or an ox.

Jer. 1. 45.-The least of the sheep shall draw them' out.

In none, certainly, of these four passages in the Old Testament, is the idea of sacrifice found. In the New Testament the word is used once (John 21:15). Feed my lambs; but this is the only occurrence besides those in the Apocalypse. And these " lambs" were not sacrifices, but the feeble young of the sheep that needed tender care.

In heaven above, when John was caught up into it, and the question was raised, " Who is worthy to open. the Book (in the right hand of him that sat on the throne), or to loose the seals thereof?" none was found: nor in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, able even to look thereon. Then it was announced that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David was there to do it. Both these titles were wondrous for Him to wear who wore them, and wore them in heaven too: both told forth of condescending grace-but of grace victorious to make good a place and blessing on earth at the right moment. John saw Him then in a character that told of deeper condescension still. Rejected upon earth, He was there in the midst of the throne in heaven as " a lamb as it had been slain." He had been obedient unto death-the death of the Cross; and therefore God had exalted Him-but exalted Him as Jesus to make every knee, of

things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, bow to that name, to the glory of God the Father.

But not only was the Father's delight in Him thus, but in this same act, and in the very form that recorded it, all the effulgence of divine glory beamed, in the Lamb as it had been slain.

Nor only so: for in that presence there was worship and adoration, and the power of these were found to be according to the inward connection of the various parties with that which He the Lamb is. " And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made them unto our God kings and priests, and they shall reign on the earth " (ver. 8-10). This first company could taste for themselves, and give forth a rationale of the worthiness peculiarly known unto them.

Then the angels innumerable take up the theme: they can own the worthiness of the Lamb, but they cannot tell forth the tale in the same full manner. All that they, with loud voice, can proclaim, is: " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (ver. 12). And yet wider still circles the sound of praise: For " every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever " (ver. 13).

The key-note to the mind of heaven, wheresoever that mind be found, in any measure, more or less, is the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain, yet varied is the power to sound forth its excellency.

To proceed: the Lamb is the leader of all in heaven; and all that flows down thence flows down from Him. Thus 'tis He (chap. 6. 1) that opens the seals, all of them. The wrath of the Lamb (ver. 16), as well as the face of Him that sits upon the throne, is the alarmed worldling's terror.

Then again (chap. 7. 9) the gathered remnant stand " before the throne, and before the Lamb." Their song, " Salvation to God, and to the Lamb " (ver. 10). Their robes they had washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb (14). 'Tis the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne that shall " feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters " (ver. 17).

So again the victors over the accuser overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony; and they love not their lives unto the death (7. 11). And the preserved ones had their names written, from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb slain (8. 8).

And 'tis as the Lamb we find Him in chap. 14. Lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and, with Him, a hundred forty and four thousand, having His name, and the name of His Father written on their foreheads (ver. 1): they sung a new song, one peculiar to the 144,000 redeemed from the earth, and are constantly to be in the suite of the Lamb, go where He may; redeemed from among men; first fruits unto God and the Lamb (ver. 4.) Again, there is the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb sung (15. 3). So the kings (17. 14) shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for

He is the Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him "are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Following the destruction of the whore and the city, we have heaven's swell of joy (19. 1), "Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God," etc.; " the marriage of the

Lamb is come (ver. 7); and his wife hath made herself ready," etc. And, then (ver. 9), the guests are noticed: " Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

How unutterably precious to have all one's connection with Him who is God's delight as the Lamb; and to be part of that which is the complement of His glory, the bride.

Chaps. 21. And 22. are, as all know, divided into three parts:-

Chapter 21:1-8., gives the post-millennial state. Chapter 22:9 to 22. 5, the millennial.

Chapter 22:6 to end. The solemn conclusion.

I would notice that, as a matter of fact, the Lamb's name is not mentioned in the post millennial state. God --Father, Son, and Holy Ghost--will then be all in all we know. The holy city, new Jerusalem, is seen coming down out of heaven from God. She is not called the Lamb's bride. The Lamb, as such, is not named, but the city is said to be " prepared as a bride for her husband" (ver. 2), and (ver. 7) heirship and sonship are noticed. " He that overcometh shall inherit THESE things; and I will be God to him, and he shall be son to me."

This is to be noticed.

On the other hand, she is spoken of as the Bride, the Lamb's wife (ver. 9); that is, in the millennial state. The twelve apostles of the Lamb have their names inscribed on the twelve foundations (ver. 14). The Lord God Almighty is the temple of it and the Lamb (ver. 22). The glory of God illumines it, and the Lamb is the candle of it (ver. 23).

The registry is the Lamb's book of life (ver. 27). The throne in it, whence the water of life flows, is the throne of God and the Lamb (22. 1). For the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (ver. 3).

What a contrast, and how blessed a one, too, to the the scene in chap. 5. There the lion of the tribe of Judah,

1-- the Root of David, -seen as a Lamb that had been slain in the midst of the throne, and of the elders, and John needing to be taught what the Lamb was, both to God and to himself, as also to others. Here the church millennial, shown as the vessel, in which, and by which, all the glory of God found in the Lamb, and all His delight, too, over that Lamb, are presented and made Openly manifest and fully enjoyed in heaven above, and yet the light of the glory to illumine the earth.

And mark, here, the character, of our portion and blessing in that day. It is not something given into our hands to possess and enjoy by ourselves, a merely human and earthly portion; but it is heavenly and divine in the highest sense. Heaven purged, the Lord God Almighty can be there: but, if there, He can have nothing there dissociated from the Lamb, nor from her who (the Spirit all permeating) is the Bride, the Lamb's wife..

The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are temple to that city, the new Jerusalem (He shall provide peace) which is the bride the Lamb's wife. Does God then find His delight in the Lamb? So do we. Is God interested in all that pertains to the Lamb? That cannot be without, in worship, through our wondrous 'connection with the Lamb, our being interested in all that pertains to the Lord God Almighty. The. Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light to that nightless habitation Its every

part is seen in light; reflects and gives out the light. And if God be delighted in the Lamb as the displayer of His own love, and life, and light, He must be delighted with that, on, and for, and through which, the light shines, our own selves. And if, in that, day, we are to be conscious of all this, as part of the glory of our connection with the Lamb, what our delight in the Lord God Almighty too! So, too, the throne is the throne of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. Throne, not of power only, to repress evil and regulate good, but throne, whence a life-giving river is to flow; its stream, all streams of life..

But we shall serve Him and bear His name upon our foreheads. Love and loving and inseparable from love-divine and heavenly love.

How feebly, at best, can we speak of these things; and yet they stand in their own eternal excellency to act upon, and fill our souls with, delight.

In conclusion, let no one mistake what I have said about "the Lamb," as though I gave not the full tribute of praise to Him, and Him alone who shed His blood that all my sin might be forgiven; and who has, through faith given to me, enabled me to know myself already pardoned and accepted. But the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, has a value besides that of pardon and acceptance to a sinner; it is to a saint separation, through faith, unto God; his freedom and liberty: it has, too, and that quite apart from atonement, a value in the mind of God (as marked in Phil. 2). Where atonement is not named as the prominent object; obedient unto death, the death of the cross. Now it seems to me, that in this sense, the account of the Lamb in the Revelation is a divine commentary upon Phil. 2:6-8; a commentary far more full of blessed details than that found in Phil. 2:9-11. If I owe pardon and acceptance as a sinner; liberty as a saint; and hope to God through Christ Jesus;-I would not forget that I have therefore, and on that very account, a debt to pay daily to God in the new nature, and that my only power to say "to me to live is Christ" is found in God's revealed estimation of the value of the humiliation of His Son. His Son is my pattern and forerunner, and this I would never forget in such a body of sin and death, and surrounded by such a world as I am. In His humiliation I get the path and standard of my life: it is fellowship with GOD.

And, moreover, it must never be forgotten that all our blessings have come from. God-and that because He is God and not man, therefore there is mercy.- The blood of Christ is forgiveness for sins, but that forgiveness is on God's side only part of the expression of His character as Redeemer. The whole of that character, as I judge, finds its expression in the history of the Lamb that was slain, as presented in Revelation, and in Phil. 2 Now I, for one, do not desire to confound forgiveness, which is a fruit of Divine love, an expression of the value, through faith, of the death of the Lord, with the root of all blessing, viz., the character of God, the only true God, as made manifest by Jesus Christ, whom He sent.

The revelation of the glory of God; the excellency of the Lord; the open door for the gift of the Holy Ghost; the utter condemnation of Satan; the salvation of God's people; the pattern of their walk to glory,-the mind that became them,-all, all were found in that wondrous obedience unto death, the death of the Cross-of Christ Jesus. Yet, when we read Phil. 2,-it is the mind of Christ, and that mind, as displayed in His course alone, which is directly set before us; the leading feature and object in the picture. Just so, I judge, is it in Rev. 5 as to the Lamb as it had been slain. The Lamb, then, as it had been slain, is THE specimen, the only perfect expression, of that in which the Lord God Almighty delights, and heaven too.

The Apocalypse has, as its running title: "Taking forth the precious from the vile." Only, instead of this being presented merely as an exhortation to a servant on earth (Jer. 15:19,20), with the promise so "thou shalt be as my mouth,"-it presents this principle, as carried out by God and the Lamb, in their dealings with what is on the earth. In this book He takes forth him that hath an ear to hear; He takes forth 144,000 of Israel, and some from among the nations; then again he takes out Israel from under the nations, and separates the four nations of Daniel from the mass of nations; and when the blessing to the earth comes, it is a new thing; not an old one mended, but a clean thing altogether, brought forth, where nothing but uncleanness had been before it: a work of Divine power. And I may remark this as being a principle of immense, present, practical value to us in this present moment. God is not restoring churches now, but is calling forth Him that has the ear to hear. The practical difference between attempting to be a restorer of churches, on the one hand; and a cultivator of implicit individual obedience, myself, to the word, on the other, may be easily conceived. Come what may, I must obey God rather than man. This puts self down at zero: subject to the word, I must keep myself unspotted from the world; the perfect strength, of realized weakness and nothingness,, follows. When I am weak then am I strong. On the other hand, the setter to rights of churches soon makes manifest how all his strength and power is vanity. I may be wrong, but it seems to me that " reformations" have always, thus, made shipwreck. The soul of a Luther, a Calvin, etc., was awakened and formed at first by the word bearing upon itself: When they began to act, not on souls, but on circumstances (in churches, kingdoms, etc.,) they failed. May we hold fast that which we have, and walk in the strength of' the realized weakness of absolute dependence upon the living God and the word of His grace.

EDITOR'S NOTE.-Though it does not affect the main point of the foregoing paper, I would remark (on the first new paragraph on page 233) that it overlooks the fact that the word **■ρνν** occurs

M the SEPTUAGINT about twenty-four times.

It is rendered " kid " in Ex. 23:19;34. 26; and Deut. 14:21. " Lamb," in Lev. 3:7; Deut. 32:14; 1 Sam. 7:9; 2 K. 3. 4; 1 Chron. 29:21.

Pro. 27. 26. Isa. 5:17;11. 6; 40. 11; 45. 25. Jer. 51:40. "Fatlings," 2 Sam. 6:13. "Fat cattle," 1 K. 1. 9; 19. 25. "Fed beasts," 1 Sam. 1:11. "Sheep," Gen. 30:32,33,35; Lev. 1:10. " Showers," Mic. 5:7.

The Captives Returned to Jerusalem

Nehemiah 1-4.

IT is after an interval of twelve years from the time of Ezra's action, that Nehemiah appears. He was a captive still in Babylon (or Persia, the same thing, in principle), while Ezra was doing good service to the Lord at Jerusalem. But, connected as he was with the palace of the Persian King, he may not have been free to take part with the movement or revival, in Ezra's day-or, it may be, he was not then quickened by the Spirit, so as to do so.

He represents a fresh revival; and all is in increased weakness. He is not a prince of the house of David, like Zerubbabel, nor a priest of the family of Aaron, like Ezra. He is, as we speak, a layman; cup-bearer to' the king.

There is something, however, in all this, that magnifies the grace that was in him. The burdens of his brethren have power to detach him from the Persian palace, as they had once separated Moses from the Egyptian. No miracle distinguishes these days of returned captives, but there are many witnesses of fine moral energy among them.

Eza had been a scribe, as well as a priest.. He was a meditative, worshipping student of God's word; for he found the springs and the guide of his energy in that word. Nehemiah was not that. He was a practical man, a man in the business of every day life, amid the circumstances and relations which make up human history. But he was of an earnest spirit, like Ezra, and he took what he heard, as Ezra had taken what he read, and dealt with it in the presence of God.

He had heard of the desolations of Jerusalem, and he weeps over them before God; as Ezra had seen the sins of Jerusalem, and wept over them before God. But here, we may ask, how was it that these desolations had not-moved Ezra? He was all this -time at Jerusalem, while Nehemiah was in the Persian palace, and could only hear of them by occasional reports. Was it that the energy had declined in Ezra? and that he himself now needed to be revived, though some years since he had been the instrument for reviving others? Such thing things are, and have been. Peter led his brethren on, in acts 1:12; but he had need to be pulled up, corrected, and led on, him self, in Gal. 2 A younger Paul reanimates his elder brother Peter who had been serving the Lord, for years, while he was blaspheming him. And here, it would seem, a younger Nehemiah, a layman too, has to revive the venerable scribe who had crossed over to Jerusalem to serve God there, years and years before him.

If it were not this, it may spew us, that the Lord has one business for one servant, another for another; one purpose by this revival, another by that. Zerubbabel had looked to the Temple, Ezra to the reformation of the religion; and Nehemiah is now raised up to look to the city-walls, and the civil condition of Jerusalem. It may have been thus, for such things, again I say, are and have been. Of old, there was the Gershonite, the Merarite, and the Kohathite service. And it has been surely thus, in a series of revivals, century after century, in the course of Christendom, since the Reformation, which was a kind of return from Babylon.

I say not, in which of these ways, we are to account for Ezra apparently remaining unmoved, though the ruined walls of the city were before his eyes day after day for years. He is, however, honorable, highly so, in the recollections of the people of God, as Nehemiah is.

Nehemiah was a simple man, of very earnest affections. His book gives us, I may say, the only piece of autobiography, which we get' in Scripture. It is this dear man of God. writing his own history, in the simple style that suits truth-telling. He lets us learn, how he turned to God again and again, in the spirit of a trustful, confiding child, as he went on with his work. His style reminds me of a word which I met, I believe, in some old willier, "let Christ be second to every thought." That is, let the soul quickly turn to the Lord in the midst of occupations, be habitually before Him, not, however, by effort, or watching, but by an easy, happy, natural exercise of soul.

And together with this exercise of his spirit towards God, Nehemiah's heart was alive to his brethren. In deep affection, and in that eloquence that comes fresh from the heart and its suggestions, he calls Jerusalem, " the city of his fathers' sepulchers." And all this presents to us a very attractive person. •We love him, and do not grudge him his virtues, or envy him because of his excellencies. We trace him with affectionate admiration.

The exercise of his spirit ere he got his royal Master's leave to visit Jerusalem, is very beautiful. From the month Chisleu to the month Nisan, that is, from the third to the seventh month, he was mourning before God on account of the city. At length, he comes before the king, and leave is given him, and a time is set him, to take his journey and pay his visit-a captain and horsemen are also appointed to guide and guard him on the road. He had been much alone in all this. Revivals commonly begin with some individual, and when he reaches Jerusalem, he is still, at first, alone. By night he inspects the city walls, acquainting himself with the nature of the work that now lay before him. He proves what he is about to publish. Very right-it is the way of Spirit-led servants. " We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Nor is he a patron, but yokefellow, a fellow-laborer, like Paul, or like Paul's divine Master, who, while he was Lord of the harvest, served in the harvest-field also.

And, indeed, these are always the forms after which the Spirit prepares the servants of Christ They prove what they teach, and they labor in the principle of service and not of patronage. They are not lords of the heritage, but ensamples of the flock; they affect no dominion over the faith, but they are helpers of the joy.

Then, as we go on to chapter iii, and look at his companions in the work, we see much to instruct us, and much that tells us of- our own day and our own circumstances.

All are a working people together-the nobles and the common folk. The service of God's city had put them all on a level. The rich are made low, the poor are exalted, a beautiful sight in its time and place. Then, some are distinguished. Baruch the son of Zabbai works "earnestly," ver. 20, the " daughters" of Shallum work with their father, ver. 12, some of the priests "sanctified" their work in their part of the city-walls, while others of them worked after a common manner, ver. 22, 28. And painful to have to add to all this, the nobles of the Tekoites worked not all, ver. 5.

There have always been such distinctions as these, and there are the same abundantly in this our day. In raising the Tabernacle in the wilderness in fighting the battles of Canaan, in accompanying David in the days of his exile, as here in the building of the wall of Jerusalem, and afterward

among the yokefellows of St. Paul, we see these distinctions. And surely, like the daughters of Shallum, or like the wife of Aquila, females in this our day are doing good work in the Gospel, and in the service of Jerusalem. But we may remember, and it has its profit to do so, every man shall receive his own reward according to his own work (1 Cor. 3); though we have also to remember, that the Lord weighs the quality as well as the quantity of what is rendered to Him (Matt. 20:1-16)

Thus we may surely be instructed in the details of this sweet story. As we pass through chap. 4. we find the builders have become fighters as well as builders. Their work is continued in the face of enemies, and in spite of "cruel mockings," as the 11th of Hebrews speaks. And in this combination of the sword and the trowel, we see the symbols of our own calling. There is that which we have to withstand, and there is that which we have to cultivate. We are to cherish and advance, like builders, what is of the Spirit in us; we are to resist and mortify what is of the flesh. We are builders and fighters.

As to the enemies, they are the same Samaritans as at the first. The Zerubbabel generation of them was represented in Rehum and Shimshai, or in Tatnai and Shethar-boznai; and now, the generation of them in this day of Nehemiah, is represented in Sanballat and Tobiah. They were not heathen men, but a seed of corruption, who might appear to be the circumcision in the eyes of flesh and blood. And by this time, they seem to have become more corrupt, for Edomites, Arabians, Philistines, and Ammonites appear to be joined with them, or to have become one with them.

And still more serious, and more for our personal, immediate warning, we see a company of Jews dwelling near these Samaritans. And they were in the secrets of the Samaritans (ver. 12)-a bad symptom. They were borderers. They may remind us of Lot in Sodom, and of Obadiah in the court of Ahab. Surely they were not Samaritans-they were Jews, and had some love and care for their serving, toiling brethren in Jerusalem. But they dwelt near the Samaritans, and were in their secrets. Again I say, a bad moral symptom. They were, I presume, some of the old stock, left behind in the land, in the day when Judah was taken captive. They had never shared in the revival virtues of the days of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Their scent was in them-they had not been emptied from vessel to vessel, as Jeremiah speaks of Moab (Jer. 48).

Different from such, widely different, was the trumpeter, whom Nehemiah here sets close to his own person-for if these Jews were in the secret of the Samaritans, this trumpeter was in the secret of God. That is what the holders and blowers of trumpets always represent-whether we see them as priests, doing their occasional and varied work in Num. 10; or their annual work on the first day of the seventh month, as in Lev. 23; or as gifted ministers in God's assembly, teaching and exhorting, according to 1 Cor. 12:8,9.

Humbling to some of us to trace these beauties in the

:servants of Christ,, in the Nehemiahs, and in the trumpeters on the walls of the city I

5.,6.

There are combinations in Nehemiah which distinguish themselves very strikingly. In chap. 5., we see him in his private virtues; as in preceding chapters, we have seen him in public energies. He surrenders his personal rights as governor, that he may be simply and fully the servant of God and

His people. This may remind us of St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 9, for there, the apostle will not act upon his rights and privileges as an apostle, as here Nehemiah is doing the same as the Tirshatha, or Governor of Judea, under the Persian throne.

This is beautiful. How it spews the kindred operations of the Spirit of God in the elect, though separated so far from each other as Nehemiah and Paul!

We have, however, a warning, as well as an example, in. this chapter.

The Jews, who had now been long in Jerusalem, were oppressing one another. Nehemiah tells them, that their brethren, still away among the Gentiles, were doing far better than this. They were redeeming one another, while here, in the very heart of the land, their own land, they were selling one another.

This is solemn; and we may listen to this, and be warned. It tells us, that those who had taken a right position, were behaving worse than those who were still in a wrong one. The Jews at Jerusalem were in a better ecclesiastical condition, while their brethren, still in Babylon, were in a purer moral condition.

Is not this a warning? It is another illustration of what we often see ourselves; but it is a solemn and humbling warning.

But that we are to go back to Babylon, leaving Jerusalem; but we are surely to learn, that the mere occupation of a right position will not be a security. We may be beguiled into moral relaxation through satisfaction in our ecclesiastical accuracies. This is a very natural deceit. " The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these," may be the language of a people on the very eve of God's judgment. There may be the tything of mint, and rue, and anise, and withal the forgetting of the weightier matters of righteousness, goodness, and truth.

But this chapter also gives us another of those combinations which shine in the character of Nehemiah. It enables us to say, that while there was beautiful simplicity in him, there was likewise decided independency. His simplicity was such, that, like a child, he turns back and home to God, while treading one path of service after another; and yet, there was that independency and absoluteness about him, that led him to begin always as from himself, in the fear and presence of God. As here, he tells us, that upon hearing of those oppressions of brethren by brethren, he took counsel with himself, ere he acted (ver. 7). And, indeed, all his previous actions bespeak the like independency. He was Christ's freeman, and not the servant of man; simple in God's presence; independent before his fellow-creatures.

These are fine combinations, greatly setting off the character of this dear, honored, man of God.

In chap. 6., we see him again in conflict, but it is in personal, single-handed fight; not, as in chap. 4., marshalling others, putting the sword in one of their hands, and the trowel in the other, but fighting himself, single-handed, and alone, face to face with the wiles of his enemies. He is put through different temptations, in the progress of this chapter. Generally we see him a single-hearted man, whose body, therefore, is " full of light." He detects the enemy, and is safe; But besides this, there are certain special securities, which it is very profitable to consider for a moment.

1. He pleads the importance of the work he was about (ver. 3.)
2. He pleads the dignity of his own person (ver. 11.)

These are fine arguments for any saint of God to use, in the face of the tempter. I think I see the Lord Himself using them, and teaching us' to use them also.

In Mark 3 His mother and His brethren came to Him, and they seem to have a design to withdraw Him from what He was doing, to themselves; just as Nehemiah's enemies are seeking to do with him in this chap.. But the Lord pleads the importance of what He was then about, in the face of this attempt, or in answer to the claims which flesh and blood had upon Him. He was teaching His disciples and the multitude; getting the light and word and truth of God into them. And the fruit of such a work as this He solemnly lets us know was far beyond the value of all connections with Him in the flesh; and the claims of God's word, which He was then ministering, far more weighty than those of nature.

And in like manner, He teaches His servants to know the dignity of their work. He tells them, while at it, " not to salute any man by the way," nor to stop to bid farewell to them that are at home; or to tarry even for the burial of a father (Luke, 9. 10.)

But again. In Luke, 13., the Pharisees try to bring Him into the fear of man, as Shemaiah seeks to do with Nehemiah in this same chapter (ver. 10). But the Lord at once rises into the sense of His dignity, the dignity of His person, and lets the Pharisees know that He was at His own disposal, could walk as long as He pleased, and end His journey when He pleased; that the purposes of Herod were vain, save as He allowed them to take their way. And so, in John 11, when His disciples would have kept Him from going into Judea, where so lately His life had been in danger, He again rises, in like manner, in the sense of the One that He was, in the consciousness of personal dignity, and answers them as from that elevation (see verses 9-11).

And the Holy Ghost, by the apostle, in 1 Cor. 6, would impart courage and strength to the saints, from a like sense of the elevation and honors that belonged to them. " Know ye not," says Paul to the Corinthians, " that we shall judge angels;" and again, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.' " Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost."

There is something very fine in all this. These are weapons of war indeed, weapons of divine, heavenly metal. To gain victories with such, is Christian con--quest indeed--when temptations can be met and withstood by the soul carrying the sense of the importance of the work to which God has set us, and the dignity of the person which God has made us. Would that we could take down and use those weapons, as well as admire them as they thus hang up before us in the armory. of God. It is easy, however, to inspect and justify the fitness of an instrument to do its appointed work, and all the time be feeble and unskillful in using it, and doing such appointed work by it

7.

Here we read, " Now the city was large and great, but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded" (ver. 4.) Having therefore built the walls, Nehemiah takes in hand to people the city. For the walls would be nothing, save as the defense of a peopled place within them.

This purpose, therefore, we find in his heart, at the opening of chap. 7.-and accordingly he acquaints himself with the returned captives, and reads the catalog and the account of them, as they had been in the days of Zerubbabel, which would be a guide to his present object.

8.- 10.

However, ere he pursue this purpose, and take on him to people the city, he turns aside for a while to consider the people themselves. And this gives us his action in chap. 8.- 10., which may be called a parenthetic action-for in chap. 11., he resumes the purpose which he had conceived in chap. 12; that is, the purpose of peopling the city.

This gives a peculiar character and a special interest Nehemiah looks at them personally, looks at their souls, at their moral condition, and would fain quicken Or sanctify them, ere he settles them in their places.

This action begins on the first day of the seventh: month-a distinguished day in the calendar of Israel, the feast of Trumpets, a day of Revival after a long season of interruption when all was barren or dead in the land: And this action, thus begun, is continued in successive stages, down to the close of chap. 10.; thus, as I observed already, giving chap. 8.- 10. a distinct place in the book of Nehemiah, and the character of a parenthesis.

We must, therefore, look at these chapters a little particularly.

This distinguished day, the first day of the seventh month, demanded, according to the ordinance touching it, a holy convocation and a blowing of trumpets-for it was the symbol, as I have said, of a time of Revival after. a long season of death and barrenness (see Lev. 23:22-25). This ordinance was observed here in Neh. There was a convocation of the people. But there was something additional. The Book of the Law was read in the audience of the people, and explained to them. And at this the people wept-properly so, for this is the. business of the application of the law to a sinner, to convict him, and make him cry out, " O wretched man that I am!" But their Teachers, on this occasion, at once restrain their tears, because that day was " holy to the Lord." It was a time of joy, such as the blowing of trumpets, and the new moon then beginning again to walk in the light of the sun, would signify. The people were, therefore, told to let the joy of the Lord be their strength, to be merry themselves and to send portions to others.

All this was beautifully in concert with the day, in the ordinances touching it. The thing that was additional, or unprescribed by Lev. 23, that is, the reading of the law, was by all this made to give a richer, fuller tone to the day itself in its proper, prescribed character. The added thing was in no collision, whatever with the; ordained thing-that which was voluntary was no violation of that which was prescribed.

And here I would say, this is just what we might expect in a day of Revival. At such -a-time, the word of God must be thoroughly honored. It must be the standard. But there will be, necessarily I' would say, such new or added things as the character of the time, under the Spirit of God, would suggest. But these new things, whatever they be, will not offend against the word of God. And such is the scene here.

But the word of God being opened, is kept open. It was a day, as we speak, of " an open Bible." Precious mercy! And this open Book, having yielded one piece of instruction, telling them of the

rights of the first day of the seventh month, now yields them further instruction, telling them about eight other days of that same month, or about the Feast of Tabernacles.' And the people, already in the spirit of obedient listeners to the word of God, are still kept in it. They learn about that eight day feast, and they keep it; in such sort, too, as had not been witnessed for centuries.

This was, in like manner, beautiful. But again, we notice something additional.

In chap. 9. we see the congregation. of the children of Israel in humiliation, going through a solemn service of confession; and then, in chap. 10., entering into a covenant of obedience to God, and of the observance of His ordinances. But nothing of all this had been prescribed. We find no mention of such a thing in the law of Moses. Lev. 23 had not required this to wait upon or follow the Feast of Tabernacles.

Here, however again we have to notice something. This solemnity did not take place till the twenty fourth day of this month; and then the time of the Feast of Tabernacles had ended-for that ended on the twenty-third. And this, again I say, was very beautiful. The congregation would not, by their act of humiliation and confession, soil the Feast, or prevent its purpose. That Feast was the most joyous time in the Jewish year. It celebrated the ingathering, or " harvest-home," as we speak. It was the foreshadowing of the days of glory or, of the kingdom. It shall have all its demands answered in full tale and measure. The twenty-third day, the last day, that great day of the Feast, shall pass, ere the language of humiliation and the voice of penitential sorrow be heard. But then, the ordinance of God admitting-it, the people may hold, as we again speak, " a prayer-meeting."

This was likewise voluntary or additional, as I have said-not appointed by Scripture, but suggested, under the Spirit of God, by the time and the circumstances which marked this present revival under Nehemiah. Confession was the due language of a people who stood, at that moment, the representative of a long-revolted, disobedient, and guilty nation.

" Ceasing to do evil," however, is to be followed by " learning to do well." It is very right, if we have been doing wrong, to begin with confession of the wrong, ere we set ourselves to do the right. But to do the right thing is a due attendant on the confession of the wrong thing. And all this moral comeliness we see here, as we pass from the ninth to the tenth chapter.

The nobles, and all the people together, meet as " brethren," in separation from the people of the land (see 10. 28), and seal a covenant to keep the laws of God. It is pleasant to see here, as also when they were building the wall in chap. 3., how rank and station lost itself in common brotherhood. " Let the rich rejoice in that he is made low and the poor in that he is exalted, for the fashion of this world passeth away." And what they now covenant and seek to do, has still something additional or unprescribed in it. They pledge themselves to observe all the commandments of the Lord, His statutes and His judgments; not to make marriages with other people; not to profane the Sabbath; to bring in their first fruits, their first-born, and their firstlings, and the tithes of their ground; and all this is according to the word of the Lord. But they also make ordinances for themselves, to be chargeable yearly in the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of God; and they cast lots, to bring wood for the altar of God, at appointed seasons.

All this is still in sweet and wondrous harmony with the whole of their actions in this day of happy revival. The word of God is, again and again, and throughout, honored in all its demands; but added things are seen in their services and activities; such as the fresh energy and grace of a

Revival-Season would suggest, and the Spirit would warrant.

Here this parenthetic action, as I have called it, ends. It is beautiful from first to last. The people are conducted through a gracious process. They are exercised according to truth, by the Spirit. They are convicted and then relieved. Then they have a lesson about coming joys in days of glory. And thus instructed as to their rich interest in the grace of God, they can look at themselves, not as in fear and in a spirit of bondage, but for due brokenness of heart and with a purpose to serve God for the future, And all this may call to mind that utterance or experience provided by the Holy Ghost for repentant Israel in the last days: " Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth" (Jer. 31).

11.- 13.

These chapters witness the people still earnest and obedient. The day of revival continues. The freshness of its morning has, in no measure, faded, though we here reach a later hour of the day.

The 11th chapter opens with a grievous mark of Jerusalem's degradation. She is a witness against herself, that she is not as the Lord will have her in the days of coming glory. She is not " desired," rather indeed " forsaken." People are not flocking to her. She cannot look round her, as she will in the days of the Kingdom, and wonder at the multitude of her children. It is not, as yet, the boast of others, that they have been born in her; nor are they owning that all their fresh springs are in her. She has not as yet to say, that the place is too strait for her, for the multitude of those who fill her. These surely are not her condition here in this chapter. She is debtor to any one who will consent or condescend to dwell in her.

What a witness of degradation! what a sign indeed; that restoration was not glory! Jerusalem is still trodden down; the times of the Gentiles are still unfulfilled. Surely the daughter of Zion has not arisen, and shaken herself from the dust, and put on her strength and her beautiful garments.

Still, she must be inhabited; she must have her citizens within her. The land must have its people, for Messiah is soon to walk among them; the city must have its inhabitants, for her King is soon to be offered to her. Therefore is the return from Babylon, and therefore is the peopling of Jerusalem.

And again, as we see in chap. 12. she has her wall.

Right, that, having a wall, that wall should be dedicated. Public festivity had been often celebrated on such like occasions; at the carriage of the ark in the days of David; at the dedication of the Temple in the days of Solomon; at the foundation of the second house in the time of Zerubbabel; and again, when that second house was finished, this was so. And now, in this day, this day of Nehemiah, the people again rejoice at the dedication of the wall which was now finished, and was encompassing the city.

But while this is so, and all is right so far and after this manner, yet what, I, ask, is this wall? What, I further ask, but another witness of Jerusalem's degradation? In her coming days of strength and beauty, when she is the city of the Kingdom, the metropolis of the world, the sanctuary and the palace of the great divine King of Israel and of the earth, " salvation " shall be her wall. God will then appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. The Lord Himself, like her mountains, shall stand round about her. Her walls shall be called. Salvation, and her gates Praise. The voice of the Spirit

in 'Zachariah, the echo of which could scarcely at this time have died away, had uttered this fine oracle:" Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls-for the multitude of men and cattle therein - for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. 2:4-6).

How infinite the difference! Jerusalem under the eye of Nehemiah bearing the marks of her shame: Jerusalem, as we read of her in the prophets, the witness of the highest destiny in honor and excellency in the earth! How must such a man have felt, because of all this! And yet he serves earnestly, undauntedly, patiently! Great moral dignity shines in this- a fine spirit of self-devotement expresses itself. He works, and works nobly, though beset with foreign enmities, and encompassed with domestic degradation! Such a servant of Christ, St. Paul appears to be in 2 Timothy; and such Nehemiah in this book of his.

And this we ought to be ourselves. The Christendom that we see around us is as far from the Church that we read of in the Epistles, as the Jerusalem which Nehemiah looked on was unlike the Jerusalem which he read of in the Prophets. But he served in the midst of her-and so should we in the face and in the heart of Christendom. For the spirit of service measures not the scene of the service, but the will of the master.

All this, however, tells the character of the moment.. Israel is restored, her land peopled, her city inhabited again but this is not the Kingdom. The children of Israel are to be put to the proving and the clearing of themselves still, and the day of grace, of salvation, and of glory, the promised day of the Kingdom, is still distant. But faith has to be exercised, and obedience has to learn and practice its lessons.

Accordingly, on entering chap. 13., we find the Book of God still open among the people. For surely a day of revival is the day of " an open Bible," as we speak. But it is a new lesson they have now to learn. They are growing in knowledge, in acquaintance with divine principles. It is quite another page of the Book which they have now turned over. Scripture, as yet, had its " comfort" for them - now it is to have its " patience." As yet it had " piped " to them, now it is about to " mourn" to them..The joy of the Feast of Trumpets,. and the still richer joy of the Feast of Tabernacles, had been made known to them, and they had obediently responded. They had " danced " to that piping. But now, they were to be exercised painfully by the Book. They read " that the Moabite and the Ammonite were not to come into the congregation of the Lord for -ever."

This was terrible. All, as yet, had' been eminently social. Not only in their joy as on the Feast days, but in their act of confession, they had been together.

Strangers " had been removed, but the " the mixed multitude" do not seem to have been looked after and detected. But now, at the bidding of the word found in Deut. 23, this severe cutting off must be performed; as at the bidding of Lev. 23, the joy of the Tabernacles had been already celebrated.

But this was the more fitted- to test the spirit of obedience in this good day of revival. And the congregation do stand it, and answer the demand of the word of God very blessedly. For we read, " it came to pass, when they heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude." This was obedience, indeed, doing what scripture prescribed - doing the lessons of the Word, teach they what service or duty they may, or call to what sacrifices they may. Iniquity,

however, is now found to be in high places, higher, it would seem, than the people could reach. But it must be reached even there; for, a day of awakening, and of fresh power from God, must be a day of obedience. All this time an Ammonite had been in the house of the Lord. This exceeded. Not merely was he, like the mixed multitude, in the congregation, but in the house; and that, too, by the practices of the high priest himself.

Nehemiah was not at Jerusalem just at this time. But on his return, he acts on this abomination thus found in high places, as the people themselves had already acted, in their measure, upon the mixed multitude. For Deut. 23 shall be heard, though the highest functionary in the church will have to be rebuked. Eliashib is nobody to Nehemiah, when Moses speaks-for the one has God's authority with him, the other is to have it over him. A word of admonition to Christendom, if Christendom had ears to hear, that Christendom. that has set its own Eliashib above Moses, its own officers above the scripture. But such an one was not this faithful man. With him, " Moses' seat" was supreme. Scripture judges every man, while it itself is to be judged of no man. Neither high priest in Israel, nor assumption of antiquity and succession, nor of any other kind in Christendom, however attractive, are to set aside one jot or tittle of it. The Book, speaking from God, as it does, at all times, and addressing itself to all conditions, must be supreme.

The scripture cannot be broken,"-therefore it is not to be gainsayed. God will fulfill it; we are to observe it.

All this which we thus find in Nehemiah, and the Congregation in this closing day of the Old Testament, may well arrest the thoughts of the saints in this day of Ours.

We have seen marks of degradation in Jerusalem in the 11th and 12th chapters-we see them still in the lath. The sabbath was profaned there, and alliances with the daughters of the uncircumcised were still found there. This is more than degradation in circumstances; it is moral degradation; it is abomination. The restoration from captivity, and the re-peopling of the city; have not entitled it to be saluted, as it is to be in coming kingdom days, with that voice which the Spirit has prepared from the lips of an admiring, gazing world, " the Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness " (Jer. 31:23)..'

But in spite of all this, again I say, we see Nehemiah serving. And this is a very fine sight. I need not say, how to perfection, the divine Master of all servants was a pattern of this in His day of service. But there is great moral dignity in this, let us find samples of it in whom we may.

'The Congregation, too, keeping the Book still open, is an edifying sight, a sight for us very specially to look at. They were not " partial in the law." They exhibit a people who would fain have no " neglected texts," nor "unturned pages," in the Book of God. Not a sound of it was to be lost upon the ear, as though it was heard in the distance. But who of us, I ask, is up to them in this? How prone we are to choose our lesson, rather than " to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Is it not so? I may love the page which reads me a word on the Feast of Tabernacles in its joy, and delight myself in the sound of the trumpets in the day of the new moon of the seventh month. But the word that would wash me for purification, and separate me from unwarranted alliances, has another relationship to me, and addresses me in other accents. I do not choose that lesson. It is a page of the Book I am not disposed to open. I am tempted to say with the Roman governor, " Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for

thee." The house may be too social, the heart may be too much at ease, to discipline itself by such ordinances as Deut. 23:3.

Indeed, indeed, we may say, all this scripture, these' books of the returned captives, this Ezra and this Nehemiah, are worthy of the deep attention and full admiration of our souls. How aid the Spirit of God work in the' elect in those days, how does He, by what He has recorded of them, instruct us in these days!

And beside, as we have also seen, those times of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, were times of Revival. Such times had been known before in Israel, as with Samuel, David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Isaiah. And such have been known again and again, in the progress of Christendom. And a re-quickening season may take a shape but little expected by us, and perhaps without a perfect precedent. It is the property of life, to put on at times, some exuberant features, to work outside and beyond its ordinary rules and measures. It is more like itself when it acts thus. For life is a thing of freedom, and has inbred force in it. But, at the same time, we are to judge every expression of it by the Word of God. " To the law and to the testimony." If a thing stand not that test, it is not the overflowing of life, however ecstatic or exuberant it may be; it is to be disclaimed with all its fascinations.

" To him that bath shall more be given." Obedience to one lesson is the sure and safe road to the discovery of another. " If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine." There is a temptation to hold back, lest the lessons we have yet to learn shall prove distasteful: " He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." There is, therefore, disposedness or temptation to stop short. But this is disobedience, as well as the breaking of a word read and understood. To shut the book, through fear of what it might teach us, is plainly and surely, disobedience.

Hebrews. 13:5,6.

In ver. 4, our writer speaks of marriage; its honorableness; its duties and its uses; so guarding the Christian as to this great relationship, and teaching him how to guard himself in reference to it. In ver. 5, he begins by guarding us amid the cares of this life. Our walk is to be without trust in riches, content with such things as we have. How this can be-and the why of it-is that He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake." The Lord's presence with us down here may well suffice to make us " content" and " without trust in riches." Ver. 11. seems to allude to some such state of things as does James 5.1-5; a time of great difficulty when man's hand is against his fellow. But, what then? Surely the presence of the Lord with any one, in such days, has more in it to make free from care and content than have the trials of those days power to give anxiety.

It may be, to many a poor man, "hard to get any work; harder still to get a fair price for work: and hardest of all to get paid for work done"; but the Lord's presence is 'better than life; and the heart can be satisfied with it.

There is great force, too, in the way the statement is made.

" Himself has said, No; never will I leave thee; never, no, never will I forsake thee." Observe how emphatic it is Himself has said, thee the individual, not you, merely, in a mass; and then the repetition of the negatives, "no; never"- " never; no, never." Clearly, he would have us to know that there is one thought which neither has, nor ever can have, any place in His mind: that of forgetting

His people down here. And observe, it is Himself with His people down here. Not only has God given to us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and assured us, too, of heavenly glory and blessing when the wilderness is passed; but, more than this, He is with us to conduct us Himself right through it. Israel's hard circumstances in the wilderness only gave to God the occasion of showing Himself and His grace and power as being with them. There are two things to be noticed here-His presence and our faith in it. (See also Ex. 17:7; Hag. 2:5). He is with us, always and unto the end. But, if we know not how to put our "Amen" to this, surely we shall not be established (Isa. 7:9).

Look upon trials in the darkness of your own shadow, and they will seem black. Look upon them in the light of the presence of the Lord with you and then they will shine. Truly, as we go along we find that the relative bearing of things to us is according as we regard them in faith or with the eye; in grace or in nature. It is God or my own poor, fallen self, that characterize.; my path to me as I go along.

"NO; NEVER will I leave thee; NEVER, NO, NEVER Will I forsake thee," is the Lord's banner for His saint; banner that floats over every circumstance.

10.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE APOCALYPSE.

Revelation. 12

IT is constantly God's way throughout Scripture, and especially in the Apocalypse, to unfold His ways to us under the form of visions. It is thus that some of the most important truths are revealed, and it is of all modes of representation the most powerful.

Truths, under symbolic forms and personifications, are presented to the eye of faith, and thereby are we taught not only the bearing and relation of those truths thus symbolized to all other things; but also, the exact proportion and relation which the parts and elements of the scene bear to one another, and that according to the estimate of God and not of man.

Who then can 14-;t the importance of the divine mode of instruction?

It was thus that Ezekiel was shown the judgment of God and His glory, in relation to Jerusalem, as well as the ultimate bringing in of millennial blessing. It was thus that Daniel was made to perceive and comprehend what was God's estimate of the kingdoms of the earth, Jew and Gentile, throughout thousands of years; it was thus that Peter, Paul, and John were instructed in many of the deepest counsels of God. Those revealed to the latter are largely developed in this book, under the form of visions, embodying a wide range of truth relative to 'Israel, the nations, and (at the conclusion) the Church, and what we find unfolded to us in the vision of Chapter 12 is one of the most prominent in that portion of the counsel of God which relates to the earth; that is to say, that which is connected with His earthly people; 'and with regard to which the earth is the scene of action; in fact, it is that from which all other such counsels emanate, the center round which they revolve, the pivot which sustains them: for what does this vision reveal to us? what is its aim and object? Is it not Christ the center of God's earthly counsels on the one hand, and the object of Satan's rage and antagonism on the other?

It is not a heavenly Christ, in His relation to the Church, that we have here. That, or rather her association with Him in this central position, is given elsewhere; but in this vision He is seen in His character of Messiah, and in His relation to the Jewish people, from whom He springs as to His earthly association.

In fact, the whole scene is essentially Jewish, and does not extend to His connection with man universally. He, the man-child, is born of, for, and in relation to the woman; and though the facts herein represented are a striking fulfillment of the sentence which God pronounced on the serpent with reference to the woman's seed, "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," it is more an accomplishment of it in connection with Israel than with man in the broad sense of the family of Adam. With the Jewish, rather than with the human, seed.

The symbols under which this is represented are most powerful. Let us examine them.

The first object which John sees is a "great wonder," which appears "in heaven." The scene is an earthly one, yet it is mapped out to the eye of the prophet as in heaven, and why so? Because it is to be revealed to him as it stands in the mind and purpose of God; he must not see it as on earth, i. e., in man's view and estimate, for in that case a very different aspect would have been presented, - the whole character of the scene would have been changed; but it is shown to him in heaven, in God's holy perfect estimate and mind, and the colors of the picture are dark or bright in their moral hearing as He sees them, and not as a human unspiritualized eye would regard them.

The scene, then, is laid in heaven, but what does the prophet behold? "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This striking figure presents to us Judah, the royal tribe, and is one in full keeping with the symbolism of scripture, for the nation of Israel in connection with the Lord is continually represented to us thus, not (it is true) elsewhere in this investiture, but the simile of a woman is made use of to represent the earthly bride as well as the heavenly. Here, however, it is Christ's humanity, or rather His incarnate connection with Israel that is to be developed; and, consequently, it is in a maternal and not in a bridal character that she appears. She is presented, not as that which He 'draws into relation with Himself, but as that from which He springs. And from whence did he spring? Was it not from Judah, the royal tribe, here typified by this glorious woman? That she represents Judah exclusively, and not the whole nation, we shall see proved as we proceed further in the detail of the chapter, where we shall find her in scenes in which no part of the nation except Judah will move in the last days.

But ere we proceed further, it will be interesting to note the figures of glory and dignity with which she is invested; symbols very frequently made use of in scripture in Jewish connection, and which would seem to bear a double signification here.

In the first place, the sun, moon, and stars, as the three orders of the heavenly bodies, and comprising "the host of heaven" (Deut. 4:19) are in their individual attributes, the expression of light and glory; and, in their relation to the system which they form, of the stability of God's will and counsel by which they are upheld. Conferring and reflecting light, they are a very fit symbolic investiture for that royal house which in God's mind is the center of earthly glory and blessing, and which will confer on the earth that light which she reflects from her Lord and King. Thus, also, the sun which clothes her may, in another aspect, be regarded as Christ himself. He the "Sun of

Righteousness" is indeed her true glory and covering, her " sun and shield," and in this aspect, the earthly glory which is but a reflection of Him, is "under her feet," while the stars form her crown. The number of these stars is significant, and would lead us to think that the symbol conveys more than (as has been stated above) a part of the glory necessary to the woman's position. The number 12 is that of the tribes which actually form the crown of Judah, and in God's mind adorn it thus gloriously. The crown designates her as royal; that which forms the crown declares of what her royalty consists.

Many passages of scripture might be adduced to corroborate the signification here given to these symbols, which seem to be peculiarly linked with the throne of David. In Psa. 89:36,37, they are used to designate the stability of that throne:-" His seed shall endure forever, and His throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in Heaven." In Canticles, where Judah (there it is Bridal. Judah) is spoken of, she appears in the king's eyes "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun."

In Gen. 37, when Joseph dreams, and dreams in intelligent communion with the mind of God, the whole nation, of which Jacob's family was the nucleus, is prefigured by these heavenly bodies; the sun, moon, and eleven stars typifying the nation in obeisance to him in his anticipative and Christ-like exaltation, consequent on his humiliation. So far, then, we can understand the bearing of these symbols, and also how truly the scene is in heaven, i. e., in God's estimate. He always views this woman as thus mantled and clothed, although His manifested favor to her, her regal rights and her earthly glory, have waned since the days of Solomon, and totally disappeared to human sight; but to her shall it yet be said, " Arise, shine, for thy light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon thee." How truly do these words describe her as she here appears to John! What she once was, and still more will yet be to man's eye, and what she always is to the eye of God. But her intermediate history is also to be set forth for our instruction, so verse 2 continues, " And she, being with child; cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." In her is the seed, the hope of the nation, but not yet brought forth. This verse describes the condition of the godly part of the nation from the time of its earliest existence to the first coming of Christ-the Messiah.. It was in throes of travail, as it were, yearning for " that holy thing" which was to be born, On which all hopes centered. And beautiful is it to notice from the very commencement of Scripture history, this pulse of the elect nation (if we may so say) ever beating, as evidenced by the throbs of it, which we meet with here and there, from time to time, as we trace its history onward; one which gained strength from the moment when it was first quickened into life by God's pronouncing those significant words to Abraham, " In Isaac shall thy seed be called." It beat in the heart of every godly mother in Israel, and produced that remarkable desire to be the channel of the fulfillment of the promise which was so strong in the Sarahs, the Rebekahs, the Rachels, the Hannahs, the Ruths, the Marys; the Elizabeths. Isaiah gave expression to this natural throb when, in anticipation, he bursts forth, " For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (see Isa. 9:6). And as the time of the realization of these hopes drew nigh, it beat louder and more distinctly, though the circle in which it was found became more and more contracted; the greater part of the nation having, through ungodliness and unfaithfulness, fallen off from the line of God's promise, and its true hopes, so that at last it was concentrated in that little remnant which " waited for the consolation of Israel." Strong and clear did this pulse beat in the Simeons, the Annas, the Zachariahs, who, indeed, "travailed" in expectation of this desire of their hearts, which broke forth

in accents of joy when the birth from the manger pointed on to the resurrection-birth from the tomb-communicating the glad tidings to all who looked for "redemption in Israel." As truly, if not so intelligently, did it linger in the hearts of the shepherds, who, on the announcement of the angelic host, gave vent to a gladness which evinced what had been the hope of their souls, a hope which, more or less intelligently, had buoyed up every godly Jewish heart, and which the very magi of the East felt the influence of, when, guided by the star, they came from distant lands in search of the new-born king, who personally was nothing to them.

But before the consummation arrived, during this period of expectation and travail, another "wonder" is introduced on the scene; and in relation also to that object towards which all eyes were turned. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head" (ver. 3). "In heaven" also in the mind of God is this "other wonder" seen of the Prophet. In that mind and estimate, however fair its form on the earth, it is a Dragon, "that old Serpent the Devil" here seen as embodying the perfection of Gentile power and evil. Seven heads and ten horns are seen on the Beast of chap. 13. And 17. the heads designating seven kings in its successive, and the horns ten kings in contemporary power; the former showing the course and progress from beginning to end; the latter, the last form which it assumes (see chap. 17. 10-13). Now these seven heads succeeding one another during the whole period of the Beast's existence, are evidently those who acted a prominent part with reference to the Holy Land, that land which is ever in God's mind the center of earthly blessing, and in relation to which He judges all the kingdoms of the earth. By both scriptural and historical evidence we find that there were seven, and seven only, viz.: Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, Antiochus the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, Caesar, and lastly Antichrist, who is the "seventh and also the eighth." Thus we find that this Beast had its existence from the time that Gentile power was first vested in Nebuchadnezzar; and also, that it will revive, and, before this existence terminates, that it will wear the form of ten kingdoms, ruled by kings subordinate to itself. So much for the Beast of chap. xiii. and xvii; but why, it may be asked, are these heads and horns seen on the dragon? what connection have they with him? The answer is solemn and teaches us that it is he (the dragon) who really wields Gentile power, the origin of which is here seen as diabolical; the human aspect of it being given elsewhere. Embodying the very essence and spirit of the Beast, we find in figure here, a fact which chap. 13. 2. relates in language "and the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority." The heads are crowned, because the whole period of their actual rule is contemplated; God's eye ranging over that mighty lapse of time in a moment, and gathering up (as it were) all the activities and exponents of its evil rule, in order to present to us under this powerful symbol of a seven-headed-ten-horned dragon, not only the power itself, but also its origin and animus.

Verse 4. The Dragon, seeing the royal woman in this state of expectancy travailing to bring forth that wondrous child and king who was to bruise his head and take away his dominion, stands "ready to devour it as soon as it is born," and in the strength of this malice with which he is animated, he assails the whole line from whence the expected one should spring. "His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth." The faithful are very frequently spoken of in Scripture under the similitude of stars, we read in Dan. 8:10, of the little horn that it "cast down some of the host, and of the STARS [the faithful ones] to the ground" again, "they shall shine as the stars," etc. So, in this vision, Satan is presented as acting with his own evil power

upon the stars, that faithful portion of the royal seed who kept up the hope and faith of the nation. This verse comprises in a few words the whole • tale of his wives, his rage, and his malice against the holy seed, the godly ones, which may be traced as a vein running throughout the Old Testament. Various were his ways and means; but if we examine the Lord's genealogy, we shall find that from Judah downwards there is some flaw or escape, as it were, in all the individuals through whom the royal seed was borne onwards, and this increasing as the time drew on. How far he succeeded in drawing so many of the stars to the earth, that is 'in alluring them morally from their high estate, the books of Kings and Chronicles fully unfold.

From David onwards most of the kings of Judah were servants of God, but all without exception fell in one manner or another under temptation.

David we know was not proof against it; Solomon turned to idols;

Asa made a league with Benhadad;

Jehoshaphat joined with Ahab and Ahaziah;

Joash at first faithful, became idolatrous;

Amaziah " did right in the sight of the Lord," but his heart was not perfect;

Uzziah also, but his heart was lifted up, and he offered incense in the temple;

Jotham walked with the Lord, but did not throw down the high places;

Josiah fell in battle for not heeding the word of the Lord through Pharaoh Necho. But above all did the dragon succeed with

Hezekiah; therefore to him is the sentence pronounced that the " crown, was to be profaned and cast to the ground." Strikingly does that blotted page in Hezekiah's history illustrate the success of the dragon's allurements on these stars of heaven. He had walked before God in rectitude during all the previous part of his reign, but when the Babylonian ambassadors were sent to congratulate him on his recovery, his heart was lifted up and he made a display of those treasures, which were only given him for God's glory. Who impelled him to this but the Dragon, who doubtless knew well what would result from his falling from that high place of witness for God, to the vain glory and flattery of the world? " Therefore" (says Isaiah), " behold the days come that all that is in thine house, and that thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon, nothing shall be left, saith the Lord " (2 Kings 20) and Hezekiah must admit that the " word of the Lord is good."

So far was the Dragon successful when these predictions took place, and the utterance of the royal woman at this epoch must have been that so finely expressed by David in Psa. 89:38,39,44. " But thou hast cast off' and abhorred, thou hast been wrath with thine anointed. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant, thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground. Thou hast made his glory to cease and cast his throne down to the ground."

But then the TRUE " anointed" had not yet come. She still travailed in expectancy of this long looked-for child whom the Dragon now stands ready to devour. This attitude is one which Satan constantly bore towards Judah in her royal and holy character. He was the animus of Saul in his

deadly and determined hostility against the life of David who was to found the kingdom, and the hair-breadth escapes which he experienced evince how inveterate was Satan's desire to destroy him. Another remarkable instance of this we find in 2 Chron. 22 when Athaliah destroys all the seed royal; all but one, Joash, who was concealed in the house of God for six years. Who but the Dragon prompted her to this? and who but God could have thwarted the attempt thus? On that single life depended (speaking as to the necessity of God's counsels preserving their thread and consistency throughout) not only the preservation of David's throne, but the ultimate bruising of the serpent's head, and the salvation of the world, for from him the Messiah, the woman's seed, the bruiser of Satan was to spring. Again, we find the Dragon in this attitude towards the woman in the person of Herod, who on the report of the birth of the king of the Jews, sent forth in exceeding wrath to slay all the children of Bethlehem.

But however implacable the Dragon's enmity, he could not succeed, either by means of Saul, Athaliah or Herod; his last effort against Him was on the cross, but his apparent triumph there was the rather his most dire defeat, and in the due course of God's counsels, this wondrous child is born from the tomb;-brought forth in resurrection. " And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and the child was caught away to God and to his throne."

We cannot doubt, though the interpretation 'of this figure may include the actual birth of the Lord, that the truth primarily intended to be revealed here is His resurrection; for then was it that He having put away sin, was presented as the Messiah, and then did God say unto Him, " Thou art my Son-this day have I begotten thee." It is in resurrection that he is presented to the nation as " both Lord and Christ," the fruit of David's loins according to the flesh; raised up to sit on David's throne. How fitly is such an event represented in vision by the resurrection-birth of the man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, but who is caught away to God and to His throne, the Heavens receiving Him till the restitution of all things... The life of Christ on earth, His rejection and death is not contemplated here, though silently implied by the intimation that the Dragon stood ready to devour Him, which of course includes the whole course of His enmity from first to last; but we have only a child born and caught away. No doubt it was His actual birth, that the dragon watched in malice, as he had the royal line from the 'commencement, but it is from the tomb more emphatically than from the manger, that the royal woman brings Him forth and the heavens receiving Him, as well as His ultimate rule of all nations is consequent on this. This rule and exaltation is not entered on in the chapter before us, the catching away of the child being merely introduced to meet the enmity of the Dragon towards Him; but, in the clause which reveals His destiny, viz. as the ruler of all nations, we have a link to that which other scriptures so fully develop. For instance, in. Psa. 2 the sequel of this scene is finely set forth,. The kings of the earth and the rulers, impelled by the Dragon, had set themselves against this " man-child" the Lord's anointed, but Jehovah had set Him on Zion-had declared the decree, and anticipatively given Him the heathen for an inheritance. The Apostle Paul, quoting this Psalm in Acts 13, sets forth the doctrine of this 5th verse of our chapter in other words, for he declares the glad tidings " how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is written,...Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee, and as concerning that he raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise: I will give you the sure mercies of David." Here was the fulfillment of the promise for which the nation had yearned, the man-child brought forth; but, on account of the Dragon's

rage, caught away.

This 5th verse concludes the first division of the chapter, the first phase of the vision; and the succeeding One passes rapidly onward, and presents to us a scene still future; the whole of the present dispensation, that time which elapses between the heavens reception of the woman's offspring, and her own re-appearance on the scene-7-during the last week of Jewish history coming between, and being silently passed over. The reason of this omission is evident; the vision relates solely to the woman and her child; therefore, that period during which she is lost sight of on earth, and He is hid in the heavens, has no reference to it, but relates to another branch of God's counsels, the church, the dispensation grace which is not treated of here. We must, therefore, pass on in spirit to that period which the Apocalypse specially unfolds, viz: the last week of Daniel, which is very fitly entered on in unbroken succession with the previous phase of the vision; for although ages elapse between the two, it succeeds in strict moral order and identity, and is consequent thereon.

Here then (verse 6) we find this same woman; she who had appeared in such glorious investiture, now is a fugitive (morally fugitive) character-fleeing into the wilderness for the significant period of 1260 days, " where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there "-i. e. during the first half of the week. That this event is moral separation and not actual flight from persecution is plain, because there is no active persecution or enmity during this period to flee from. The rage of the Dragon had been against the child; He, being caught away, and the object of his malice removed, he is in no hostile attitude towards the woman as yet. We find also from other parts that these 1260 days-this first half of the week, will be days of deception and allurements, and not of violence or persecution. From the deceptive and ensnaring condition of things, the woman,---the godly remnant of Judah which now comprises the royal tribe-withdraws herself morally; and is sustained by God in this honorable moral separation. She is in spirit in the wilderness even as the Lord declared when speaking of this day by the mouth of Hosea. "I will allure her and bring her into: the wilderness, and speak comfortably -to her;" etc. Dissociated from the guilty condition of things around her, even as the heavenly saints are now, or ought to be; she truly " revives there the days of her youth," and finds her vineyards from thence, and the " door of her hope," for in the power of that separation, she is borne through that terrible period when the waters of judgment deluge the earth, and is reserved for millennial blessing and rule, when she shall know her Lord as " Ishi," and be betrothed unto him in " righteousness, judgment, loving-kindness, and mercies."

But to return to verse 6, which only treats of the first half week of moral separation. This is her position on earth, and while such is the case with her, verse 7 goes on to tell us how it is with her old enemy the Dragon.... A wondrous scene is being enacted with regard to him. There is war in heaven. Michael (that great prince which standeth up for the children of the Jewish people) and his angels war with the Dragon and his angels, and the result is that the latter is cast out, and his place is found no more in heaven.

That great fact which the Lord Jesus saw in anticipation, when He says: " I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven " now takes place. He (the Prince of the power of the air) who hitherto has had access to the heavenly places, is found there no more, his power from henceforth is confined to the earth, and is all the more terrible therein from its concentration, He is the ".star called wormwood," who in chap. 8. 11, falls on the rivers and fountains of waters, and who in chap. 9.

opens the bottomless pit and lets forth its contents. We are not told at what precise period during the first half of the week this event takes place, but it must be during the first 1260 days, for it is the action of the star that had previously fallen, which in chap. 9. commences the last half, by opening the bottomless pit. And what is the mind and spirit of heaven with regard to this transition? ver. 10-13 tells us, " A loud voice," swelled no doubt by that of all the heavenly saints, falls on the Prophet's ears to let him know what is heaven's estimate of that terrible moment. " 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 accuseth them before our God day and night, and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he bath but a short time."

This utterance must not be regarded as one immediately consequent on the fall of the Dragon, or at least confined to that moment, for the victory of the martyrs who had not then Plaid down their lives is celebrated therein. It is more a continuous expression of the mind of heaven with reference to this event-extending throughout the remainder of the week; the heavenly saints give expression to their estimate of the joy of heaven and the woe for earth by the transition of the Dragon, and the honor and victory of their brethren who were to suffer thereby.

Suffer indeed they would, but the cry of " woe" is not for them, but for the inhabitants of the earth, " those whose rest and dwelling-place being there, are emphatically dwellers" therein. And well may the cry be " woe" for them who dwelt where all His power was now concentrated. This is the " woe," the three-fold "woe" which is consequent on the fall of the star Wormwood; in chap. 8. 13, which is the same event as the language of chap. 7., expresses as the Dragon cast out of heaven. These three woes are the contents of the three last.: trumpets-four having been sounded during the first half of the week, and the last three during the latter half, the fifth ushering in the devil's concentrated and exasperated power, and with the sixth and seventh heralding " Woe woe, woe." Ver. 13 verifies the prediction with regard to the woman which brought forth the man-child, for the great action of the Dragon on finding himself cast to the earth is to persecute her. The child is beyond his reach, but she, the godly portion of the tribe, is not; for her moral flight or separation only exposed her the more to his malice; and mark! it is still as the mother of the child that his rage is exhibited against her. Mere, however, God interposes and provides her with means (symbolically " the wings of a great eagle"), which expresses rapidity of flight, and she actually, not morally as before, but actually flies into the wilderness for time, times and half 'a time (three years and a-half) from the face of the serpent." This is what we read of in Matt. 24:16, where the Lord, addressing the disciples, as in moral identity with the holy remnant of the latter day, says-" Then let them which be in Judea flee unto tile mountains," etc. This was to be on the setting up of the abominations at the commencement of the last half week of Daniel, which was to be marked by " great tribulation such as had not been from the beginning of the world." The woman, however, escapes, she is part of the company which we find sealed for preservation in chap. 7.; in fact the 12,000 from the tribe of Judah; and is borne away from the scene of the Dragon's activity to be nourished for time, times and half a time.

This winds up the week as to her, but ver. 15 retro- grades a little, as to the narrative, and tells us the action of the serpent when the woman was out of his reach. This is his final effort against

her-he casts "out of his mouth water as of a flood that he might cause her to 'be carried away by the flood"-doubtless raises up a people to pursue her, but again God interposes miraculously on her behalf, "and the earth helped the woman, and swallowed up the flood which the Dragon cast out of his mouth." These pursuers are destroyed by earthquake, possibly that which we read of in Zech. 14:4,5, at the Lord's coming. " And his feet shall stand on that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half the mountain shall remove toward the north and half toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal, yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the stints with thee."

In the above passage we learn, that on the eve of the Lord's coming there will be an earthquake, which will form a valley through which the believing remnant will flee from their foes. In Rev. 12:16 we have seen an earthquake also, the effect of which is to swallow up the flood or pursuers which the Dragon had impelled after the remnant, Both occur at the very end of the week, and if the earthquake be identical, it may answer the double purpose of destroying the woman's enemies, and forming a passage for her escape. In Zechariah, the Lord appears on the scene just as the remnant are fleeing; appears for their deliverance. In Rev. 12 the vision does not extend to this last, so the precise time of the earthquake cannot be fixed, but they appear very similar. At any rate in both instances the earth helps the woman, or the remnant.

" And the Dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." This passage must not be regarded as continuous in occurrence to the previous verses, which relate the Dragon's final effort against the woman, and wind up the week; ver 17, recurring to that period, thus wound up, only designs to show us how he bore himself towards those individuals who were not in the place of preservation and concealment with the woman. She was in the wilderness, they, still exposed to the Dragon's fury, and with them he makes war. They were " the remnant of her seed," a second company of martyrs who suffered later in the last half of the week, even as the witnesses and the first company (the souls under the altar of chap. vi.) were martyred in the middle of it. " They are those who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Faithful to this testimony, they lay down their lives and enter into heavenly glory, while the woman is preserved for the earth and forms the crowning portion of that company, the 144,000, which is extracted, not only from Judah, but from, every tribe, and enter into earthly blessing and joy. She is the royal part of that company, and the whole nation will be gathered unto her: or at least the elect remnant in each tribe, the 12,000 sealed ones, will together form that redeemed people, that holy nation who will form the kingdom during the millennial age, Judah, this royal woman, no longer in a fugitive suffering character, but as she appears first to the eye of the prophet adorned with her crown of twelve stars, swaying the realm of earthly glory, and clothed with Him the " Sun of righteousness" from whom she derives all her glory and royalty, and (whom having long yearned in expectation for) she now owns His sway and finds herself lost in Him.

In recapitulation we may add that these last' verses 14-17, disclose to us what takes place during the last half of the week. Not in consecutive order by any means, but merely in the light of cause and effect. The woman out of the Dragon's reach, he makes war with the remnant of her seed, and

also makes a final effort against her. The former, God allows, and gives the honor of martyrdom to one portion of His own, designed for heavenly glory; the latter, He prevents by miraculous interposition, in order to rescue another portion for the earthly glory designed for them. Neither of these glories are entered on here, but the week is fully wound up, the period of the woman's concealed security in the wilderness having run out, but the Dragon is not yet destroyed, and the man-child is on the throne, ready to be revealed.

The object of the vision being attained, it closes. That object is, as we have seen, to show forth in strong colors, by means of these powerful symbols, not the revelation of Christ-the man-child-but His origin, earthly relations-destiny--and Satan's enmity to Him in His royal, Jewish, Messianic character. He and the Dragon are the two objective features in the vision, all the rest hang upon these, and serve to illustrate them. True, the woman appears to be the most prominent personage, but it is her maternal relation to this royal child that gives her the prominence. It is against Him that the Dragon's rage is excited; the " stars of heaven" are only objects of interest to this evil one, because of their connection with Him;-the woman, because she travailed to bring Him forth. He, who was to supplant the Dragon's rule and dominion-the child, being caught away, the serpent and the woman do not come in contact again until the former is cast out of heaven and finds his power confined to the earth, and that for a short time. Then, it is true, he assails her, and the remnant of her seed as the only remaining witness for the object of His hatred and fear.

This scene is one of most comprehensive range, embracing the whole period of the woman's existence from the time of her investiture by 'God with earthly, glory, authority, and rule, until the verge of that moment when her root and offspring-this royal child, on which all her heart and hopes were centered, shall merge her in His own person, and actually take that rule which His birth from the tomb entitled Him to, as ".both Lord and Christ."

In conclusion, we may add, is it not plain that the woman must symbolize the royal tribe, and not the nation as a whole?

She retains her identity and personality, throughout all the shifting scenes of this vision, and bears a prominent part in that closing week, which the nation, as a whole, will have nothing to do with. The house of Israel will still be lost to human sight and prophetic action, while the House of Judah-this woman, will be on the scene-separating herself morally, assailed by the Dragon, fleeing, escaping, and not till after the three years and a-half (during which she is nourished in, concealment) have expired, will the rest of the nation, the ten tribes, be brought back. Before this last takes place, the man-child, the offspring of this royal woman, born in resurrection, received into the heavens for a season, will have come forth from the throne, for her deliverance, for the destruction of that power so inimical, to her; and the resumption to Himself of those royal rights, which He had in grace derived from, though in divine right conferred on, the house of David.

Ignorant as I am-" I know the mind of God better than I know my own mind:"

No. 11

THE SPIRIT OF "THE CHRIST."

SAINTS lose much blessing by not seeing the different force of the expressions " the Spirit of God," and " the Spirit of the Anointed Man" (i.e. the Christ). It is not, of course, that there are two

Holy Ghosts, but the one Holy Spirit (as man says the third person in the blessed Trinity) acts, at one time in connection with one part of truth, and at another time in connection with another part of truth; and He, as the animating power and principle of all truth, knows how to turn truth so that all its blessed phases and connections should appear, and should, by us, be the better apprehended and reflected.

It was the Spirit of God (Gen. 1:2) who moved upon the face of the waters in creation. It was the Spirit of God (Ex. 31:2) which gave power and skill to those that prepared the tabernacle. So " GOD anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38), etc.

In all these cases, the blessing comes forth direct from God and manifests His power, wisdom, and goodness. But the power, as flowing from the divine being, from God Himself, has not, when I think of it, the same perfect address to my renewed heart and mind, as has that which comes to me from the Anointed Man.

As rests for the heart and mind of a believer, the statement of Acts 1:8, differs much from that of Acts 2:31-33. In the one, the sure promise "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you"; in the other, the declaration that the power (so referred to and now given) was a power which Jesus, the Nazarene, had (as the Anointed Man owned in heaven), in resurrection received of the Father, and Himself, therefore, shed forth that which they saw and heard. In the former passage, I get God, even the Father, sending down the Holy Ghost; in the latter, my heart and mind find much more; for the Nazarene, a man in heaven, passed through death, is the fountain, in the divine glory, whence it flows to me.

There should result much solemnity of spirit from the having directly to do with God, and God having to do directly with us at all times. It is a very solemnizing truth. Without weakening its force, however, I may state, what I believe to be true, viz. that if the revelation to us had been only of a communication of the Spirit of God to us, and of our being under His hand, we must then, necessarily, have got into and been kept under the mazy state in which most Christians' minds actually are; and they are so, just because instead of their knowing the Spirit as He has been revealed to them as the Spirit of the Anointed Man, who is in divine glory, they only know him as the Spirit of God. God has been pleased to reveal Himself fully, and only fully, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If I know Him at all; it is in Jesus Christ, and the measure in which my knowledge of God is true, and correct, and full, is according to the measure in which my knowledge is of Him, Jesus Christ;

Now, when the Holy Ghost acts, in salvation, what does He but reveal the Anointed Man, Jesus the Lord, to the soul. And in teaching us, and instructing us, and in' leading us on, it is just in the same way that He acts; He reveals " the truth" in the Anointed Man, Jesus the Lord, to us. If led by the Spirit of God, my heart, my mind, my whole being has to do with that which my renewed heart and mind can right well apprehend-the Anointed Man, Jesus the Lord, now upon the throne of God and the Father.

If, instead of being turned to Him, because I know it is the Spirit of Him (the anointed, though now divinely glorified Man) that is teaching me,-- teaching molding,

guiding, me, by means of what is shown to me in Him (in which case I shall think and speak of Him as the Spirit of the Christ), I think and speak of Him only as the Spirit of God (which certainly He is, yea He is God the Spirit), I shall find the effect upon my own mind, and soul, and life, by a certain want of clearness in everything.

The subject is of all importance, for it is inseparable both from the way in which God has been pleased to reveal Himself, and from the way in which He has redeemed us to Himself.

Attention to this will open much blessed fullness of truth in chap. 8. of the Epistle to the Romans.

FRAGMENT.

When conviction of sin is made little account of by the Evangelist, it is a bad sign for him; for it shows that he neither apprehends the message which he professes to carry, nor the ways of Him whose message it is. When God reveals His mercy and compassion to a soul by the revelation of Christ in it, there are certainly before the soul two things; first, God's object of delight (that is, His Christ); and secondly, the self to whom Christ is revealed—the soul, the very contrast of Him. Its state, when so found, is one which the God that delights in Christ must loathe. and does loathe, though being compassionate and showing. mercy to the individual soul, He then and there, by the revelation of Christ to it, pledges Himself to its deliverance.

I do not admit that a soul must be brought to despair before it can know peace, or that it must be brought to despair before it can know settled peace (both of which are taught by some); but that a soul knows mercy and compassion in God, or the meaning of the work of Christ who has never tasted self-loathing and self-abhorrence, I certainly do hold. Mercy has certainly to be measured, not only as having its heights in God, but also its depths in us that are saved. And most surely the contrast of what Christ is morally, and myself must produce self-loathing and abhorrence.

When I was in the flesh my conscience was hard, and I had no consciousness of sin present with me. I was under guilt. When grace revealed Christ to me, my conscience might, at once, become perfect, fit for God's presence in the holiest, through the blood; but then, guiltless, I became conscious of sin in every way.

The ways of the Lord in grace are not known to him that makes little account of conviction. For if the whole work, from first to last, of salvation is of the Lord, yet His way of applying it is such as to give to the saved one his full place individually: he is to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, just because it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. By making us know what we are and loathe it, He, in His ways of grace, permits us to identify ourselves with Him against ourselves, as also against the world and Satan.

The would-be Evangelist, who makes light of conviction of sin, may find himself a good maker of stony-ground hearers; but he will find that the fruit-bearer is the man that has had convictions, deep and many, and has them, still onward to the end.

Some Remarks on Colossians

The profound character of this epistle consists in its being, in the first chapter, a concentration of the epistles to the Thessalonians, Ephesians, and Philippians, presenting the person of Christ substantially, to faith, in relation to the subjects of all these three epistles. The second chapter is to teach us the exclusiveness of Christ. The third is the highest practice of the condition brought in by this. The fourth contains some practical exhortations. The current of it is full and highly practical.

It has been a question among critics, whether this epistle preceded or followed those to the Ephesians and Philippians. Those to the Thessalonians are acknowledged to be prior. This, and the two former, were written during St. Paul's first captivity. The difference would be, that, if written first, the former epistles (with the introduction of the subject of those to the Thessalonians) would be a development of these; or, if written after, a throwing of their subjects together, with Christ more distinctly introduced. But, whether written before or after, we see the goodness of God, showing us very emphatically, that holding the Head in all things, and for all ends, will ever be the sum of blessing to the Church..

Verses 1 and 2. As there is something peculiar in the opening address of every epistle, so there is in this—an apostle, by the sovereign will of God. Timothy is. " the brother," They might have stood together as "servants" (or slaves) of Jesus Christ, as in the epistle to the Philippians; but not as apostles. But Timothy here is (implying special designation to the Colossians) " the brother."

The diversity in the method of addressing them from that in the other epistles is manifest, and in all, with definite purpose, in the spirit. --Αγιος, is most generally taken, writings of Paul, substantively, as saints. It is used alone in the epistle to the Philippians, with bishops and deacons, manifesting the subjection to order, and consistency of the whole body as such.

In the Ephesians, it is to the saints at Ephesus, having the distinctive character of the word, and believers in general; but this is (i.e. the address to all believers) not as manifest as in Corinthians. We have in the epistle before us the separation of saints, and separation confessed; and also believing brethren, as in the epistle to the Ephesians. In the Philippians, the saints, and none other; and the subjection of the body and its order. We see this distinctly, from the first action of the gospel, by the hands of the apostles. After the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the people greatly magnified them, but no man durst join themselves to them; but, at the same time, multitudes, both of men and women, believed, They wondered at the power, They acknowledged the righteous exercise of discipline, and rejoiced in the grace proclaimed; but kept aloof in fear, and thus were not subject to the rule which God vouchsafed, nor to one another in the fear of God. Among those with the apostles, there was fellowship under their teaching, prayer, breaking of bread, and confession of the Lord, The others are mentioned as believers, but aloof in some degree or measure, suffering assuredly loss, by missing all that the Lord intended in blessing, by their being together under Him; and peculiarly as the object of His care as representing His body, and in faith of the Spirit (not only as in individuals, but) as in the body of Christ. The table expressed all, The epistle to the Thessalonians is addressed

to the Church, or assembly, in that fullest corporate character and confession. And in what blessing! " In God the Father," as said to none else-" knowing, beloved of God, your election." The apostle seems more warmed to them than to any other body (except though, in another way, the Colossians). He addresses them, joying in the manner of their reception of the word of God, sympathizing with them in the righteous judgment that should place them both in the rest of glory. The salutation of the epistle we are considering is the usual one-" Grace and peace."

" The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is the Church-name of Christ. Subject as the obedient man to God. The Son of the Father. Bringing the children of the Father in Him into the obedience of God. All is fullness in this epistle.

Thanksgiving is offered by the apostle (since he heard of the faith and love to saints, or the saints at Colosse) for the hope laid up for them in heaven.

We have again here the peculiar fullness of this epistle; the hope which they had heard in the word of the truth of the Gospel from Epaphras, who was a minister of this fullness, and though the gospel of grace was much.; this was the "grace of God" in truth, embracing all that grace which was in Christ. And it is said that they had acquaintance with it. No wonder that he to whom it was committed, to make the fullness known, should have his heart drawn out to the Colossian assembly, bearing as it did its excellent fruit, and increasing continually, 6-11. For this cause, and on this ground, he prayed and made petition to God, that, in order that they might walk worthy of the LORD, they might be filled with the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; bearing fruit, and increasing in acquaintance with God.

The result of what they should receive on his petition to God, was acquaintance with God. Experimental knowledge of God, through intelligent fulfillment of his mind under

Christ. An habituation of walk and service in subjection to Christ and His word, was to work this. This order is deeply to be observed. In Ephesians, the knowledge of the Son of God Comes through the unity of the faith wrought through a true course of church action in the Spirit; and so in the epistle of Peter, " growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." But this goes beyond them all. IT IS ACQUAINTANCE WITH GOD: first came knowledge of God's will in spiritual understanding; then practice, and thereby true acquaintance.

What a solemn occupation for the soul! But in this walk, what practical proof and experience was required. The walk here contemplated is in face of the enemy; and the power of the glory to which suffering was attached was to sustain it in all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness. The confession of the Lord was the confession of the supremacy of God in the world, in the kingdom of the Son till He come, in all virtue and grace, according to the heavenly calling of the saints.

Thus far is the subject of the Thessalonians, where, as in this portion of this epistle, all are regarded as members of the rejected kingdom.

12-14. Our present ground of thanksgiving to the Father is, that He made us meet, or, is making us meet unto the share of the inheritance of the saints in light, who saved us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption, even the remission of sins. The depth of this epistle cannot be plainer seen than in the following verses. Christ is presented in all His eminence. Let us collect a few of the expressions, and we

shall see how our redemption, and the reconciliation of all things, is connected with this eminence. He, by whom is our redemption, even the forgiveness of sins; is the image of the invisible God, and the Head of all creation (what a new Adam is granted unto us!) because He was Creator, and being before all, sustains all. Heaven and earth, and powers, are all of Him and by Him.

18-22. We now come to the Church as offered to us in the epistle to the Ephesians (in its part in this epistle) which He had purchased with His own blood. The charge of this epistle being here to declare Christ as the Head of it. What would be attached to the church, as found in the Ephesians, is not mentioned till later (2. 19), where that is reprov'd which rejects both the head, the joints, and bands, by which the members of the body are kept united together, Christ had this headship, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that thus He might be the first in all things; because in Him, by divine counsels, all fullness should dwell, that having made peace by the blood of the cross, He might reconcile all things to Himself, and ourselves who were estranged by wicked works, BY THE BODY OF HIS FLESH THROUGH DEATH (oh, the wonder of the work of Him-the, Word made flesh-to the sinner brought into the light of God!) that He might present us holy, unblamable, and without charge before Him.

Here are the two stages of His dealings-our redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, and the work of presenting us holy, unblamable, and without charge before Him, as the wife in the epistle to the Ephesians, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Nothing may be less than fullness in the way of grace in the word of the truth of the good tidings laid before us in this epistle..

23. " If ye continue in the faith." Faith is confidence and assurance in the word of God and in His faithfulness. This may apply to many things. It is not " abide in faith simply; but the expression is, "the faith," and in the fullness of the things here presented, grounded and settled in them. We have a marked instance of this sense in Jude. The expression, "the faith once delivered to the saints," in relation to the subject of that epistle, subjection to Christ as Δεσποτης (4); for He had purchased the slaves of Satan out of his hand, but who now walked after Cain, Korah, and Balaam. So, all of which Paul was made a minister manifested in this epistle is "the faith," the circle of all the revelations from the first to last revealed to him, whether common to the other apostles or peculiar to himself. The faith of the kingdom, of the Church in heavenly places, and the union of Christ with His members, fulfilling (making up the fullness of) the word of God; and, it is added, are not moved from the hope attached to the good tidings, which is, of being with Christ when He comes.

24-29. But we have not done yet. The apostle rejoices in sufferings, and he fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for His body, which is the Church.

How many think it a satisfaction to gather saints for some body to which they are attached; but if it be carried on in the Spirit, and according to the purpose and ways of God in Christ, and in confession of Him in the world; and this done with the strivings of the world and Satan directed against those who would then receive their bodies and souls out of their power, gathering and keeping them for Goff; this would bring in many afflictions here spoken of.. This was the complement of the afflictions of Him who bought them; and this was the work of Paul, here mentioned as a commission from the Lord towards those for whom Christ had died, in order to separate them out of the evil age, according to the will of God and their Father. Paul was the

minister of the body according to the dispensation which was given towards them, to fill up the measure of the revelation of God-the mystery which had been hid for ages and generations, and was now made manifest among the saints, to whom God willed to make known what was the riches of the glory of it among' the Gentiles. "Christ is thus the hope of glory."

In the epistle to the Ephesians, it was given to him to make known the mystery of the Church in Christ. Here it is Christ in them. There they got spiritual blessings; here the hope of glory.

In the epistle to the Philippians, it was the inward life, and reaching to its fullness. In this epistle it is characteristically Christ, the substance of that life by the Spirit, whom (i.e. Christ) we preach (καταγγελλω not ευαγγελλω), warning every man and teaching every man, that I (says Paul) may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, he laboring in the power of God to this end which worked in him in divine energy.

) This was the "justification" of Rom. 4:25, and "for Jesus' sake, 1 Cor. 4:5.)

Chapter 2:1-7. The apostle would not have the depths of the dispensations of the grace of God remain unknown to any, not even to those that had never seen him. He declares that he has earnestly pleaded with God that the blessings of that grace which he had committed to him to make known might be vouchsafed to them; that their hearts might be comforted (having been), knit together in love, and unto the full assurance of understanding unto acquaintance with the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ The saints, strangers in the world, bound together in the same hope, are comforted, having been knit together in love, and being knit in the gospel, have reached an apprehension unto the full assurance of understanding, even unto the acquaintance with the nature of the mystery of God.. It is to guard them from everything that would be presented to them in the place of Christ.

He rejoices at their firmness and order. As they had received Christ Jesus the Lord, so let them continue to walk, rooted and built up in Him, confirmed in the faith we have before heard of, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

8-10. To the believing soul, every word is in these words a volume. Christ in whom dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily being He in whom the saints are completed -faith in Him, in all we have in Him, faith in our place in him; faith working by love.

11, 12. From this verse onward, we find the moral and practical and formal application of the truth set out in this epistle. Still, however, it is " in whom" all is found. To think to find it elsewhere is Antichrist. " In whom " ye are circumcised-the end of the flesh and its power on the eighth day (ever the token of resurrection), makes a dead body of it by the Spirit-the good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ raised by the glory of the Father, and dwelling in the newness of " this life." By faith we see the old man, and everything that could apply to him, buried by baptism in the grave of Christ, " in whom " we are risen through faith of the operation of God that raised up Jesus. Our business is with life-His life, and we ascend with Him.

13. To you hath He forgiven all trespasses who were dead in them, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, and quickened you in His risen life. What have ordinances to say to you? Ordinances which were ordained for the flesh and for trespasses and sins. Ordinances are the dead works under the law, from which your conscience is purged by the blood of Christ. They no longer serve any

purpose. But we here come to a more obscure expression, evident however in considering the nature and order of the dispensation now laid aside. There are special warnings against two evils-re-introduction of ordinances as a principle of religion, and adopting the patronage of angels. Both of these had place from God in the dispensation that had vanished away.

The Jewish people received the law by the dispensation of angels. (Acts 7:53.) It had been committed to them in this prior order of things. The world to come, of which Israel will be the head, will not be subject to them, but to the Son.

This inferior agency, and all that was subject to it by the will of God, had never any place to the Church, save, as angels are to minister to the heirs of salvation, a place of service instead of superiority. Ordinances take altogether a secondary place to the Church, they, being in the kingdom. They were once the connecting link with God. Christ is so now. When, therefore, God in His wisdom sent Christ the Son into the world, it was to take all things to Himself, and bring the world back to God under Himself. He now sits at the right hand of power. All handwriting of ordinances which was against us was nailed to His cross, and all authority overthrown but His. These things were thrown out into the world, the place of the excommunicate. And they became rudiments of the world, beggarly elements. Satan has taken advantage of the honor in which they once stood by the divine appointment, and has corrupted the souls which he could not overthrow by violence, by the re-introduction of those things which render the faith of Christ of no effect. Angels too were applied to as mediators, all which things so easily in false humility lay hold of the fleshly mind, which looks into things it has not seen, and judges of God by it.

It is most needful to see that God, in the spiritual institution of the Church, had provided helps and the joints and bands under the Head, thus showing the guard which the institution of the body of Christ in its character in the Church and administration was against this dangerous relapse; and in its positive force, when held to, in having nourishment ministered, and knit together, and increasing the increase of God (see Greek).

If ye are then dead in Christ to the elements of that which is of this world, why do ye found your ways upon ordinances And what did the rules of the law do but prohibit things which God hath given to be received with thanksgiving- for our needs, and which perish with the using, distorting thus the gracious purposes of God.

All variety of argument is answered by the single word, " It is not the way of God in Christ." He that is dead bath been justified from sin. (Rom. 6; see margin.) Risen, ascended, glorified in Him. Presented thus in His life, ascension, and glory. We ourselves are within reach of all things in Him.*

Chapter 3:1-11. The beginning of this chapter lays the foundation of heavenly and divine practice.

Every believer by grace, risen in Christ and before God in Him-in the perfectness of His risen life and Christ in them, is called (faith working by love) to be exercised-to walk in the way of this divine life, to bring by Him all that was contrary to that life into death, to make a dead body of it, so that life should find place. " If (or since) ye are risen in Him, set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth."

It is said to believers (in chap. 2. 20), ye are dead from the rudiments of the world (whatever virtue these may pretend to), and are risen in Him, and, risen in Him, are now in the condition of receiving a real and effective grace. Few feel the enemy to God which the mere flesh (and its motions) is, -its contrariety to Him, its judgment, its doom. As the deeper evil of the sins of the flesh, with covetousness, which is the worship of another god, came first in the list of all that was in the body of sin on the cross (and for such the wrath of God cometh on the children of unbelief), but mortified in the risen life that is in God.

These also must follow their communications among the saints about these things, and the mischiefs of the spirit of man, under the power of the flesh, and might even find occasion and do show themselves in the human spirit about the things of God.

The fullness and closeness of the word in some places is so great that it is by nothing but dwelling long on it by the Spirit, and believing' the words as they stand, that will lead us to a just apprehension of the gracious purposes of God in them. And such a dwelling on them must be by the soul going back to those original deep actings of God, on which the call to holiness and the ways of life are founded.

To what power in the soul in the power of God would you say-" Mortify therefore "3

The conflict on the old ground is displaced. It is no double or separate power, it is the power of God in the soul in connection with Himself before whom in Christ, in the fullness of Christ for us, we stand, being presented before God in Him risen, and not only risen but ascended, by which is access, and also for every occasion that the soul in faith can be exposed to, and therefore glorified.

This is the only moral standing of' the Christian, or the way of it, " Mortify. therefore,"

We now advance to the relationship one with another, the fellowship being so put before us that the reality can only be in the fullness of that fellowship, can only be perfect in the fullness of condition in God. (1 John 1:7.) " Lie not one to another, for ye are members one of another." Put off the old man, put on the new man; and in the measure of acquaintance with it, after the image of Him that created him-Christ.

In this character of the new man, there can be none of the difference that exists from race and circumstances among men. Every member is a member of Christ Himself, and, in obligation of conformity to this character., There can be no distinction in this; Christ is the whole (τα παντα), and in all diversities in those that are His alike.

12, 13. We now get a further exhortation on the ground of this portion in Christ. Put on as holy (hagioi) and beloved, the bowels of the compassion of Christ, and lowliness, meekness, long-suffering. The ground of mutual forgiveness and forbearing one another is on the ground of the standing of the settled forgiveness of the believer, not as in the prayers given to the apostles before the grace of the death of Christ was known to them; the motive proposed in the one being the previous forgiveness of trespasses by themselves, the other looked for on the ground of an acceptance by grace already existing.

' 14. We are now introduced to the highest step-over all these superinduce 'CHARITY.

Charity is the quality of God Himself, in divine grace (1 John 4), or rather God Himself.

In the first measure of charity we love God, because He first loved us. Every motive as to another has self in it; but the full measure is love perfected in us (not to us, as the received translation). It would mean God's condition in the soul, the bond of perfectness to all and upon all occasions. And we are told it is the capacity to testify that God so loved the world that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. The former measures the qualities of the new man in Christ, and the measure of Christ in Him. He that abideth in this, abideth in God, and God in him. Therefore, said the apostle, "superinduce charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

15. How well can the apostle now exhort them with the words, " Let the peace of Christ" (which is the better reading) " rule in your hearts; for now it is in the perfectness of church-condition, for it is in this you are called in one body; and be ye thankful." This is a peace that may grow. I know that my Father loveth me, because I do those things that please Him. Let no man deceive you; he that worketh righteousness is righteous, as (καθως, after the same manner) Christ is righteous.

The degree is the degree of being like Him. So will your fellowship too be perfected, which can alone be by a walk in the light, as God is in the light. (1 John 2:5.)

16, 17. We have in these two verses the blessed character.-of the intercourse for the growth of the saints, and the soul's worship with the perfectness of conscience in word and deed, giving thanks to God who is our Father by Christ. What are the disjecta membra by the side of this Surely it is a device

, of Satan that they melt away again and be lost in the world.

18. Chapter 4:1. At this place in the epistle we enter on the exercise of common life in the body; viz., among those who are the subjects of all this blessing. One has but to say, " Let men try." Let such as know the Lord put themselves under the word of the Lord, in obedience to the Lord. It is to walk by faith; for He is not here, but seen in faith over those that walk on earth and in the midst of earthly things and in the relationships of nature under Him. Those relationships are not left to the best care which men are used to give to them, for their own objects in some measure, sometimes of the fear of God, but in ignorance of the ways of God; but there is a way under the Lord, with reward in the kingdom in which these are, when it is manifested in power, as is expressly said at the end of this chapter; viz., that such as do these things to the Lord shall of the Lord receive the reward of the inheritance. Likeness finds its place in heaven, and service its reward on earth in the day of the glory of the kingdom.*

The place of the twelve Apostles in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21) is not on earth; it is heavenly, and in the city not come, down to earth. Paul may have a place in that city too, though not the place of a foundation. That there may be also an earthly side to the twelve Apostles' reward, and to Paul's too, I do not deny.

Certainly I do not read 1 Thess. 2:19,20;3. 13; 4. 13, 14, and 15, 17; 5. as expressing Paul's hopes of reward on earth, but in heaven.

I might refer also to the promises to the Seven Churches, Rev. 2 and 3.-Editor.)

It is the authority of the Lord they obey, and therefore to be done to Him as in the person of those to whom they obey in their respective duties. Masters are cautioned.

2. Nothing should be left behind us in the word; God is to be waited for, as well as to be waited on, for the teaching we are to receive.

We shall ever be vouchsafed more light and understanding of the things of the Lord by the Spirit in the measure in which we are in subjection to His authority. For it was always in the measure of this that He revealed the hidden things of His teaching, and will still by the Spirit, as He gave the Holy Ghost at first to them that obeyed Him.

It would seem very simple to say or hear, " Continue (constant) in prayer, and watching in the same with thanksgiving." In hearing it, how often our souls would fail in the thought of what we should pray for in such a manner. It is not merely the praying of individuals, as necessity or difficulty arises to themselves. There must always be felt the need of getting something from God, on whom we are depending as the giver, and that need, felt in the soul, making all our requests known to God in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving; i.e. in blessing God for the way made for us to His presence, and the love that has embraced us. But as God acquaints us with His counsels for the Church, the need of the saints is the truth twice set before us in this epistle; so also twice in different degrees in the Ephesians. Surely the value of the prize, and the way to it, would, to the conscious soul, be ever suggestive of entreaty.

In the Corinthians it was on the subject of that epistle.

In the epistle to the Thessalonians it is that they may be found worthy by the confession of their calling-individual prayer (i.e. for ourselves). Besides, we may say the requests for all we are charged with will be for ourselves in that dependence that brings forth God to help; and this will be greatly, in the knowledge of. the grace of God in truth, confession, till we reach the needed revelation of recovery and power, and also for our usefulness in service.

Watching in prayer seems an extension of the thought of perseverance; watching unto it would be to turn every occasion into a position of dependence on God. The apostle suggests a subject to their petition for himself in his service to the Lord.

In conclusion of the spiritual portion of the epistle, the apostle charges them to walk wisely to them that are without, commending Christ by their walk; they have to learn wisdom for the practice of their position as confessing the Lord in the world which knows Him not. As to " redeeming the time " (Eph. 5:16), it is added, " because the days are evil," it would be saving the time to good ends, which in the world is used to evil. He closes with a charge that their words should not be idle, but in love, and seasoned with that salt that must be in themselves.

Epaphras is again mentioned with the character we find

given him by the apostle in the former part of the epistle, and we have what his prayer is for the Colossians, that they may stand of full age and fulfilled in all the will of _God.

It is exceedingly to be remarked, that the apostle is anxious to keep up fellowship in the confession of the UNITY OF THE BODY, by engaging the interest of the several assemblies, one in another, desiring that the epistles to those two churches should be mutually communicated.

In the circumstance of his being a prisoner, and his work suspended, they had much to remember him about. He concludes with " Grace (favor and the free mercies of God) be with you. Amen."

APPENDIX.

Critics have generally left out the words, "of the Father and of Christ," which, with the addition of " and," are kept in the received text. There is a considerable variety of readings in this place, while there is very unimportant testimony for their being quite left out, perhaps none. As they stand above, they may be understood as belonging to the profound character of this epistle. But it is a matter of testimony; and this does not make it imperative to leave them out, as it is the variety of form and not the exclusion 'that the MSS. show.

To what would attach " in whom"? It is in strict standing with the character of this epistle, charged with setting forth Christ as the Head and fullness of all things; and, therefore, it is in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. "In which," as applied to the mystery of God (the words being left out) must embrace the same thought, for the mystery of God is the Church; and the Church stands in the relation of the Son to the Father; Christ being the name of the Lord, is rather used because it is His name specially in this epistle. And what have we in the sequel of this chapter? Every variety that could be offered in the place of Christ; in fact, Antichrist. Antichrist denies the Father and the Son. The Apostle feared their being beguiled with enticing words of philosophy and deceit from the faith of HIM. I cannot deny the Father and the Son more completely (for my interest in God) than in denying the relationship of the Church in the relationship of the Son to the Father; denying thus the Holy Ghost as given to dwell in the Church.

The mystery of God, therefore, is in this relationship. And these words may be taken as standing as an addition, being a form of language not unknown to the Greek of the New Testament, and the name of Christ thus brought in keeping with the depth and purpose in this epistle. Such, in either case, however, would be the force of the place. How deep a work of Satan it is, thus given to us to see, in having revealed his enmity against the truth of the ONE BODY to which the Holy Ghost here so distinctly leads the saints in this place, in leading them in the way to it as a solid refuge appointed of God in Christ. One body, one Spirit, confessing the Lord is that in which Satan, assailing the faith of the saints, would assail all their steadfastness in Christ.

The mystery of God, the mystery of the Father and of Christ in this respect, is that which the Holy Ghost brings forward to secure them from the wiles and corruptions developed in the sequel of the chapter. How can then we, with such truth here set before us, be satisfied with the thought that the disjectamembra of Christ are scripturally the body of Christ, while the security of the faith is here shown to be in the apprehension of its being knit together under Christ its Head, lest the abuses of superstition should displace its true connection; or philosophy and vain deceit and other evils overthrow the mystery made known in this epistle of " Christ in you, the hope of glory," which is the sacred deposit to be maintained among them. It may be, that the ruin is such that, through the desire of some of keeping the saints scattered, that they may be as Diotrefes among them, or sects claiming the agency of the faith in the world, or the divine thought (lost in the condemned world), that there may be but here and there one and another conscientiously separating themselves from the evil, who find themselves together walking in the steps of the faith of Abraham in dependance upon God; yet the blessings of the mystery of God may rest upon them by faith of the dispensation of God. " Have faith in God,' says the Lord. But how close must their

way be with Him; how close to the sanctuary; nothing else will prevent the simplicity of Christ proving light food, and they have the Word which, with the help of God, leads to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.

Discipline and Unity of the Assembly

Two principles seem to be at work at the present moment which it may be well to notice in connection with the title of this publication-the present testimony. We are living in a time when all things are in question, and principles of every kind abroad. If there, are such as seem to destroy the very position of the saints as a testimony in the midst of Christendom-a conscious and intelligent testimony-it is not amiss that attention should be drawn to them. The two principles I refer to are-First,-the denial of the obligation of a Christian assembly to maintain purity, in order to be owned such, or rather the denying that if it allow evil within itself it becomes defiled, and,-Secondly,-the denial of the unity of the body, as regards the Church here on earth.

I have heard in such various quarters, both as to morals and doctrine, that no assembly of Christians can be defiled by any evil in it; and even that it has to go on and leave it to the Lord to lay His hand upon the evil and put it out,-that I must suppose it to be a principle generally admitted. And what has been often alleged in individual argument on the second point noticed above, is now maintained in a tract which has been voluntarily sent me, I suppose for my edification, and which I therefore now take notice of. I am ignorant who is its author, and discuss its principles briefly, as a subject that it is well to bring before the minds of many.

A tract has also been sent me on the first point; I have heard by report who is its author, but shall here simply discuss its principles. The two questions are,-Can there be corporate defilement by allowed evil in morals or doctrine; and is there any unity of the Church of God upon earth.

It has been openly contended, that if fornication be allowed in a body of Christians, it is no ground for separating from it. This has been met by others; indeed, exposing it in daylight was the best way of meeting it. To say that Christians were to separate from the world, to detach themselves from the great body of the professing Church because of ecclesiastical evils, and then to affirm that positive immorality did not defile their community; but that, supposing it was allowed, saints should still own such a meeting all the same, was a proposition so monstrous, such a preference of ecclesiastical notions to the unalterable morality of God in the Gospel, that one can only wonder how it was possible any Christians could have got into such a state of moral darkness. It was a solemn witness of the effect of false principles. With the individuals or their meeting, we have, of course, nothing to do, save as the charity of Christ demands. We speak Of principles; and let us see where these would lead. Those who are inside such a meeting of Christians are not allowed to break with them. They are bound to accept the companionship of sin,-bound to accept disobedience to the apostles' rule, " put out from among yourselves that wicked person." They must live in constant communion with evil, and constantly, in the most solemn act of Christianity, affirm the fellowship of light and darkness. But this is not all. In such kind of meetings, a meeting in one place receives, as did the Scriptural Churches, those in communion in another, and, when formally done, by letters of commendation. Suppose the fornicator, or even those who have maintained his continuing in the meeting, another allowance thus of sin to be commended, or to come, as in communion, from the supposed meeting; and if they receive him deliberately at home,

they must of course give him, so far as they are concerned, the same title abroad, and he is received elsewhere, and thus the deliberate wickedness of a majority of the meeting to which he belongs, or of the whole of it, if you please, obliges thus every Christian meeting,-and When the Church of God was in order we might say every Church of God in the world, to put its seal on communion with sin and evil, and -say that sin could be freely admitted at the table of the Lord, and Christ and Belial get on perfectly well together; or, break with the meeting or Church, that is, disown its being such at all. But if they ought, those who have any conscience in the meeting itself ought.

The National Establishment is incomparably better than this. There there is no pretension to discipline, each one is pious for himself. Here, sin, and communion with sin at the Lord's table, is sanctioned on principle. And if it is admitted that it ought not to be allowed, it is declared, that if it is deliberately allowed, every one must acquiesce in it, the meeting is not defiled, and the disobedient sinners have a right to force the whole Church of God to accept it, if not in principle, in practice, and deny their principles. It is the Church of God securing as such, and by its special privilege and title, the rights of sin against Christ. How it would be possible to conceive anything worse I cannot imagine; it really seems to me the most wicked principle that possibly can be thought of And it is not merely the habits of a particular class of Christians Which lead to this; the scriptural order of the Church of God as shown in the Scriptures, involves this sanction of sin if this theory be true. No person can deny that saints passed from one assembly to another, and if belonging to one were received in another. It was not an organization of Churches, such as Presbyterianism or Episcopacy,' which I name here only to be understood, but it was a full recognition of them as expressions of the unity of the body of Christ. We see the saints going from one, and received as such in another, and that in virtue of letters commendatory. It was because each assembly was owned as representing the body of Christ in its locality that others were bound to receive those who belonged to it as being members of that body. Each local assembly was responsible within itself to maintain the order and godliness suited to the assembly of God, and was to be trusted in it; it is not disputing the competency of the local assembly, but owning it, when I receive a person because they belong to it. If I do not receive a person who belongs to it, I deny its being a competent witness of the unity of the body of Christ. Now it is exactly in this place the Spirit of God puts the local assembly at Corinth; not denying the unity of all saints on earth in one body, but owning the local assembly as so far representing it. " Ye are the body of Christ, and members one of another." Now if I -own the assembly at Corinth, or any where else to hold that place, surely I must receive a person belonging to it, as a member of the body of Christ-other membership I do. not own. I quite agree that Scripture, owns no other; but, for that very reason, when the apostle says, " Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular, and we are all one body, for we are all partakers of that One loaf," I am bound to own the assembly as representing the body; and those who partake of the one loaf -as members of the body. If I do not, I fall into the principle of a mere voluntary association, which makes rules for itself, and does what it pleases. Amos 1, then, to hold, as representing the unity of the body, and acting by the Spirit with the Lord's authority, an assembly which sanctions sin, and says it is not defiled by it? or, on the other hand, suppose such an assembly, say at Corinth, had put out from among themselves the wicked person, and another assembly received him, the latter thereby denies that the first has acted in the character of an assembly of God, representing there the body of Christ. It denies the action of the Holy Ghost in the assembly, or that what has been bound on earth has been bound in heaven; it is

a mere sophism to suppose that because an organization formed of assemblies is disowned, the responsibility of each assembly to the Lord is disowned, and its competent action by the Holy Ghost in - the matters of the Church of God. If a person was put out at Corinth, and received at Ephesus, the action of the Holy Ghost in the body at Corinth was denied, or Ephesus refused the action and denied the authority of the Holy Ghost and of Christ; that is, the assemblies were owned because each did, in its locality, act under the Lord and by the Holy Ghost. No doubt they might, fail; Corinth would have failed but for the intervention of the Spirit by the apostle. But such is the scriptural principle, and that which we have to look for in an assembly; and the assembly is owned because it acts., by the Holy Ghost under the authority of the Lord. This point being cleared, and 1st Corinthians seems to me not to leave a trace of doubt on it, I would turn to another-the consequent responsibility of the Christians who compose it. They are to act for Christ by the Holy Ghost. " Put out from among yourselves that wicked person." Paul forces it on the assembly; so in cases of wrong it is finally told to the assembly, and the " without " and " within " refer to - it; that is, I get the body responsible as well as competent. The Lord, who knew all the coming history of His Church, has extended this in His grace to two or three gathered in His name, and connects this with discipline and being heard. When two or three are gathered in His name, there is He in the midst of them. Thus, while fully admitting that all the saints in a locality constitute properly the one assembly in a place, if they will not unite, the responsibility and the presence of the Lord are found with those who do, and their acts, if really done as met in His name, have His authority; that is, another such assembly must own the assembly and their acts, or disown their connection with the Lord. I do not mean that if they fail in any particular case they may not be remonstrated with, entreated, and so on; but, in a regular way, one assembly owns the action of the other, according to the promise of the Lord's presence, because if it be a true assembly it owns the Lord's own action in it, its. own Lord's action and the assembly as His. It is not a voluntary Church, but a scriptural divine assembly; if they are not so gathered, and do not own the unity of the body, the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, and the presence of Jesus as so gathered together in His only name, I do not own the assembly, though I may the saints who compose it. In the other case I am bound to do so.

But, further, we find that the assembly at Corinth did not put out the wicked person, and the apostle set about to correct this, and, indeed, would not go there while they were in this state, unless it were to exercise rigorous severity. His words, in speaking of it in the second Epistle, show that he thought they were involved in the evil by allowing it,-" Ye have proved yourselves clear in this matter." His complaint was that there was sin, leaven,-not merely a sinner, but sin among them, and ignorant as yet of discipline, they had not grieved so as that God should have removed the evil-doer from their midst, and tells them to purge out the old leaven (not merely to put the person out, which was his practical direction) that they might be a new lump as they were unleavened. They, acquiescing in the sin, were involved in it; they were viewed in Christ and their true standing as unleavened; but they were to put out the old leaven that they might be a new lump, that-their. actual condition and standing might agree, otherwise they, the assembly, was not a new lump. Hence, in the second Epistle, when the first had produced its effect,- the Apostle says "that they had proved themselves clear in this matter;" but, if acquiescing in it, they were not clear. The assembly was not a new lump, and the members of it were not clear, it' they accepted the principle of allowing sin in their midst. To use the title of our standing as a sanction for acquiescing in sin, in fact, in the assembly, Saying it cannot be defiled, is a most evil and pestilential doctrine;.

and that persons in it not guilty of the sin in act, are clear, though they acquiesce in it, is a thoroughly wicked principle, and directly contrary to Scripture.

But, more, an assembly which admits such a principle has forfeited its title. to be owned in the way I have spoken of above. We have seen it is a common 'point agreed upon, that the particular assembly, met truly in the Lord's name, represents the body of Christ, and Christ is to be looked for in their midst. But I cannot 'own an assembly which admits or acquiesces in sin, which takes this ground, that sin does not defile it, to represent the body of Christ, or to be met in Christ's name. It is to make Christ acquiesce in the sin,-" a minister of sin "-God forbid! Christ's body, and we declare by " the one loaf" that we are one body, is a holy body; I cannot-say I am one body with sinners. That a sinner or hypocrite may have slipped in we all admit; but I do not own him. But if a body admit, or acquiesce in sinners being there, it ceases to have the character of Christ's body altogether, or Christ's body is compatible with known sin; that is, the Holy Ghost and Christ present admit and allow the sin. This doctrine (of the assembly not being defiled by known sin being there) is a direct denial of the presence of the Holy Ghost making them one, and of the authority of a present Lord. Does He accept sin in the members of the body? If not, those who do are acting as a voluntary meeting, acting on their own rules, not admitting the animating power of the Spirit of Christ; for it is a blasphemy to say He admits sin in those who belong to Him; an assembly which has this doctrine is not an assembly of God at all. Carelessness there may be-it should be corrected; but he who, as a principle, owns the existence of sin in the assembly, and denies it is defiled, denies its unity and the Lord's presence; that is, it is not an assembly met in His name at all. What I think essential in this matter is the promised presence of the Lord, and the acting of the Spirit of God. If this be so, if I own the Lord I must own the assembly and its acts; if it has a principle contrary to the presence of the Lord and the action of the Holy Ghost, I cannot own it as His.

The other question to which I adverted at the commencement is the recognition of Christ's body on earth. That which is taught in the tract sent to me, is mere Congregationalism or Independency. I will give an extract or two from it.

" Now were we to understand the unity thus prayed for as designed to consist in all the disciples of Jesus, throughout the world, being visibly united and forming one community on earth; or in any considerable number of them resident in any particular country or very large city being thus united, we should assuredly be at a loss to see how this prayer has hitherto been answered. But it formed no part of the commission which the risen Savior gave "the apostles to execute, that they should form all those of whom by the preaching of the gospel they made disciples into one visibly-connected religious community. This, accordingly, is what the apostles, when planting churches and setting them in order, never aimed at, and so soon as there were other churches planted in addition to the first Church formed at Jerusalem; believers ceased to form in all respects one community. We read afterward, accordingly, not of one Church or religious community, but of numerous distinct religious communities independent of each other; We read of the Churches of Judea,' of Asia, of Macedonia, of Galatia, and of the Churches of the Saints,' that were planted in the different other countries and cities, in which converts were made to the Christian faith." (p. 2.)

I only add what it associates itself with. The existence of sects, through the attempt to organize into one body, as the writer alleges, " is probably the principal obstruction to that ample effusion of

the Spirit which is essential to the renovation of the world." (p. 9.) I will add another: " Such is the oneness, it would appear, for which our Lord prayed in behalf of His disciples-a oneness invisible to mortal eye, but distinctly seen by the Omniscient." (p. 12.) The absurdity of this is evident, if we only read the passage in John referred to. " That the world may believe that thou hast sent me." So the world was led to believe by " a oneness invisible to mortal eye "? This, however, to give the idea of the author complete, " was to be the foundation of a farther union--a union of a visible kind " (p. 14);... " the manifestation of it given by every assembly of Christ's disciples." (p. 15.) This is fulfilling the "highly responsible office of giving a just representation of Christ's one body." (p. 15.) " Thus we are impressively taught, that as the human body is one, so also is Christ's spiritual body, the Church, one. But the mystical one body ' of Christ is nowhere to be seen in this world; nor is the Church universal anywhere to be seen on earth as one body except by 'representation. Where, then, is that representation given? It is given; Scripture answers, by every scripturally-constituted Church which endeavors to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' In such a body alone-a body which is the institution of infinite wisdom-is Christian unity manifested, and the ' oneness' of Christ's body to be seen." (p. 17.) The author then states, there is the invisible unity, and "of this spiritual unity there is a visible -representation given by every assembly of Christ's disciples united on their profession of the one faith, walking together in love in the observance of all things the Lord Jesus has commanded, while endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Viewed in the first aspect, Christian unity is much more perfect than when viewed in the latter. Though the one is a divinely-appointed representation of the other, owing to man's -failure - and imperfection in this mortal state, it -is often, and indeed at best; but an imperfect representation." (pp. 19, 20.)

But the author goes further: "The universal Church of Christ may, therefore, be correctly viewed as one in reference to Him, its supreme Head in heaven; but it is not one community on earth, and the various schemes that have been devised to connect Christians in different districts of the same 'country under the same government, whether the government be avowed or merely virtually exercised, have been all futile attempts to accomplish what was never designed to exist." (p. 22.) Again (p. 3), " It formed no part of the commission which the risen Savior gave the apostles to execute, that they should form all those of whom by the preaching of the gospel they made disciples, into one visibly-connected religious community. This, accordingly, is what the apostles, when planting churches and setting them in order, never aimed at; and, so soon as there were other churches planted, in addition to the first Church formed at Jerusalem, believers ceased to form in all respects one community. We read afterward, accordingly, not of one church or religious community, but of numerous distinct religious communities independent of each other," etc. (p. 3.)

" Under such circumstances, if disciples thought it advantageous to meet in separate assemblies in the same city or neighborhood, there would not be any interference with Christian unity; for, as an indefinite number of churches in the same district of country independent of each other, was not considered inconsistent with Christian unity in the apostolic age, neither ought it to be considered inconsistent with it now." (p. 24.)

These extracts will suffice to give the writer's mind. I affirm, that, with the exception of the fact, that local assemblies were formed, every statement of it is in direct contradiction with Scripture, and that the very truth which the Spirit of God has been rescuing from the corruption of ages, is laboriously denied in it. The best way to show this will be to quote Scripture as I have quoted the

author. Our author quotes Rom. 12:4,5; Col. 2:17,19; and Eph. 4; and 1 Cor. 12, and says, "Why, it may be profitable to ask, is an assembly of believers such as the assembly at Corinth, to whom Paul wrote, united in faith and love to the Lord Jesus, and united by ties of love and sympathy to one another, compared to the human body?" (p. 16.) To whom, then, was this comparison designed to apply? Was it designed to apply to the mystical body of Christ, or to what is sometimes called the Holy Catholic... Church, which, correctly viewed, is the same thing; or was it designed to apply to an individual assembly of disciples? It was designed, we apprehend, to apply to both." (pp. 16, 17.) It is then he states what has been already quoted, -" But the mystical one body' of Christ is no where to be seen in this world; nor is the Church universal anywhere to be seen on earth, as one body except by representation. Where, then, is that representation given? It is given, Scripture answers, by every scripturally constituted Church." (p. 17.) Now I have already recognized the responsibility of each local assembly in faithful discipline and unity, as locally representing the whole body, because the Spirit and the Lord are there, so that they act by an authority which necessarily is binding on every other assembly, saving allowance, as all do, for human failure, if the assembly be a true one.

The question is, Is any one body recognized on earth? We are told " it formed no part of the commission which the risen Savior gave the apostles to execute, that they should form all those of whom by the preaching of the Gospel they made disciples into one visibly connected religious community." (p. 3.) This assertion is easily disposed of. It is wholly beside the mark in every respect. There is not a word about churches-, church, community, or communities, in the commission of the apostles. The mission or missions given by the risen Savior had nothing to say to them. Either the Gospel was to every creature unto salvation or condemnation, or repentance and remission of sins to be preached among all nations, or the nations were to be made disciples of. There is a Church spoken of; but the Lord is the builder or adder to it; this is never said of churches. But even when the apostles' work in this respect is spoken of, it is in general, or the whole assembly of God is spoken of, not particular assemblies, though such we know were formed, and in a practical sense in their own sphere represented the whole assembly. But the denial of an assembly as one whole on earth is a great and mischievous error; we will consult the Scriptures. The author distinctly states, -" We read afterward, accordingly, not of one Church or religious community, but of numerous distinct religious communities independent of each other." (p. 3.) This is in the teeth of Scripture. " Scripture teaches that it is the bounden duty of every one who becomes a disciple of Jesus openly to profess his faith and unite himself with a company of his fellow disciples." (p. 33.) I deny this entirely. Scripture NEVER teaches anything of the kind; they were added to the assembly, nor is there such an idea in Scripture as uniting himself with a Church. The writer does not tell us where Scripture teaches it, for the best of reasons, because he cannot. Nor can any one be called on to prove a negation, but we shall find that Scripture speaks quite otherwise on the subject. Disciples were added to the Lord and became thus a part of the assembly.

Let us now take up Scripture, and see how it speaks on the subject. The first place the assembly is spoken of is in Matt. 16-" On this rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of hell (Hades) shall not prevail against it." Now, building the assembly is not even mystical union of individuals with the Head in heaven. It supposes a system established on earth-a building, one assembly. The end of the clause is the plainest proof of this: a promise that the gates of Hades should not prevail against

mystical union with Christ in heaven to the exclusion of the conditions of a Church on earth, is an interpretation which condemns itself. The gates of Hades have nothing to say to individual mystical union with Christ in heaven. In Matt. 18, as we have seen, for the administrative authority of discipline, two or three met in Christ's name are sufficient.

I turn to the Acts. Here we see how the assembly was formed; as yet there was no difference between the assembly and assemblies. The Lord had declared He would build His assembly, and He was doing it; there was no idea of the duty of joining a man's self to a community of disciples. A Jew, or a heathen, as soon as Cornelius was called, was converted to have share in the promises and calling of God. He was introduced (I raise here no special questions on the subject) by baptism most certainly, not into any particular assembly. Into what then? Into THE assembly; he was publicly admitted among Christians; and now mark how it is as to the work itself spoken of. "The Lord added daily to the assembly such as should be saved." The Lord added. It was His work, and He added to the assembly. That is what He did with the remnant, preserved according to the election of grace. He did not restore Israel; he added them to the assembly, the nation being about to be cut off. They were put upon earth into this new position; also it was evident that the assembly was upon earth. It was according to the saying, "He died to gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Now, if the unity were only the mystical one, if they were believers, they had no need of being gathered into one. They could not be scattered; their unity, as the tract tells us, was constant and unchangeable. Yet Jesus gave Himself to gather them together into one. The fact of baptism being the means of public admission; makes the idea of joining a Church impossible. The Church had put its public sanction on them, and received them, and they had a place, and were bound to take it, wherever they went in God's assembly. We may now turn to the Church's dealings with them when they were written; the first of Corinthians will here afford us divine light.

In the first of 'Corinthians it is of moment to remark, because it is the epistle in which a local assembly is spoken of as practically, in certain respects, representing the whole assembly of God, that the epistle is addressed to all believers everywhere--all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. We get a Church-character, but the Apostle in his address is careful to associate all Christians with those at Corinth. Hence, if one was put out as a wicked person by the assembly at Corinth, he was "Without," i.e. outside the whole Church of God; not of the body of Christ vitally, but the assembly on earth. Nor can you indeed read the entire epistle without seeing that what was said by the Apostle, and consequently done by the assembly at Corinth, was an act valid for the whole body of saints on earth; that they are viewed as involved in it, as indeed they are expressly mentioned. To say he was only outside the particular assembly when he was put out of it, is a monstrous and mischievous perversion. When the Apostle says "them within," and "them that are without," to say that he only means within or without a particular body (do ye not judge them that are within; them that are without God judgeth); it is clearly "within," or "without," on earth; and it is clearly not within or without a particular assembly; the difference is between Christians and men of the world. Within and without, that is, applies to the whole assembly of Christ on the earth; they were the fornicators of this world, or one called a brother. In Corinth, to be of the assembly they must be of the local assembly, unless in schism; but if called "a brother," they were of the assembly, not because they had joined that particular body, but because they were Christians not excluded by just discipline. I now turn to the twelfth chapter, which will make

the matter as clear as possible; and, while it shows that a local assembly, viewed in association with all Christians everywhere on earth, practically represents and acts for all saints with the Lord's authority if gathered in His name, yet shows that the Apostle has in mind THE assembly, not an assembly. "But all these worketh one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will; for as the body is one, and there are many members, and all the members of that body being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." The tract tells us, " Every member of Christ's ' one body' forms a constituent part of a great Church or assembly, of which the Head is in. heaven." (p. 21.).. " The universal Church of Christ may, therefore, be correctly viewed as one in reference to Him, its supreme Head in heaven, but it is not one community on earth." (p, 21) Again, " It's true spiritual unity has reference to its future existence and appearance in glory." (p. 21.) In another place we are told " It applies to the mystical. body of Christ-the Church universal; but that it applies also to a particular assembly of believers." (p. 17.) Now, I affirm that the passage can apply to neither (save so far as the Church universal itself is seen on earth), and solely to this last. The. subject of the chapter is spiritual gifts, and the figure of the body is not used in view of mere personal union with Christ (important, yea, yet more important as that doctrine surely is), but of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. The Church universal is not viewed as in heaven, in its Head, but as on earth in its members; they have all been baptized with that one Spirit, to make one body-the members are the gifts. All are members, and the Holy. Ghost distributes as He will. Where are these gifts exercised, and to what do they belong? They are exercised on earth, that is a clear case; there is no evangelizing nor healing of the sick in

heaven. But they do not belong to a particular assembly, but to the assembly; and God hath set some in the assembly; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healing, etc. Now nothing can be plainer or more positive than this; these gifts are exercised on earth; they are set in the assembly; they were not even all exercised in an assembly as apostles might be preaching to the world. Miracles might be wrought in the world, or healing take place, but they were members of the body who wrought; they were set in the assembly This chapter shows in the distinctest manner possible that, while Scripture clearly owns local assemblies whose responsibilities and acts we have already considered, the action of the Holy Ghost is viewed as forming, and acting in one assembly on the..earth, and is viewed only as on earth,- to the exclusion of what it will be in heaven, as is evident from the exercise of the gifts, and their nature. The whole scriptural view of the Holy Ghost's operation is denied by the teaching of the tract, as indeed the true nature of a local assembly is also. If Apollos taught, at Ephesus, he taught when he went to Corinth. He was a Christian, and thereby necessarily belonged to the assembly of Christians at Corinth, because it was the assembly of the Christians who were there. This does not hinder discipline, but makes the discipline valid as to the whole assembly of God.

If I turn to the Ephesians, more especially consecrated to the instruction of Christians on the highest privileges of individual saints, or of the Church, I find the same truth. "Ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;" that is; Jews and Gentiles were reconciled in one body to God by the Cross. It was growing to its full result, but there was on earth an habitation of God through the Holy Ghost. Here unity is the great point, -one body, one Spirit, one hope. But where is this? On earth. Gifts are given to every one according to the measure of the gifts of

Christ.. When ascended, Christ gave gifts to men - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, till we all come, etc.

Thus, again, the future heavenly state is excluded.

Yet we are to keep the unity of the. Spirit in the bond of peace, for there is one Spirit and one body. The Head being. ascended He has given gifts-not in a Church; apostles and evangelists exercised their ministry, the first partly, the latter exclusively in the world, and the apostles as such clearly belonged to no particular assembly. The idea of the members. of an assembly is wholly unknown to. Scripture. It is used as a figure, and in reference, to the human body. We are likened to a body, but that body is the body of Christ.; an assembly is not His body, though it may locally represent it. I read:-" The assembly, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

Now, that predicted confusion has come in, I certainly am the last to deny; a confusion which makes one feel doubly the comfort of the promise-" Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." But this becomes a mere self-regulated, voluntary association, whenever the unity of the body on earth is not owned. They cannot take the Scriptures for their guide, they have begun by denying them in the point which established their own position. We are God's husbandry, God's building. Alas! wood, and hay, and stubble have been built upon the foundation, and perverse men have crept in, and wolves have come, ordinances and legalism have perverted Christendom, but that does, not, alter God's truth. God has foreseen all, and provided. the path of obedience in the word, and grace for it. And when we deny a scriptural truth, we may be sincere Christians, and do so from prejudice and ignorance, but we deprive ourselves of the blessing and character of sanctification attached to that truth. So where the unity of the assembly on earth is denied, the blessings attached to it are lost, as far as our personal profit goes, and these benefits are nothing less than the action of the Holy Ghost on earth, uniting us as members to-Christ, and acting as He sees right in the members down here. To deny the defilement of the assembly by the allowance of sin, and the unity of the body on earth by the presence of the Holy Ghost, is to destroy all the responsibility of the one, and all the blessing of the other, and in these points to make void the Word of God.

The Dispersed Among the Gentiles

IN the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, on which I have already meditated, we saw the captives brought back to Jerusalem, there to await the coming of the Messiah, that it might be known, whether Israel would accept the Messenger and Savior whom God would send to them. In this book of Esther, we are in a very different scene. The Jews are among the Gentiles still.

We will look at it in its succession of ten chapters; and in the action recorded, we shall find-

The Lord God working wondrously, but secretly.

The Jews themselves.

The Gentile, or the Power.

The great Adversary.

The Book opens by presenting to us a sight of the Gentile now in power. It is, however, the Persian and not the Chaldean; "the breast of silver," not "the head of gold," in the great Image which Nebuchadnezzar saw. We are here reading rather the 2nd than the 1st chapter in the history of the Gentile in supremacy in the earth. We see him in the progress rather than at the commencement of his career; but, morally, he is the same. Moab-like, his taste remains in him, his scent is not changed. All the haughtiness that declared itself in Nebuchadnezzar reappears in Ahasuerus. No spirit or fruit of repentance-no learning of himself-or of what becomes him as a creature, is seen in this man of the earth. The lie of the serpent, which formed man at the beginning, is working as earnestly as ever.

The old desire to be as God, utters itself in the Persian now, as it had afore in the Chaldean. The one had built his royal city, and looked at it in pride, and said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" The other now makes a feast, and for one hundred and eighty days, shows to the princes and nobles the whole power of his realm, "the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honor of his excellent majesty."

Nay more; for the Persian exceedeth. There is a bold affecting to be as God in Persia, which we did not see in Babylon. We notice this in three distinguished Persian ordinances.

1. No one was to appear in the royal presence unbidden. In such a case, had this ordinance of the realm been violated, life and death would hang on the pleasure of the king.
2. No one was to be sad before the king; his face or presence was to be accepted of all his people as the spring and power of joy and gladness.
3. No decree of his realm could be canceled: it stood forever.

These are assumptions indeed. This exceeds, in the way of man showing himself to be as God; and know we not, that this spirit will work till the Gentile has perfected his iniquity? But the hand of God begins to work its wonders now, in the midst of all the festivity and pride which opens the book. The joy of the royal banquet was interrupted; a stain defaces the fair form of all this

magnificence. The Gentile Queen refuses to serve the occasion, or be a tributary to this day of public rejoicing; and this leads to the manifesting of the Jew, and of ultimately making that people principal in the action, and eminent in the earth, beyond all thought or calculation.

It was a small beginning, poor and mean in its character and material. Vashti's temper, which goaded her to a course of conduct which jeopardized her life, was the "little fire" which kindled this "how great a matter." It is a miserable, despicable circumstance. What can be meaner.? The temper, we may say, of an imperious woman! And yet, God, by it, works results, then known to Himself in counsel, but the accomplishment of which shall be seen in the coming day of Jewish glory.

"Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never-failing skill,

He treasures up His bright designs,

And works His sovereign will."

Vashti is deposed. She is disclaimed as the wife of the Persian; and others more worthy are to be sought for to take her place.

Now, the question may arise, How far can one of the Jews take advantage of such an occasion? Does holiness avail itself of corruption? Can the people of God forget their Naziritism, their separation to Him? And yet, Esther consents to go before the king at this time, as in company with all the daughters of his uncircumcised subjects!

This may amaze us, if we judge of things by any light less pure and intense than that which is of God. The moral sense of mere man-the verdict of legal ordinances-the voice of Mount Sinai itself-will not do at times. We must walk in the light as God is in the light. We must know " the times," like Issachar of old, ere we can rightly say, "what Israel ought to do."

Did not some of Bethlehem-Judah take wives of the daughters of Moab, and that, too, without rebuke? Did not Joseph, in his marriage, deviate from the holiness of Abraham, and Moses from the ordinances of the law? Was not Rahab, though a daughter of the uncircumcised, adopted of Judah, and became conspicuous in the ancestry, after the flesh, of David's Lord? And did not Sampson take to wife a woman of Timnath, that belonged to the Philistines?

The people of God were not in due order on the occasions of those strange events; and this is their moral vindication. The light of divine wisdom in divine dispensation becomes the judge, rather than ordinances. The Jews were now in the dispersion. Joseph, if we please so to express it, is in Egypt again, Moses in Midian, and the sons of Bethlehem-Judah in Moab; and Esther is as much unrebuked for going in unto the King of Persia, as Joseph for marrying Asenath, or Moses for marrying Zipporah, or Mahlon for marrying Ruth; and each and all of them stand without reproach or judgment before God in these things, just as David did when he ate the show-bread. Nay, these things were of God, as Samson's marriage with a Philistine woman seems distinctly to be so recognized. (Judg. 14:4.)

Divine counsels shall be accomplished; the fruits of grace shall be gathered; and the ordinances of righteousness, and the arrangements which suit us, were we in integrity, and in well-ordered condition, shall not interfere.

The Jew, strange to say it, as we have seen, becomes important to the Power-that is, the Persian. But more so than I have as yet noticed-important to his safety as well as to his enjoyments. For Mordecai becomes his protector, as Esther had become his wife. This we see at the close of chap. ii. The King is debtor to both. In spite of all his greatness, and all the resources for happiness and strength which attached to his greatness, he is debtor to the dispersed of Judah. They are important to him. Both his heart and his head, as I may say, have to own this.

But, if the Jew be thus strangely brought into personal favor and acceptance, equally strangely is the Jew's enemy brought into high and honorable elevation, and seated in the very position which capacitated him to gratify all his enmity. An Amalekite sits next in dignity and rule to the king. Above all the princes of the nation, Haman, the Agagite, is preferred; why we are not told. No public virtue or service is recorded of him. It is, apparently, simply the royal pleasure that has done it. A stranger to the nation he was-a distant stranger.; one, too, of a race now all but forgotten, we might say, once distinguished, in the day of the infancy of nations, but now all but blotted out from the page of history, superseded by others far loftier in their bearing than ever he had been; the Assyrian first, then the Chaldean, and now the Persian. And yet, there he now is before us, an Amalekite seated next to Ahasuerus the Persian; in dignity, office, and power, only second to him.

This is strange, indeed, we may say. The great enemy of Israel, when Israel was in the wilderness, reappears here in the same character, in this day of Israel in the dispersion. (See Ex. 17) It is strange; an Amalekite found nearest to the throne of Persia! The heart of the great monarch of that day turned towards him, to put him into a condition to act the old Amalekite part of defiance of God, and enmity against His people. We could not have looked for such a thing. This name, the name of Amalek, was to be put out from under heaven; and, from the days of David till now, I may say, this people had not been seen. But now they reappear, we scarcely know how; and that, too, in bloom and strength, as in a palmy hour.

This, again, I say, is strange, indeed. It is of one in resurrection; of one whose deadly wound was healed; " who was, and is not, and yet is."

The Agagite now stands forth as the representative of the great enemy, the proud Apostate that withstands God, and His people, and His purposes. There has been such an one in every age; and he is the foreshadowing of that mighty apostate who is to fall in the day of the Lord. Nimrod, in the days of Genesis, represents him; Pharaoh, in Egypt; Amalek, in the Wilderness; Abimelech, in the time of the Judges; and Absalom, in the time of the Kings; Haman, here in the day of the Dispersion. and Herod in the New Testament. Exaltation of self, infidel pride, and the defiance of the fear of God, with rooted enmity to His people, are, some or all, the marks on each of them; as such will be displayed, in a full form of daring, awful apostasy, in the person of the Beast who, with his confederates, falls in the presence, of the Rider on the White Horse, in the day of the Lord, or the judgment of the quick. Prophets have told of him as " the king that is to do according to his own will;" as " Lucifer, son of the morning ' " as " the Prince of Tyrus," we may say; as "the fool that says in his heart there is no God; " and variously beside. And the Apocalypse of the Apostle shows him to us in the figure of a Beast, who had his Image set up for the worship and wonder of the

whole world, and his mark as a brand in the forehead of every man; whose deadly wound was healed, who was, and is not, and yet is to be.

And further, we may notice, that the purpose, as well as the person of the great adversary, stands forth in this great Haman, He must have the blood of all the Jews, His heart will not be satisfied by the life of the one who had refused to do Him reverence. He must have the lives of the whole nation. He breathes the spirit of the enemy of Israel, who by and bye is to say, "Come. and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance." (Psa. 83) The Amalekite and his company cast the lot, the Fur, only to determine the day on which this deed of extermination was to be perpetrated. But, as we know, the lot may be " cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. (Prov. 16:33.) And so was it here. Eleven long months, from the thirteenth day of the first month, to the thirteenth day of the twelfth month-that is, from the day when the lot was cast, to the day on which the lot decided that the slaughter of the nation should take place-are given, so that God would ripen His purposes both towards His people and their adversaries.

This has a clear, loud voice in our ears. There is no speech or language but the voice is heard, God is not even named; but it is the work of His hand, and the counsel of His bosom.

Haman finds no hindrance from the king his master. He tells the king that there is a people scattered through his dominions whom it is not his profit to let live, for their customs are diverse from all people-the secret of the world's enmity then and still. (See Acts 16:20,21.) The decree, according to the desire of Haman, goes forth from Shushan the palace; and it spreads its way in all haste to all parts of the world, the domain of the great Persian "breast of silver." The whole nation, as the consequence of this, takes the sentence of death into them selves. The decree would have reached the returned captives, as well as the dispersion. Judaea was but a province of the Persian power in that day. But they are to learn to trust in Him who quickens the dead, who calls those things that be not, as though they were, who acts in this world, in resurrection-strength. The remnant of Israel must learn to walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham. It is faith that must be exercised; for " the Lord will not for awhile reveal Himself, though He thinks of them, and shelters them without displaying Himself."

Mordecai now appears, as the representative of this Remnant, the possessor of this Abraham-like faith, in this awful hour.

The godliness of this dear and honored man begins to show itself, in his refusal to reverence the Amalekite. The common duty of worshipping only the true God, the God of Israel, would have forbidden this. And shall a Jew bow to one of that race with whom the God of the Jews had already said, that He would have war forever and ever?-bow to one who, instead of bowing himself to the Lord of heaven and earth, had even come forth to insult His presence and His majesty, and to cut off His people even before His face? Mordecai will jeopard his life by this refusal. But be it so. He is in the mind of his brethren Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who can say to an earlier Haman, " 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 is fine in its generation truly; but finer still from its connections.. For combination constitutes excellency of character. We are "to quit ourselves like men"-and yet, let all our things be done in charity." In Him, who was all moral glory, as we have heard from others, there was "nothing salient"-all so perfectly combined. And in Mordecai we see this. We see "goodness," and with that, "righteousness." He was gracious, and tender-hearted, bringing up his orphan cousin, as though she had been his own daughter. But now, he is faithful and unbending. He will quit himself like a man now, if then he did all his things in charity. He will not bow and do reverence at the command of the king, though his life may be the penalty.

iv. v.

The various exercises of the soul in these chapters, as we see in Esther and Mordecai, are a matter of great interest. The Hand and the Spirit of God work together so wondrously in the story of Israel, as we get it in the Psalms and in the Prophets-the Hand forming their circumstances; the Spirit, their mind-and these two things occupy a very large portion of the prophetic word. And we get living personal illustrations of this here, in the exercises of heart through which these two distinguished saints of God are seen to pass, and the marvelous circumstances through which they are brought.

On the issue of the fatal decree, Mordecai fasts and mourns in sackcloth. But all the while, he counts upon deliverance. Such a combination is full of moral glory. Elijah gave a sample of it in his day-for he knew the rain was at hand; but he casts himself down on the earth, and puts his face between his knees, as one in "effectual fervent prayer." (1 Kings 18; James 5:16-18.) The Lord Himself gives another sample of this. He knows and testifies that He is about to raise Lazarus from sleep, the sleep of death; but He weeps as He approaches the grave. So, here, with Mordecai. He will put off his mourning. He refuses to be comforted, while the decree is out against his people, though he reckons, surely reckons, upon their deliverance some way or another. This is another of those combinations which are necessary to character or moral glory; a sample of which I have already noticed in this true Israelite, this "Israelite indeed."

And Esther is as beautiful in her generation, as a weaker vessel. She may have to be strengthened by Mordecai, but she is tenderly, deeply, in sympathy with the burdens of her nation. She sees difficulty, and feels danger; and she speaks, for a time, from her circumstances. Nothing wrong in this. She tells Mordecai of the hazard she would run if she went into the royal presence unbidden. Nothing wrong, again I say, in thus speaking as from her circumstances, though there may be weakness. But Mordecai counsels her, as a stronger vessel; and he appears as one above both circumstances and affections, in the cause of God and His people. He sends a peremptory message to Esther, though he so loved her; and he is calm and of a firm heart in the midst of these dangers. He sits above water floods in this way; in the dear might of Him who has trod all waves for us. There is neither leaven nor honey, as I may say, in the offering he is making-he confers not with flesh and blood, nor does he look at the waters swelling. His faith is in victory-and the weaker vessel is strengthened through him. Esther decides going in unto the king. If she perish, she perishes-but she is edified to hazard all for her people. And yet, while she thus does not "faint" under the trial, neither will she "despise it"-for she will have Mordecai and her brethren wait in an humbled, dependent spirit, so that she may receive mercy, and her way to the king's presence be prospered.

Accordingly, at the end of the fast, which they agreed on for three days, she takes her life in her hand, and stands in the inner court of the king's house, while the king was sitting on his royal throne. But kings' hearts are in the hand of the Lord; and so it proves to be here. Esther obtains favor in the sight of Ahasuerus, and he holds out the golden scepter to her.

This was everything. This told of the issue of the whole matter. All hung upon the motion of the golden scepter. It was the Spirit of God, the counsel and good-pleasure, the sovereignty and grace of God, that ordered all this. The nation was already saved. The scepter had decided everything in the favor of the Jews and to the confusion of their adversaries, be they as high and mighty, as many and as subtle, as they may. God had taken the matter into His own hand-and if He be for us, who shall be against us? " Thou shalt be far from oppression," the Lord was now saying to His Israel, " for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come nigh thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." (Isa. 54)

Esther drew near and touched the scepter. She used the grace that had visited her; but used it reverently; and the scepter was true to itself. It awakened no hope that it was not now ready to realize. It had already spoken peace to her; and peace, and far more than peace, shall be made good to her. " What wilt thou, queen Esther," says Ahasuerus to her, ".and what is thy request? it shall be given to thee, even to the half of the kingdom."

Very blessed this is. The scepter, again let us say, was true to itself. What a truth is conveyed in this! The promise of God, the work of the Lord Jesus, as this scepter. These have gone before-pledges under the hand and from the mouth of our God, and eternity shall be true -to them; and endless ages of glory, witnessing salvation, shall make them good. Nothing is too great for the redeeming of such pledges-as here, the half of the king's dominions are laid at the feet and disposal of Esther.

But her dealing with the opportunity thus put into her possession, is one of the most excellent and wondrous fruits of the light and energy of the Spirit, that we see in the midst of the many wonders of this book in all this workmanship of God's great hand.

Instead of asking for the half of the kingdom-instead of desiring at once the head of the great Amalekite, she requests that the king and Haman may come to a banquet of wine which she had prepared for them. Strange, indeed! Who could have counted on such an acceptance of such an unlimited pledge and promise? It brings to mind the answer of the divine Master, of Him who is " the wisdom of God," to the Samaritan woman. She asked for the living water, and He told her to go call her husband! Strange, it would appear, beyond all explanation. But, as we know, it was a ray of the purest light breaking forth from the Fountain of light. And so here. This answer of Esther was strange indeed. But it will be found to have been nothing less than the witness of the perfect wisdom of the Spirit that was now illuminating and leading her. It was the way of conducting the great adversary onward to the full ripening of his apostasy, to his attaining that mighty elevation in pride and self-satisfaction, from the which the hand of God had prepared from the beginning to cast him down. Esther, under the Spirit, was dealing with Haman, as the hand of God had once

dealt with Pharaoh in Egypt. The vessel of wrath had again fitted itself for judgment; and God was again about to make His power known upon it. Haman was the Pharaoh of this day, "the man of the earth" now, "king of all the children of pride;" and he must fall from a pinnacle up to which his own lusts and the god of this world are urging his steps. Esther is the instrument in God's hand for giving him occasion thus to fill out the full form of his apostasy. Esther shows herself wonderfully in the secret of all this. She bids Haman and the king, the second day, as well as the first-only these two together; and when this was done, the giddy height was reached from which the apostate is destined to fall.

He cannot stand all this. It is too much for him. His heart is overcharged; gratified pride has satiated it. He cannot contain himself-but corruption drives him in the way of nature; a sad verdict against nature. But so it is. It was natural, that he should expose all his glories to his wife and his friends. Flesh and blood can appreciate it; and pride must have as many courtiers and votaries as it can. And it must have its victims likewise. Mordecai still refuses to bow; and a gallows, fifty cubits high, is raised that he may be hanged thereon.

vi. vii.

Every secret thing must reach its day of manifestation. The word which Mordecai told the king about Teresh and Bigthana, the chamberlains, though hitherto forgotten or neglected, must now be remembered. The tears and the kisses, and the spikenard of the loving sinner in Luke 7, and the corresponding slights of the Pharisee, are passed in silence for a moment; but they are all brought to light ere the scene closes. For there is nothing hid that shall not come abroad. God lets nothing pass. Mordecai's act shall not always be forgotten. It shall be recognized, and that too in the very face of his great adversary-as the loving sinner's acts were all rehearsed in the hearing of her accuser. (Luke 7:36-50.)

The night after Queen Esther's first banquet was a sleepless one to Ahasuerus. For, as God gives His beloved sleep, so does He at times hold the eyes waking to them, by thoughts of the head upon the bed. By sending instruction through meditations in the night-season, He deals with the hearts of the children of men. So; here with the Persian. The sleepless king calls for the records of the kingdom, the depository of the act of Mordecai, and there reads about that act which had now happened some years before. And as it is true of man, that all that he path he will give for his life, so now, the king, on the sudden unexpected discovery of the act of Mordecai, by which his life had been preserved, deems nothing too high or honorable to be done for him.

Here, however, we may pause for a moment, and consider the wonderful interweaving of circumstances which we get in this history. There is plot and underplot, wheel within wheel, as the expression is, circumstance hanging upon circumstance; and each and all formed together to work out the wonderful works of God.

There is, in this story, the marvelous re-appearance of both the Jew and the Amalekite. Strange phenomena indeed! Who would have thought it, as I have said before? The Jew and the Amalekite reproduced in the distant realms of Persia, and in divers places of favor and authority round the throne there! Then there is Vashti's temper and Esther's -beauty meeting at the same moment. There is the fact of Mordecai being the one to overhear the plot against the life of the king. There is the lot deciding on a day for the slaughter of Israel, eleven months distant, so that there may be

time for counsels to ripen, and changes to take place. There is the heart of the king moved to hold out the golden scepter to Esther. And now we see the king's sleeplessness, and his thoughts guided to the records of the chronicles. And now, again, we see Haman entering the court of the palace at this peculiar juncture.

What threading together of warp and woof in all this! What intertwining of circumstances, and the production of a curious texture of many colors! And yet, as we have seen and said already, God all the while unseen, unnamed!

Very blessed! Pleased with the work of His own hand, and in the counsels of His own mind, the Lord can be hid for a time, unpublished, uncelebrated. And we are called, in our way, to that which is like this. We are to prove our own work, to have rejoicing in ourselves alone, and not in another, without uttering our secrets, or gathering the regards of our fellows. And truly great this is, to work unseen, to serve unnoticed. Deep counsels of that wisdom which knows the end from the beginning, and wondrous working of that hand which can turn even the hearts of kings as it pleases.

Haman falls. What a day may bring forth, we commonly say, who can tell? We see it to be so in his history. Zeresh and his friends have to receive, ere the second day's banquet begins, a different Haman from him whom they had greeted after the close of the first. Haman falls, and falls indeed. But over this we must tarry for a little, that we may take knowledge of the character of this great fact, so important is it in setting forth the judgment of God.

1. Haman's greatness was allowed so to flourish and ripen, that he might fall in the hour of highest pride and daring.

This is very instructive, for this has been God's way,

and is so still. The builders of the Tower of Babel were allowed to go on with their work, till they made it a wonder, Nebuchadnezzar was given time to finish his great city. The Beast of the Apocalypse will prosper till the whole world wonder after him. So here, Haman is borne with till he sits on the pinnacle. Then, in the moment of proudest elevation, the judgment of God visits all these. Herod, as another such, was smitten of God, and died, as the people were listening to him, and saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." (See Psa. 37:35,36.)

He is caught in his own trap. The honor is given to Mordecai which he had prepared for himself; and the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, he hangs thereon himself.

This still instructs us; for this has been God's way, and will be so still. Daniel's accusers are cast into the den which they had prepared for him; and the flame of the fire slew those men who took up the children of the captivity to cast them into the furnace. And so is it foretold of the adversaries and apostates of the last days in this world's history. "Their own iniquity shall be brought upon them." (Psa. 7;9;10;35;57;141, etc.) Satan himself, who has the power of death, is destroyed through death.

He falls suddenly.

So with the last great enemy. The judgment of God is to be like a thief in the night, like the lightning that cometh out of the east and shineth to the west. " In one hour," it is said of the

Apocalyptic Babylon, " is she made desolate." The judgments on the world before the flood, and on the Cities of the Plain, was such also; " like figures," with this fall of the Agagite, of a judgment still to be executed.

He falls completely, utterly destroyed.

So with the great enemy, and the course of this present world with him.

The children of Judas cut off (Psa. 109), the little ones of Edom dashed against the stones (Psa. 137), Haman's sons, all hanged after himself-these illustrate for our learning the utter downfall and annihilation of all that now offends; the clearing out of all by the besom of divine judgment. The " millstone" of Rev. 18 tells us this, and prophecy upon prophecy has long ago announced it.

Full of typical significancy, in all the features that signalize it, is this fall of the great Amalekite. We live in such an hour of the world's history, as renders it specially significant and instructive to us. We are, day by day, seeing the Lord allowing the purposes of the world to ripen themselves, gradually to unfold their marvelous and varied attractions, and its whole system to make progress, till it again, like the Tower of Babel of old, draw down the penal visitation of heaven; and that, too, in a moment, suddenly, to do its work of judgment completely, when (blessed to tell it!) not a trace of man's world shall remain, his pride and wantonness, with all their fruit, shall be withered and gone, and such a world as is fit for the presence of the Lord of Glory shall shine.

8.- 10.

We close this Book with the deliverance of the Jews in the very moment when destruction was awaiting them, and with their exaltation in the kingdom, and the celebration of their joy.

Mysterious workmanship of the hand of God! The Amalekite, the great adversary, cast down in the moment of his proudest elevation, and utterly cut off; the Jew, his purposed and expected victim, when there was but a step between him and death, delivered, then favored and honored, and seated next to the throne in rank and authority!

What a history.! True in every circumstance of it, typical in every circumstance of it also; significant of those last days in the history of the Jew and of the earth, of which prophets have spoken again and again, the downfall of the man of the earth, and the exaltation of God's people in His own kingdom!

Mordecai, instead of any longer being at the king's gate, now comes before the king and takes his ring, the seal of office and of authority, from his finger. Thus is the Jew translated at the end. All scripture prepares us for this; and here it is illustrated. Here the historic scriptures of the Old Testament end, and here, as in a type, the history of the earth ends.

I may say, that the leading, principal characteristics in the story of Israel are these, as we read it in the prophets:-

The present casting off of that nation, and the hiding of the divine countenance from them; and yet, their providential preservation in the midst of the Gentiles.

The present election of a remnant among them, and that repentance at the last, which leads them, nationally, to the kingdom.

The judgment of their adversaries and oppressors, with the especial downfall of their great infidel enemy.

Their deliverance, exaltation, and blessing in kingdom-days, with their headship of the nations.

These are among the great things of the prophets; and these things are found in this little Book of Esther. So that, again, I may say, this last Old Testament historic notice of the people of Israel pledges and typifies their present preservation all through this age of Gentile supremacy, and their glory in the last days, when the judgment of their enemies shall be accomplished.

Certain detached features of the coming millennial kingdom are likewise exhibited here. The fear of the Jews falls on their enemies, on those that were round about them; and they are restrained from all attempts to do them harm. Such had been seen in the palmy days of the nation, and such is promised by the prophets to be their portion again. Shushan, the capital of the Gentile world in that day, rejoices in the exaltation of the Jew; as all scripture tells us, the whole world will rejoice under the shadow of the throne of Israel in the time of the coming kingdom. Many of the people of the land became Jews; as we read the like thing in the prophets again and again; as, for instance, "Many people shall go, and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The throne that had exalted the Jew, and put down his oppressor, exercises universal dominion, laying a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea; as we know that, by and bye, the king in Zion " shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

And here, let me add, that Ahasuerus represents power, royal authority in the earth. He then filled the throne that was supreme among the nations.. He was " the power," and represents, mystically or in a shadow, the power that will be in a divine head in the day of the kingdom. It is so, I grant, that power in the hand of this Persian is first exercised in evil; serving, as he did, the wicked designs of Haman, though now lie is exalting the righteous. Still, he represents power, royal authority in the earth. Just like Solomon in Jerusalem, he did evil personally. He may have repented; but still his personal ways were evil as well as good. Nevertheless, in a general typical way, he represented power, and was the shadow of Christ on the throne of glory, that throne that is to rule the world in righteousness.

Full of mysterious beauty and meaning all this is. Those days of Ahasuerus and of Mordecai were days of Solomon and of prophecy, coming millennial days, days of the kingdom of God in the earth, and among the nations. They were as the days of Joseph in Egypt. Mordecai in Persia was as Joseph in Egypt-the first historic book, and the last, in the Old Testament, giving us these varied but kindred notices of the kingdom that will come in upon the close and judgment of the kingdoms of the Gentiles.

The days of Purim celebrate all this. They constitute the triumph after the victory, the joy of the kingdom upon the establishment of the kingdom. The Jews took on them, according to the word of Mordecai and Esther, to make the 14th and the 15th days of the 12th month, the month Adar, days of feasting and joy, because therein they rested from their enemies, and their mourning was turned to gladness, and light and honor. They were a kind of Passover, celebrating deliverance from the land

of Persia, as that feast did from the land of Egypt; or, if we would rather have it so, Purim was another song on the Red Sea, or another song of Deborah and Barak on the fall of the Canaanite. And it rehearses the song yet to be sung on the sea of glass in Rev. 15; or again, I say, if we would rather have it so, the joy of Israel in coming kingdom-days, when they shall draw water out of the walls of salvation. (Isa. 12) Indeed the 124. Psalm, and 126. Psalm, prepared as they are for future days of Israel's glory and joy, breathe the very spirit that must have animated Israel in this present day of Mordecai and Esther. It is beautiful to trace all this, to see these rehearsals again and again, as we go on the way, waiting for the full chorus of eternal harmonies in the presence of glory by and bye. The infant church in Acts 4, in this spirit, breathes and utters the 2nd Psalm, prepared, as that Psalm is, for the day when God's king sits upon the hill of Zion, after the enemy has perished, and the kings of the earth have learned to bow before Him. The blessed God is pleased with His own works: " For thy pleasure they are and were created." He, therefore, preserves the works of His hands as their Creator. He is pleased with the counsels of His grace and wisdom. He has, therefore, preserved to this day the nation or people of the Jews, and will preserve them till the fruit of His counsels display itself in His kingdom. And His kingdom thus will rise on the ruins and judgment of the nations; and Christ's world, "the world to come," shine in brightness, and purity, and blessing, after the folding up and passing away of " this present evil world."

This coining kingdom, this millennial world, is spoken of in all forms of speech by the prophets; but it has also been set forth in all forms of samples, and parcels, and specimens of it, in broken pieces of history from the beginning; as here we have seen it showing itself at the end of the Book of Esther. Ordinances, prophecies, and histories, in their several ways, have been doing this service.

Ere the antediluvian saints pass away, the spirit of prophecy speaks through Lamech, and addresses, as to them, a word of promise touching the earth; that therein, in due season, there should be comfort instead of curse. (Gen. 5)

In Noah as in the new world, we see an illustration of this prophecy of Lamech's; for after the judgment of the Deluge, the earth rises again as in new or resurrection-form; and a pledge, a foreshadowing, of millennial days, is before us.

The land of Egypt, under the government of Joseph, is a " like figure." Under the law, we have a shadow Of the same millennial rest in the weekly Sabbath-in the annual Feast of Tabernacles-in the Jubilee every 50th year.

For a moment, in the day of Joshua, when the Tribes of Israel had entered the land, kept the Passover as a circumcised people, and then ate unleavened cakes of the corn of the land, we see, in another form, the same happy mystery witnessed to us. (Josh. 5)

After this, the palmy reign of Solomon in a more extended form, in a full and rich manner, tells us the like secret.

As, indeed, I might have noticed the meeting of Jethro with the ransomed Israel on the mount of God, in wilderness-days, was (though in a different form) the foreshadowing of the same coming of glory. (Ex. 18) And so now, in dispersion-days, as I may speak, we have the same; as we see at the close of this Book of Esther.

Prophecies upon prophecies accompany these ordinances and these histories; so that in the mouth not only of many, but of various witnesses, the kingdom that is still to be set up, and the glory that is still to be revealed, is verified to us. These are rehearsals of the great, the magnificent issue of the counsels of God, of that purpose which shall be manifested in " the dispensation of the fullness of time."

The New Testament gives us like illustrations and promises. The Transfiguration tells us of it. The Regeneration or Palingenesia tells us of it. The action in the Apocalypse first makes way for it; and then, at the end, it shines in our sight, when the holy city descends from heaven bearing the glory of God with it, and when the nations that are saved walk in the light of it.

Thus, the close of Esther finds itself in company with things from the very beginning to the very end, and all through the volume, all through the actings and sayings of God in the progress of this world's history. It is wonderful. What a witness of the writings that are to be found in Scripture! What a proof of the breathing of the same Spirit in all the parts of it! How it tells us, that " known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world 1" We fill our own place, and occupy our own moment, in this great plan.

CONCLUSION.

Having read the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah by themselves, as the story of the returned captives, and the Book of Esther by itself as the story of the dispersed captives, we would now meditate on them together for a few moments. They give us, as we see, two distinct companies of captives, or two sections of the Jews. They illustrate different parts of the divine counsel and wisdom touching that people; and teach us lessons very important for our souls thoroughly to learn.

In each of these scenes, in the midst of each of these sections of the people of God, we have, so to speak; a separate platform erected for the exhibition of several or separate portions of God's ways and dealings with them.

The returned captives are brought home and left in the land, in order that they may be tested again-for to test His people, though in different ways, had been God's way from the beginning. Israel had already been tested by the gift of power. They had received a fat and good land, and been led on as from strength to strength, till they had flourished into a kingdom; a kingdom which had drawn the eyes of the kings of the earth, and was the admiration of the world.

But they had been untrue to this stewardship. They had abused the power entrusted to them, and been rebellious against the supreme rights of Him who had thus set them up, and ordained them as chief and metropolitan in the earth. And accordingly, or consequently, power, supremacy in the earth, or principal authority among the nations, was taken from them and given to the Gentiles.

Now, however, they are at home again. The captivity to which their unfaithfulness had led is over, and there is a section of the people at home in the land of their fathers again. For it is the divine purpose to test them by another test. God is about to send Messiah to them. His mission and ministry is to be in healing mercy, a proposal of the grace that brings salvation, that it may be known, whether they have an answer to the appeals of love, since they have already proved that they had no fidelity to Him who had entrusted them with power.

This is what we read in the fact of Israel's (or Judah's) return from Babylon. They are Jews again in their own land. Accordingly, as soon as they get home again, they behave themselves as Jews. They kept the ordinances-they raise the national altar-they rebuild the Temple - they keep themselves apart from the heathens-they read the Scriptures-they observe the way of the God of Israel, as far as subjection to power in the hand of the Gentile will admit it. And the God of Israel owns them. He blesses them. He shelters them. He may exercise them in faith and patience, but still He is with them. As of old, He gives them leaders and deliverers and teachers; sends to them His Prophets; and grants them days of revival, days of the new moon in the seventh month.

We know all this, indeed. This was, it is true, a kind of Reformation in their religious history. No idolatry is practiced by them after this; but other corruptions rapidly set in and worked-as not only the books of Ezra and Nehemiah themselves show us, but more particularly the prophecy of Malachi. And the opening of the New Testament Scriptures confirms this -for the Gospel by Matthew lets us see clearly and fully, that the returned Captives were deeply unbelieving; as untrue to the doctrines and proposals of goodness, as their fathers had been to the stewardship-of power.' "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

This is so, indeed. And as, when they had been untrue to power, power was given over to the Gentiles, so now, since they are untrue to grace, grace is gone' over to the whole world--for the Gospel is preached and the salvation of God is held up in the eyes of the ends of the earth.

And strikingly consistent and beautiful this progress in the ways of divine wisdom, or of God's dispensations. All testing ends in failure, and God must act for us and not with us. This fresh trial, by the ministry of Messiah only proves, as by the mouth of another witness, that man is incorrigible and incurable. Every effort to make something of him, or to do something with him, leads him out to another exposure of himself; till he is left naked to his shame. The kingdom is not entered by a tested creature, even though grace test him. Judgment as of " reprobate silver " is the result of the process. "The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain."

Yes, indeed, he must be saved by grace, and not merely tested by it. The first advent of Messiah, or the proposal of salvation, did not lead Israel into the kingdom; it has left them a judged people, scattered and peeled, unsaved and unblest, only condemned upon a fuller conviction than ever.

We turn, however, to another scene. We are to consider another section of the people, the dispersed and not the returned. For in them is erected another platform, as I may still speak, for the illustration of God's way. We shall see them as the pledges and witnesses, not of a tested, but of a saved people, saved through sovereign grace, and led into the kingdom.

This people had not availed themselves of the opportunity they had of returning home. This is a standing witness against them. They remained among the uncircumcised. They acted the part of the Raven in, Noah's ark. They seem to take up with the unclean world. They are as Gentiles, we may say; we see no feasts or ordinances, or word of God among them. But I grant they are Jews still. And grace abounds towards them. In the midst of the Gentiles they are still kept alive-another unconsumed burning Bush. Jehovah is not seen to be acknowledging them, as He was acknowledging their brethren who had returned to Jerusalem. Still He has His eye upon them, and they are kept alive; and that, too, till the due time comes for His rising up to deal with them in a way of which all His prophets have spoken.

All this we see in Esther, that wondrous book which closes the historic volume of the Old Testament.

A Remnant is seen there. God deals with the marvelously both by His Hand and Spirit; but He is unmanifested. We have seen this, when meditating on Esther. And we further traced God's way with Israel in all those eras of their history, when they were in an informal anomalous state. As instanced in the marriage of Joseph with an Egyptian, of Moses with a daughter of Midian, and the like, and of Esther's marriage with Ahasuerus the Persian. For this was as the way of God Himself with them; when they were untrue to Him, He went over to others. Power first, as we have seen, and now grace and salvation, have gone over to others, since Israel was disobedient and unwilling. How consistent all this is! What constancy and perfection and unity in the ways of His holy wisdom! His brethren were untrue to Joseph, and cast him out. He married and became important in Egypt. His brethren were untrue to Moses and forced him away; he married and became happy in Midian. His people were untrue to Jehovah; and He gave power to the Gentiles. His own were untrue to Messiah, rejecting, not receiving Him; and He now dispenses grace and salvation to the whole world.

Surely the Lord knows the end from the beginning. Surely His way is before Him.

"His wisdom ever waketh,

His sight is never dim,

He knows the way He taketh,

And I will walk with Him."

Oh for grace to say this and to do it! And to walk with Him, too, along the path of His wisdom, and the ways of His dispensations, as from glory to glory, to "walk in the light as He is in the light."

And fresh wonders still show themselves to us on these two platforms, or in the story of the Returned, and the story of the Dispersed.

As I have already observed, Malachi begins to intimate what will be the end of the returned or tested Captives. All will fail, as all has failed. The New Testament Scriptures affirm the intimation of Malachi. The Evangelists make good the hints and notices of the Prophets. But Esther gives us to know what will be the dispersion, or of that portion which remained among the Gentiles. They will finally be taken up in sovereign grace, carried through "the great tribulation," and by that road into the kingdom. In that story, or on that platform, we see the nation of the Jews, brought to the eve and on the brink of utter destruction, rescued by the wonder-working hand of God, and then seated in the high places of honor, of influence, and of authority, by the Power that rules the earth, all their enemies either judged and taken out of the way, or seeking their favor and blessing

These are the secrets we are instructed in, in these books, or in these two scenes of various action. Man is tested and fails; the sinner is taken up in grace and saved.

And these are the secrets we have been set down to learn from the beginning; and we are destined, blessedly destined, to celebrate them forever. Man is exposed, God is displayed. Man is thoroughly made naked' to his shame; God is exalted in the highest order of exaltation, and

displayed in the brightest light of glory.

It was thus in the story of Adam at the very beginning. He- was tested, and under the testing he failed, and destroyed himself; he was then taken up in grace, and saved through the death and resurrection of Christ; by faith in the bruised and bruising seed of the woman.

It was thus again in Israel. Israel was set under law. But the shadows of good things to come accompanied the law. Under their own covenant, under the law, Israel, like Adam, was ruined. But God acts in the midst of the self-destroyed people, the self-wrought ruin, and by ordinances and prophecies and pledges of many kinds has ever been telling them of final grace and salvation.

And now, in like manner, the Gospel thoroughly exposes us, but fully, presently, perfectly, eternally, saves us. And through the ages of glory it will be told out that we are a washed people, a ransomed people, who owe everything to grace and redemption, though glorified forever.

So that these two platforms, the scene in the midst of the returned captives, and the scene in the midst of the dispersed captives, are in company with all the divine way from the beginning, and with that which is to be had in remembrance and celebrated forever. Only we marvel afresh at this new witness of the way of God, His necessary, perfect way, in a world like this.

How complete all this makes the divine historic volume of the Old Testament! That volume ends here; and we are well satisfied to have it so.

The way of the Lord Himself in this book is specially wonderful. Apparently, He is neglectful of His people. He is " silent" towards them. He does not show Himself. There is no miracle. His name, as we have all remarked, is not once named in the whole book. His people, even in all the exercises of their hearts under the most pressing circumstances, never mention Him. Surely this is wonderful. But it is admirable as well as wonderful. It is perfect in its place and season. For during this present Gentile age, God is apart from Israel, like Joseph in Egypt, or Moses in Midian, apart from their brethren, as I have already noticed. Yea, and as many voices of the prophets have anticipated. (See Psa. 74; Isa. 8:17;45. 1.5; 18. 4; Hos. 5:15, etc.) And the Lord Jesus, speaking as the God of Israel, at the close of His ministry, says to them, " Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:38,39.)

But He cares for them. Their names are in the palms of His hands. He revokes not the judgment; but He will in due time awake for their deliverance. It is Jesus asleep in the boat, winds and waves tossing it. But in the needed time He awoke, and rose for the quieting of all that, which, in its anguish swelling, was raging against them.

Hail to the Lord's anointed!

Great David's greater Son!

When to the time appointed

The rolling years have run,

He comes to break oppression,

To set the Captive free,

To take away transgression,

And rule in equity.

FRAGMENTS.

" The history of Rahab has sometimes encouraged me about unconverted relatives; -her bringing all her family -under the shelter of the scarlet line."

"Soon our pilgrim journey will be over, and then we shall be recounting, like Moses to his father-in-law, what befel us by the way, and how the Lord delivered us."

"Ought I not to have learned, by this time, not to expect or desire rest here? And also, how to trust simply with child-like confidence in His unceasing tender care."

The End

To ev'ry trial comes an end:
The hardest yoke at last must break,
Anguish and pain, and ev'ry woe,
Must hasten then their leave to take.
Robes of sorrow soon will shine,
Changed for golden tints divine.
Through the dreary desert passed,
Now we pluck the roses fair,
We have reached our Fatherland,
And our pilgrim's staff rests here.
Tears were sown whilst there below,
Now joy's fullest rivers flow.
Egypt at length is left behind,
See Canaan's beauties, ever new,
Mount Olivet's ascent is climbed,
Mount Thabor's glories burst to view.
Jacob at last has found a place
Secure from Esau's hostile race.
The End! the End! oh thou sweet word,
Crosses are blessings in thy light;
The rocks are pierced, and now apace
Sweet balsam flows. Oh, precious sight!
Observe, my heart, and dwell on this-
The End draws nigh! 'tis certain bliss.
From the German.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

Chap. 1

WE must introduce our meditations on this epistle by recurring a little to the ways of God from the beginning, because there is a wonderful unity in His counsels, and the whole volume sets its seal to the divine thought: "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning." Therefore, when we come to a scripture like this, it is well to pause and look about us, and see its relation to previous scriptures. If I come to a merely moral scripture, such as "Let him that stole, steal no more," I may take it and use it at once, and alone; but when it is a doctrinal or prophetic scripture, which opens the divine mind, I have to ask how it is introduced, and what is to come after it, because we are to be fraught with divine intelligence-" We have the mind of Christ."

The epistle to the Hebrews unfolds the heavens, and speaks of heavenly calling, putting you in company with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but it does not open the mystery of the Church. The epistle to the Ephesians opens the mystery of the Church, but does not keep you in company with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We are advancing, and we are called to distinguish between the heavenly calling, and the calling of the Church. So there is a fitness in considering the epistle to the Hebrews before the epistle to the Ephesians.

Now, why do I say the epistle to the Hebrews opens the heavenly calling I Because it associates you with Noah, Abraham, Moses, &c. The earth, at the beginning, was given to the children of men. What did they do with it?

They forfeited it. Then, what did God do with them? Well, he opened heaven to them! He gave them the earth to enjoy; they soiled and lost it by sin. "Well," said He, "I '11 open heaven to you." This is one way in which the grace of God abounds!

What should I say if one who, when I had abused the gift which he put in my hand, put a better gift in my other hand I This is God!

Was not Adam brought back to God, and Enoch taken to heaven? I have no doubt that Abraham had the heavenly calling. They looked for a better country; "that is a heavenly." Moses was carried up to Pisgah to bear witness of it. Enoch bore witness of it, and Elijah in a later dispensation. From the beginning there has been heavenly calling, but not Church calling. So when the apostle comes to address the Hebrews, who were brought from a Jewish root, he talks of heavenly calling, but does not go beyond it. When he comes to address himself to the Ephesians, once a Gentile people, the worshippers of the goddess Diana (but apart from all Jewish connections) he unfolds the mystery of the Church-the richest thing in the counsels of God. Let me say another thing. How did God unfold His purposes in the earth? He knew a family in the loins of Abraham. They flourished into a nation in the book of Exodus; then, under judges and prophets; but they did not ripen to the culminating point of glory till God put them under a king. He goes on from step to step, till the elect family flourished under Solomon into a kingdom. So it is with His heavenly purposes. It is not till the apostleship of Paul is set up that they unfold in the bright culminating point of the

Church. God is always consistent in His ways. Let the earth be the scene of His activities; we find them unfolding till they reach the palmy days of Solomon. In His heavenly purposes we follow on, till we see the Church at the highest point in creation-" The fullness of Him that filleth all in all." So it is impossible not to stand and say: "Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

Now, having prefaced thus, we stand before the epistle to the. Ephesians. It is desirable to come up to this writing with intelligence. Here we are listeners in heavenly scenes to the same kind of thing as we saw in earthly scenery.

Let me remind you of a passage in Col. 1:25: " the dispensation of God which is given me for you, to fulfill the word of God "-or, "to fill it out." To fill out the revelation of God-a magnificent commentary of Paul on his own ministry. Was it not left to Solomon to display the closing purpose of God in the earth by heading it with a throne 2 It was left to Paul to reveal, in his ministry, the bright magnificent point of the heavenly mysteries. We are brought up by him to the headship of Christ.

The apostle begins by addressing all the faithful in Christ Jesus. He steps over the Ephesians. So that we are all called to learn these things. " Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." This could not be said of the patriarchs. " In heavenly places " they would have been associated with us; but these are blessings in company with Christ.

Then, having put you in this peculiar place, he unfolds the divine roll of blessings to you. First, chosen in Him before the world was. Those high privileges began before the foundation of the world. Could I say that properly of Abraham 1. Certainly he was chosen before the foundation of the world, but you are chosen "in Him." The divine purposes rested in a peculiar way on a peculiar people. Then, predestination always follows on election. Election touches the person; predestination the place or condition: " Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.... He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Now; is not that a peculiar form of adoption I Do. I believe that Adam was a son of God? Indeed I do. Do I believe that he was " accepted in the Beloved "I No; I do not.

Do I believe that angels are sons of God I Indeed I do. Do I believe they are " accepted in the Beloved"? No; I do not. So that here again is a peculiarity. It is an adoption of the highest order. We have the joy and liberty of the Beloved's sonship. He goes on to say, " In whom we have redemption by His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Why, to be sure, that is a thing of course. Who would think of asking a person up in heavenly places, "Are you forgiven I" Did you ever observe, in the parable of the prodigal son, that the father never says he forgives him? How could he How could he frame his lips to say, " I forgive you "? You and I ought to walk in the sunshine of our calling in such a way as to assume forgiveness, as a thing at the foot of the hill, while we are up at the heights. Let the music and dancing, the ring and the shoes, tell me I am forgiven. So the father treats the prodigal, and so the Spirit treats us in Ephesians 1. Yet the soul is constantly busying itself about forgiveness, when it should be viewing the magnificence of its calling in Christ. There is a style in Love, that love could never rid itself of The father would have wept to say, " I forgive you.' Would not you be ashamed to tell one coming back in sorrow, confessing his fault, " I forgive you"? Talk of a father, on the neck of his weeping, penitent child, saying, " I forgive you!" How little we know of the ways of love! Now, to go on. He abounds towards us in all wisdom and knowledge,

having opened to us the bosom secret-all things gathered together in Christ. That is a secret never made known before. In the prophet Isaiah we get a beautiful picture of the millennial earth; but do we ever get the millennial heavens with Christ at their head? Was it ever said by Isaiah, that all things in heaven and earth should be headed up in the Glorified Man I " In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." We are heirs with Him. Was that ever unfolded before? And till the inheritance comes, we get the Holy Ghost. We get Him here under two titles-a seal, and an earnest. A seal of present salvation; an earnest of future inheritance. When I look at the place of the Holy Ghost, in the mystery of redemption, it is -wonderful to see the official glories that attach to Him here on earth. In the epistle to the Hebrews, we have the official glories of Christ. Here we are called to witness the official glories of the Holy Ghost in this dispensation. What a blessed, glorious thing -to take the secrets of the divine bosom, and make them known to us! To seal us by His presence as possessors of present salvation, and to be the earnest of our inheritance! Ah, it is wonderful! I could not move a step in company with a soul not pregnant with the blessedness of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being the One with whom we have to do. " The purchased possession " here is the whole scene- the whole creation. It is purchased, but not yet redeemed. The blood of Christ has purchased the creation as well as you; but it is not yet redeemed, and while in that condition you have the Holy Ghost as an earnest. When it is redeemed, you will be the heir of it. Are you redeemed yet? You are purchased, but you wait for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of your body, and that you will never get till God puts forth power as well as blood. The Apocalypse is the display of redemption; the gospel is the display of purchase; but the purchased thing is not redeemed till God puts forth power to rescue it from the hands of the destroyer. At verse 15 the apostle ceases to be a teacher, and becomes an intercessor; and you will find that he never in prayer pulls down what as a teacher he had built up. You will sometimes hear people asking God to love them. I could never make such a prayer as that; I am to pray for a deeper sense of His love. Paul does not ask God to give them this, and the other; but he asks Him that they may have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened. Oh for a better heart to know these things! but to ask God to love me, to make me a co-heir with Christ, to appoint me to heavenly places in Him / I will make a prayer much more humbling than that, I am so blessed in my calling; so poor in my enjoyment/ If God has lit a candle, I will not ask Him to light it, but to take the film from my eyes, that I may see what He has done, what this magnificent purpose is, and the power that has brought us there. So he prays that you may have an eye to discern the brightness of the heavenly glory, and the resurrection-power that has conducted you from such ruins to such glories.-AMEN.

CHAPTER 2.

WE have reached the second chapter, but we must look back at the first to resume the course of our thoughts. We were observing that we must distinguish between the heavenly calling and the Church calling. The Church has heavenly calling; but it does not follow that all who have heavenly calling have Church calling. Heavenly calling arose from divine disappointment in the earth. The earth was given to Adam. Adam forfeited it, and the Lord then takes His elect to heaven.

The thought introduces you to the idea of relief.

The Lord found another way to bless His elect. If the earth is lost, where will He put His saints? The blessed God of all grace says, "I know how I will dispose of them; I will put them in heaven."

The Lord never merely repairs a breach; He brings a better thing out of the ruin. So, the forfeiture of the earth opened heaven, and the heavenly man finds himself in a better place than if he had never lost the earth. The two dealings of God with the earth are in government and in calling out, strangership and citizenship alternately. Citizenship, when God is dealing with and settling the earth; strangership, when God is calling people out of it. He has now called the Church into strangership. That is the way to introduce our thoughts to the present dispensation. We see how God takes His present dispensational attitude. The earth is polluted; and God has put upon Himself to take His people to heaven. It is a dispensation of intense strangership. But the Church is something more than that. Moses, Abraham, etc., were taken to heaven as witnesses of heavenly calling. Chapter 1 of this epistle introduces a new thought. We are not only in heaven, but in Christ in heaven. See how full the chapter is with the word "in." We are blessed in heavenly places in Christ—accepted in the Beloved. God has chosen us in Him. In whom we have obtained an inheritance. We are raised in Christ. Seated in Him in heavenly places; and when the world has told its story, you will find yourself a co-inheritor in Christ. That is a new thing; that is the body of Christ. That is one peculiarity of the Church.

Let me call your thoughts a little aside. We see in the argument of the Galatians, Abraham brought into our company. And in the argument of the Hebrews, Abraham is brought into our company. Not so in the Ephesians. This is the divine accuracy of the Holy Ghost. In Galatians, we do not get the Church; we get sonship and heirship. I do not doubt that Abraham was as perfect as I am; but the moment the Spirit unfolds and displays the body of Christ, Abraham has no place in the argument. We lose sight of him. I see you and myself; but not Abraham. Is there not a meaning in these distinctions? Can I put myself in the presence of three such august witnesses to the mind of Christ, and not see these things? I have no warrant for saying that Abraham takes a place in the Church. Now, let me just ask you, Are you prepared for this? Is there any analogy in the divine dealings? I think there is—By-and-by, the Lord will fill the whole face of the earth. All nations will bow to His scepter. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. But is that all I get in the millennial earth? No; I get the has gone up to heaven, and the sword has gone to the Gentile. Has the glory ever come back? It has; not to

accompany the sword of Caesar, but shrouded in the humiliation of the man of Nazareth. The sword had failed to keep the earth in order. We know where the glory dwells. It has not accompanied the sword of Caesar, as it did the sword of David and Solomon. The glory is as much apart from the sword now, as when it went up before Ezekiel, and the sword went to the Gentile. The powers that be, are not ordained of Jesus; they are ordained of God as God. Power belongs to God in His supreme place. Jesus expresses God brought into certain conditions and relationships. All dignities belong to Jesus in title; but we could not look at Him yet and call Him King of kings, and Lord of lords. The epitome of the Remnant's religion is, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." In a theocracy, Caesar and God are together. Now, I must recognize God's domain, and Cæsar's domain. I must take knowledge of the confusion, and not say that the glory is returned to link itself with the sword; or, He who said, "Who made me a ruler or a judge," would have been a very different person in this world.

Do you and I detect the unity and variety of the divine volume? It is a beautiful whole, but infinite in variety.

Thus, having seen our attitude, we are entering on the second chapter. We are let down a little here, but only to take up an important truth; to see out of what we are called. The chapter distinguishes itself into three parts. From verse 1 to verse 7, we have the subject of death and life; from verse 7 to verse 10, we have the subject of good works; and from verse 10 to the end, distance and nearness.

What manner of people were we when God took us up to baptize us into the body of Christ? Our condition was death—a profound moral ruin. What is the verdict that lies on us? "Dead in trespasses and sins;" but, then, what condition are we brought into by Christ? The contrast is very fine. It is life of the highest order that has been imparted to us. We are linked with Christ Himself. How suitable, having shown us our high calling in the first chapter, to show us in the second the place out of which we were called! Our death-estate in nature could not be lower; our life-estate in Christ could not be higher.

Another subject is good works, and I am charmed with the beauty of it. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

As far as good works could have been the ground of boasting, they are shut out by God; but you are created of God in such a way that you must be bringing them forth. John's epistle shows us the same thing; our very new creation secures them.

Then, to the end of the chapter, we get the subject of alienation and nearness. This is just like death and life. Two things attach to us—in our own person, either death or life; in relation to God, either alienation or nearness. I look at myself, and see death in me; but as to life, I have been quickened with the highest form of life a creature could enjoy. So, by nature, nothing could be more distant than my alienation—"No hope, without God in the world." Essentially cut off from Him, my nearness now in Christ is ineffable. It could not be more perfect. It is right we should have low thoughts of ourselves; but the value of Christ rests upon every stone of the temple. The whole temple is built in the Lord; and then, when built, what other glory is put upon it? 1 The Holy Ghost dwells there.

Thus, we have disposed of the first two chapters. The first unfolds our position in Christ; the second draws us aside to look at ourselves. He shows me first, in my own person, dead—then in alienation from God. Then he reverses it, and shows me what manner of life I have got, and what manner of nearness I have got; and there is not a single feeble thought in it. Have you feeble thoughts? They belong to nature. They are not the breathings of the Holy Ghost, they are not the counsels of God touching you. He is not weak when He delineates your condition in nature. He is equally strong when He delineates your condition in Christ Jesus,

Chapter 3

We will now read from the opening of chap. 3. to chap. 4. 16. When we meditate on such a scripture as the epistle to the Ephesians, we ought to take care that knowledge be not over-valued; that we do not give it a disproportionate place. When Nicodemus came to the Lord to inquire into heavenly secrets, He turned him back from being a mere enquirer as to heavenly objects, to begin with himself. So Paul refused to bring out the mystery to the Corinthians, because of their low moral standing. So we ought to approach Ephesian truth rather cautiously, looking at our own moral condition. The Lord's dealing with Nicodemus was morally of one character with

Paul's dealing with the Corinthians. So there is a moral title to breathe Ephesian atmosphere, or else we might get giddy on such heights. We must tread softly, not timidly, as if they were not our own. These deepest secrets of the bosom belong to us; but the vessel is to be fitted morally to receive them.

Now, we were distinguishing, in the first chapter, between the heavenly calling and the calling of the Church; and, in the second chapter, we were looking at our death and life condition, and our alienated and near condition. In entering on the third chapter, we resume the mystery. Did you ever see a moral 'beauty in this chapter being a parenthesis? It has struck me a good deal, the mystery being a parenthesis, that it should be here unfolded in a parenthetical chapter.

Here we get the Church more largely opened out to us. Paul was the depository of this mystery, and he got it by revelation. You will say he got everything by revelation; and so he did, as he tells us in Galatians. Where does Paul date his apostleship? From Christ in the flesh? No; from Christ in Glory. Where the other apostles? From Christ in the flesh-the Lord walking down here. But Paul never knew Christ in the flesh. So specific was his calling, and so specific the truth committed to him. By revelation, then, the mystery was made known to him. Now, why does he say, " In few words "1 Why, if he had spent chapters on it, it would have been but few words. If all that the Lord had done had been written, the world itself would not contain the books that should he written, John tells us, in a note of admiration. Just so; this thing was so magnificent that to spend chapters on it would have been but few words. You and I want to find these notes of admiration in ourselves. They are very suited to us. " He made known unto me the mystery-which in other ages was not made known-that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs," not with the Jews merely, but with Christ. The body will have Jews in it; but still it is characteristically Gentile. So he loses sight of the Jews, and tells the Gentiles that they are fellow-heirs with Christ.

Here we have a new kind of inheritance-to be of the same body, and fellow-heirs with the Son of His love; not Gentiles grafted on a body of Jews. " Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints." This is characteristic. The Jews were taken up, because they were the least of all nations. You were taken up, because you were a poor uncircumcised distant Gentile, with no hope or God; and Paul was taken up because he was less than the least of all saints. He takes the beggar from the dung-hill. That is the way of God. Now, what was the operation of the mystery " To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." This reminds us of Col. 1:25. Paul's ministry came " to fill out the word of God." You will say: Will you put it above the ministry of Christ? Indeed, I do, dispensationally. The ways of God shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. What light we stand in! We are in the light as God is in the light. The multiform variegated wisdom of God is now told out in all its forms of beauty. That which I now get is high calling into fellowheirship-one body with the Lord of glory. I have reached the very head itself; and sit down in sight of the coronation of Christ and His elect. So I have completed it; I have reached the manifold wisdom of God. Then He comes down a little, " In whom we have boldness and confidence by the faith of Him." How He loves to put that foundation under our feet! If we are in the light where God dwells, we are in the citadel of strength which God has erected. It would not do to be in the light, if we were not surrounded by the citadel.

The apostle now becomes a suppliant, as he did before in chap. 1. Having again rehearsed the mystery, he becomes, in verse 14, a man of prayer for us. In chap. 1. he prays to the God of our

Lord Jesus; and he prays that you may know the glory that awaits you, and the strength that is conducting you there; and he prays to the God of our Lord Jesus.

Here his prayer is, that you may know the love that has destined you there; and he prays to the Father of our Lord Jesus. His heart instinctively turns itself to the Father's bosom, which is the source of all our eternal blessedness. "Out of thy heart Thou didst it," as David says. And does not your heart instinctively dictate this distinction, as you find yourself in prayer with God in glory, the Father in love, and Christ in salvation? When I think of glory and strength, I am in company with the God of the Lord Jesus. When I think of love, I am in company with the Father of the Lord Jesus. These are evidences in the Book that address themselves to the conscience. Scripture is a great self-evidencing body of light. Then he makes his prayer. One little word we must pause on—"Of whom the whole family," etc. Critics say a better translation is, "every family," and I accept it from the whole context.

I believe there are to be households in heaven, as well as on earth. I believe, when I take an intelligent view of the coming millennial heavens, I see various families, as well as on the millennial earth. I see principalities, thrones, dominions; and I see the Church as the body of Christ, carried and seated above all. There may be, as was quoted before, "The noble army of martyrs," "The goodly fellowship of the prophets." There may be a patriarchal household, and a prophetic household in the world to come; but the Church of the living God, in company with her Head, will be there above all.

It is a fine thing to read astronomy and geography after this manner!

There will be a heaven, by-and-by, studded with the sons of God—with morning stars! and there will be no jealousies or envyings among them.

We want largeness of thought; and largeness of thought need not take us out of accuracy of thought.

Having closed this parenthetical chapter, and its parenthetical purpose, we are entering the fourth chapter. He resumes what he was saying in chap. 3. 1: "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord." That again is characteristic, that the Church should have her high calling told out from a prison in Rome. If we walked a natural path, and died a natural death, we should go from prisons and stakes to Christ in glory. The saint should be an unresisting witness against the world. The world thinks separation from it an insult; and it will not be insulted without revenge. So Paul unfolds the mystery from the gloomy dungeons of Rome. The Church is a martyred thing on the earth. Now he tells us to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We should be cherishing that temper of soul that makes us in honor esteem one another. What a beautiful casket in which to deposit such a treasure! "All lowliness, and meekness, with long-suffering." In the moral history of Christendom, pride has broken that casket. Then he shows what the unity of the

Spirit is, which we cannot destroy. We may break the casket, and expose the treasure; but we cannot break it. Do we come from north, south, east, and west, Jews and Gentiles? When we sit down together, it is in one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

We must pause a little on the verses that follow. Suppose I say, "We must look back to Genesis 3" You may answer, "These are very distant scriptures, both locally and in the material." But there is

a beautiful connection between them. In Gen. 3 we see the victory of the serpent, and the ruin of man. In Eph. 4 we see the conquest of Christ, and the redemption of man. It is the undoing of the mischief of Gen. 3 Satan made man a drudge on the earth, and a captive to his lusts. The Lord comes to make the devil and his hosts His captives. There is a magnificent moral opposition in this. And what has He done with the old captive? He puts him in a more wonderful place than that out of which Satan took him. When He comes to make the hosts of hell His captives, He will let them learn what He can do with him that was once a captive. He has made us independent of everything. We are not only made proof against the deceiver; but we grow up by resources given us. The Church grows up with energies deposited in herself. He makes captivity captive, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, shows what He is about to do with that poor thing that the serpent once ruined. The story is reversed since Gen. 3 We get the captivity of man, and the glorification of man. There the doctrinal part ends. Now how shall our souls deal with it? Shall we be prepared for such magnificent disclosures of God's mind? Are they too weighty for us? I have often felt it so. Intercourse with men on the footstool is so pleasant; but that arises from a quantity of the human mixing with that which should be unmixed. So he prays that we might be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. The human mind is not able to measure these things. If my heart were opened

to the sense of what the Lord Jesus is, I should say, "Nearer, my Lord, to Thee; nearer to Thee." The footstool may be very pleasant, but, "nearer to Thee!" That Christ may dwell in my heart, and not the scene around me; and that I may know His love, which passeth knowledge.

Chapter 4

I observed that the doctrinal part of the epistle closes at chap. 4. 16. We will read to the end of the chapter. Let us just retrace the doctrinal teaching of the epistle. The first grand characteristic we are given about the calling of the Church is, that it is a calling in Christ. So we find in chap. 1. the word in abounds. "Seated in heavenly places in Him;" "Accepted in the Beloved," etc. And it is not only present possessions in Christ, but our interest in Him was before the world began (v. 4), and after the world closes. (v. 11). You will tell me all the ransomed rest on sovereignty; and so they do; and the very angels too who kept their first estate; but the character of the Church; election is, that it is not mere abstract election, but election "in Him," and you never leave Him.

The Church finds herself in closest connection with Christ from before the foundation of the world till the glory after the world has run its course. This is the first thought about the Church. These things are not predicated of Israel. It is the peculiar calling of the Church to be linked and bound up with Christ. Then this Church has been "hid in God." It was, so to speak, God's bosom secret. The secret that lay nearest to His heart, and deepest in His counsels.. We do not find the election of the worthies of old spoken of in that way of mysterious beauty and intimacy. It was hid in God from all ages up to the ministry of Paul. The epistle to the Ephesians is an instance of accumulation of language. Language grows on the thoughts of the Spirit Himself.

Will you tell me, if your soul is bubbling up with some commanding thought, that you will not tell it out again and again, multiply words about it, and even become eloquent For the heart, not the head, is the parent of eloquence. That is the style of the Spirit in bringing out this secret in this epistle. We get "the praise of His glory;" and "the riches of the glory;" and "the praise of the glory of His grace;" and "the exceeding riches of His grace." So in chap. 2., when He comes to

show those who are the objects of this calling. When He shows their death-estate, description after description is given of them; and when you are brought to see your nearness, again the Spirit multiplies descriptions of what you are.

The consummation of revelation waited on Paul's ministry, the Gentile apostle. When he brought out this secret, it was the last in the revelation of God, and it was the crown of all the divine purposes. Let me refer you to a little analogy; how did the work of the old creation proceed? One thing after another was created in its beauty, and man came at the last. He was put in the garden; and what was his condition there He was at home there; but when the cattle were brought up to be named by him, he was not only at home in his own proper place, but he gets the lordship of everything before him, He was in his dominions. Was that all? There remained a thing behind, and that thing was the chief est. He had everything before he got the woman. It was the last thing revealed, and the tip-top of his happiness. It opened his lips. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Adam was happy before, but he was not abounding. When the woman was given to him, it was the height of his joy. So we ought to be prepared for the Church waiting for the ministry of Paul. I should be prepared for the last ministry bringing out the richest thing in the counsels of God.

I get the same thing in the story of Jerusalem. When Israel went into Canaan, the sword of Joshua reduced the land to their possession. So it went on in the days of the Judges; and in the days of King Saul they still remained in possession; but all that time Jerusalem was a Jebusite city, all through that season this favored spot, this chief spot in the land-this queen, destined to fix the eye of God -was in the clutches of the Gentile; and it was not till the days of David, God's own king, that it became the chief absorbing center of everything in the land: the sanctuary, the throne, the place where the tribes went up. It was the chiefest of everything, and it came last. Do we not get there an image of Ephesian truth? God delights Himself in analogies. What are parables but divine analogies I And so, in the very end of the Book, we see the woman reappearing as the last and chiefest. The victories have been won-the kingdom seated in dignity; the very last thing in the Book is the revelation of the Church coming down to show herself in her beauty. (Rev. 21) So I am prepared to listen to Paul without charging him with arrogancy when he says he fills out the word of God.

Again, the revelation of the Church is the richest display of God in grace, glory, and wisdom. The calling of Israel was a rich display of Him. Be it so. God cannot put His hand to anything without displaying Himself thus. But when we come to listen to the mystery of the Church, the body and bride of Christ, we are instructed to know that grace in its glory, in its riches, in its exceeding riches, has been manifested, and manifested in the face of creation; in the hearing and seeing of principalities and powers in heavenly places; and there is a simplicity about all this, Does magnificence touch simplicity I It would not be simply divine, if it were not unutterably glorious. If it lay deepest in the divine mind, it was most full of grace, glory, and wisdom. Principalities and powers shall hold their breath while listening to the story that the calling of the Church is rehearsing, NOW, what are its titles? There remained a thing and the bride; and what do they mean I The body is the expression of this-that the Church is set in the highest place of dignity. As the bride, she is set in the nearest place of affection. As the body of Christ, occupying the chiefest point in dignity, all that is in this world, and in that which is to come; will be beneath her. He will be seated above all; and the Church, which is His body, is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. As

the bride, she will be in the nearest place of affection. You cannot be too near to the person you love. As the bride of Christ, the Church is set close to His heart. The Church is destined to be to the heart of Christ what the woman was to Adam. Chapter 5 is as the utterance of Adam over the woman. " We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," is a reechoing of the ecstatic utterance of the first man over the first woman.

If we love a person, we love to see them in dignity and glory. There you are set in the tip-top place of dignity, and, as the bride, in the nearest place of affection. You might be 'surprised to hear me say that the Lord Jesus did not complete the revelation of God, When you read the four Gospels, do you read them as the full picture of gospel grace'? The Lord's ministry was a transitional time. Till His death was accomplished, He had not the platform for the display of full gospel grace, or the instrument for forming the Church.. How could you form a thing without the instrument `I The Spirit was not given; and the Head was not yet glorified. The opening of the Book of God prepares me for the mystery, and the close of the Book shuts me up to it, and seals it on my apprehension, as we now see.

But in the epistle to the Ephesians, we get not merely the church, but saints individually. (Chapter 5, and 6.) We do not lose our personality, This is said to be the meaning of chap, 4. 12. That is an individual thing. The business of gifts is with you individually: "He gave some apostles..... for the perfecting of the saints," There is a deep.

intimacy and personality between me and Christ that nothing can ever touch. So the first business of gifts was with each-individually,--" For the perfecting of the saints." Then, let the perfected saints set themselves to the work of the ministry and to the edifying of the body. Consequently, in Corinthians, when he had the mystery to bring out, he says, " We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." So, when we come to practical details, we are addressed individually: " That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk," and so on; " Who, being past feeling," &c., that is, a seared and hardened conscience, with no sense of their own lasciviousness. " But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus."

The introduction of the word Jesus here shows personality; and do not you love a personal lesson Do not you delight to think that you and Christ have a business that none can interfere with' Look at John's gospel, as a beautiful picture of the sinner and Christ together. We do not find the Lord in John as a social man, working with apostles. He works alone with the sinner. It is very sweet to see the Spirit refusing to lose sight of the individual. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness." This is a much richer creation than the first. Adam was the only object in the first creation that carried an understanding; but you could not say he was created " after God in righteousness and true holiness," We are told to put away lying, as being members one of another. "Be ye angry, and sin not," Anger may be as holy a feeling as any other; but do not retain it, so as to let it degenerate into nature. Then, resist " the devil. Let him that stole steal no more," &c. This is very beautiful. He is not merely to cease from stealing, but to become a workman for others. " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Our works are looked at; our words; and now our tempers.

Are you not thankful that Christianity legislates for every bit of you! But what dignity! Your lips may be employed in communicating grace to the hearers; and your` thoughts, either in refreshing or

grieving the Holy Spirit of God

" Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." This is a change from " The Lord's Prayer." There you are instructed to know that God will measure Himself by you. " Forgive.... as we forgive." Here is quite the reverse. I am to measure myself by God; "forgiving, as God hath forgiven you." This shows, as we were observing before, that the Lord's ministry was a transitional thing; it had not come out into the full glory of salvation. Now a ministry has gone forth for the perfecting of us individually, and for our edification as the body of Christ.

Chapter 5

We have observed that the doctrinal part of the epistle closed at chap. 4. 16. Then, from that to chap. 6. 9, we get the practical part, and we get conflict in the end.

Read now chap. 5., and to chap. 6. 9; the practical details of Christian life. I should like, first, to say a little about precept.

If we consult the epistles to the Romans and the Colossians, we shall find in them a different construction from the Philippians. There the apostle is eminently a pastor; looking at the souls of the Philippians. But in the Ephesians, Romans, Colossians, he is a teacher; therefore in them we get doctrine, followed by precept. Now, why do we get precepts in the epistles? Do you always get your conduct directly from precepts? No; but by putting your mind in connection with Christ Himself, and the grace of God in your calling. So we get in Titus: "The grace of God.... hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly;" that is, if I know the moral virtue of the grace in which I stand, I shall be taught, without precepts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Peter tells us exactly the same thing: " Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" and again, " Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent." There is no precept to be diligent; but the eye of the soul is directed to the glory, and to the dissolution of all things present; and it says what manner of persons ought we to be! So practical power derives itself from the grace of our calling.

We get the same thing in the book of Genesis; there are no precepts there, but the patriarchs lived holy lives (through the Spirit, surely) by virtue of their calling. One is called out by " the God of glory." It is said, as on the lips of Joseph, " How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" It is not that he had precepts; but He looked at God. So in your daily walk you are not commonly looking at precepts, but at Christ. But why, then, the precepts? For several reasons.

Precepts serve as tests. If a soul is backsliding, you may use them in discipline. It is very well, in such a case, to have a well-defined precept to guide, you.

THEN God is dealing with living realities in His word. If doctrines tell me that God is dealing with me, precepts tell me that it is with me God is dealing. God is not revealing an indefinite light that may sparkle before me. He addresses Himself to me, a corrupt creature, and says, " Let him that stole steal no more."

There is this beauty in precepts. They do greatly honor the doctrine; they are the expression of the hidden moral virtue that lies in the doctrine. For instance, " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." The doctrine had already taught me that I had received the Spirit as the seal of salvation. The precept

tells me, that the Spirit I have received is sensitive of the least touch of unholiness. So the doctrine is glorified by the precept.

I will tell you further what precepts do. They show you that your holiness must be dispensational. You will say, Are not God's demands always the same? No; I boldly say they are not. We can only judge of this in the dispensed light of God. Is it unholiness now for the Jew to traffic with the Gentile? No; it is not. Yet under the law they dare not eat with them. So holiness may vary its form.

Now suppose I were to keep a good conscience, just because my conscience resented evil; and were moral, because morality is comely, would that be Christian morality? No holiness is Christian holiness but such as -derives itself from the truth. When you come to apply that to your self, you will find you have something to do. You will have to associate the Lord Jesus with every bit of your life. How did the elders obtain a good report? Was it a precept that worked Abraham's separation from his kindred and his father's house, and Moses's abdication of Egypt? It was God making Himself known to them. Precepts never will make a Christian man. The soul must come in contact with the revelation of God. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Now, let me ask you, supposing I was a good neighbor, just to keep my conscience a little easy, would that be- meeting the demands of this passage? "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us;" that makes kindness Christian kindness. I take the Lord Jesus as my great prototype. Does not this take morals out of the hand of Moses? This puts my morals on a new ground altogether. I am to walk in love, because Christ has loved me, and given Himself for me an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. The Lord has not only presented you in all the value of His blood, but in the sweet savor of His sacrifice. Is it accepted in the righteous one you are? No; but "accepted in the Beloved." The high priest, when he took the blood into the holiest, went in enveloped in a balmy, savory cloud of incense, was it a grudging acceptance that waited on the sacrifice of Christ? No; it was a delighted acceptance; and you are in all the value of that acceptance. Well, then, could I give the atmosphere, in which I am before God, one glance of faith, and come back to indulge my enmities?

You know your renewed conscience would never be satisfied by merely doing what is right. You must have the springs of action purified. It is what Christ has done that asks it from you. These uncleannesses, as I read in verse 3, do not become saints. Amos 1 to lay aside uncleanness, because it is uncleanness? No; but because it does not become saints. So it goes on. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." I refuse participation in uncleanness, because I was darkness; but now I am transformed. I am a new creature, a child of light. And I pause here again to ask you, Would you qualify this beautiful intensity? Do you want to leave Christ when you come, to the practical details of life? We never leave Christ. So when we come to meditate on conflict, we are just as much in His company as in the details of life, or as up in heaven in the early part of the epistle. There is something sublime in this. If a doctrine comes to unfold God to me, a precept comes to show me the moral virtue that lies hid in it. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness as in the benevolent virtues-righteousness, as in integrity and honesty, and all connected with truth. We find goodness and righteousness in the world; but we shall not find them connected with truth, save in the household of faith. These things are given to make us practically Christ. As an old writer says, "Christ Himself is the ground of all laws to a Christian;" one loathes cultivation of soul by anything short of Christ. Christ would have us sober, truthful, honest. Now are ye light; and what quality of light? Light "in the Lord." You have not kindled the

spark that is in you from Moses, but from the Lord of Light. You have borrowed a ray from Him, and you are to walk in it, proving what is acceptable to Jesus. I am sure, after this, we shall not ask why the precepts of the New Testament, when we see the blessed Lord connected with each bit of the details, the Spirit bringing down my Lord Jesus to be the sanction of my ways.

You will often find here that the Spirit is not satisfied with mere abnegation of evil. He insists on the cultivation of good. " Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good." There is the negative in company with the positive. The evil is denied, and the good is brought in. So here, " Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Because you have put off the old man; but are you merely an emptied, script thing? No; you have put on the new man. As the old man would have made plunder of what belonged to another, so now you are to work for him whom before you would have plundered. Moses never set me to that work. Will Christ measure Himself by Moses? Will He measure Himself by anything but Himself? There is such dignity in this. We should keep morals up in their own elevation. Man would drag them down; I do not say this, when we get Moses passed through the filter of Christ, as in the sermon on the mount. Would Moses have required you to lay down your life for another? Christ does, because Christ has done it. "Where fore it saith," I would rather have it in verse 14. It is the voice and language of light. The light that is now shining is, the light of Christ. So "Christ shall give thee light; " a peculiar moral light has risen now.

" See then that ye walk circumspectly... redeeming the time." Now, how is understanding to exercise itself? In the philosophy of the schools? I am to have an understanding of the will of the Lord. He keeps you, again I say, as a heavenly creature in company with Christ; as a man walking across the face of the earth, He keeps you equally with Christ. When He sends you into the field of battle, He arrays you in Christ, He puts Christ upon you. Who but the Spirit could come down into the traffic of such a world, and keep Christ in your company through it all? So the old man gets drunk with wine. The new man has the Spirit to, fill himself with. If that is to be mortified, this is to be cultivated. And how will this filling with the Spirit express itself " In psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." There is a vessel filled with the Spirit. It is the very same vessel, only transmuted. It was once filled with wine; now, in a spirit of thanksgiving, it is bubbling up with melody to the Lord. We have been in a fervent heated atmosphere, heated by the Holy Ghost; and now we are suddenly let down, with a beautiful calmness, into the ordinary virtue of taking a low place. There is a beauty in the very style of this, How can we be sufficiently charmed with it! We do not know which to admire' most,' the doctrinal or the practical part.

Having come down to that, He details it, and addresses husbands and wives. There, I need not say, how deeply we are in company with Christ. Do not a wife and husband get their sanctions from Christ I Many a good wife never thinks of the Lord Jesus. Is that a Christian wife?

Here let me turn aside to note a title that occurs three times in this epistle. Christ is called, " The Head " in chapters 1., 4., and 5.; but in each place the Headship has a different aspect.

In the first chapter it is as the Head of the Body. He is Head over all things to the Church; the principal feature of the mystic man.

In chap. 4., it is as being Head of influence, dispensing virtue to the members. " From whom the whole body, fitly joined together... maketh increase of the body."

Here, in chapter 5., we see Him in another aspect, as the Head of authority, "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church." In verse 30, it ought to be, " This is the great mystery." Then, having addressed wives by the common duties that belong to them, in chapter 6., it is the same thing with children. " Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Even in the time of Moses, this was an honorable duty. But here, it is because it is right in the view of the Lord. This takes it out from the legal promise, and the Lord becomes the new sanction.

So with fathers. A father ought to be his child's Christian servant. I mean that he should every hour be watching that the nurture and admonition of the Lord be ministered to his child: He should minister Christ to him.

As to servants--beautiful this is!-they are to be obedient. It matters not the character of their master. They are to be doing service " as unto the Lord." Did you ever get up to that verse in James 1:9, when you see people maintaining station in this life, that you ought positively to rejoice in anticipation of these distinctions passing away I Not touching the thing in passing along. 1 Tim. 6 would tell me that; but it ought to be the hidden joy of the heart that, by-and-by, station will have passed away with the fashion of this world.

Then, as to masters. Do not be guilty of threatening. The lordly ways of masters and mistresses are hateful How does your Master in heaven treat you?

Here the practical part ends; but I ask, does it not dignify you? As George Herbert says, " Who sweeps a room, if for Thy laws, makes that and the action fine." It is the same thing to Christ, if you are up there in His company. It is the same Jesus who is enfolding, embracing, enriching you in every step of the journey, and that for His own eternity.

CHAPTER 6.

We have observed that this epistle naturally distributes itself into three parts-doctrinal and practical; and here, from verse 10 to the end, we get a scene of conflict. Teaching, Walk, and Conflict.

The teaching, we remember, was the education of the Church, the body of Christ.; and we were observing that there was heavenly calling before there was Church calling.

We have constant proof all along the line of Old Testament days, of heavenly calling; but we have only distant shadowy intimations of the body of Christ, as has been said by another, " It would have sounded absurd in the ears of a Jew, to talk in divine mysterious language, of giving Messiah a body, completing Him, filling Him out." It is not said of Abraham, that he was blessed in heavenly places in Christ, incorporated in Christ. This is the grand teaching of this highest of all the epistles. Then, leaving the doctrinal part, we enter on the practical part, which goes on to verse 9 of this chapter 6.; and I should like to repeat what we were observing. When we come to the practical part of the epistle, we get the doctrinal part gloriously honored. Precepts become, in the hands of the Spirit, the expression of the moral virtue that lies in the doctrine. If I had my heart open to God, I should be guided by the intrinsic virtue of my calling; and, oh, if we have common spiritual taste, we must enjoy that! Is it not beautiful, to see the doctrine and precepts thus in company In the same way, Peter stands before the doctrine, and wonders that we should not prove the moral

virtue of it; and so do I. Then, in the next place, it gives precepts a dispensational character. God is not dwelling in the same light now, as when He was sitting on the throne in Jerusalem. That was an earthly light; a light that shone on earth. The light in which God now dwells is the awful, yet most precious mystery, that He has been rejected here in His dear Son, and that that Son is now glorified in heaven. And you must be in the light where God dwells. You must make God's dispensational truth the rule of your ways. I speak not, of course, of the light in which God dwells, as in His own proper glory, as we read in 1 Tim. 6:16.

Now, the difference between chapters 5. And 6. is this. In chapter 5. we see the saint taking his walk in the midst of the circumstances of human life. Here we see the saint in' the field of battle. Do you believe your conflict is as constant as your walk? Are you to be in conflict to-day, and in conflict again to-morrow? There is plenty of work for us to do; our hands will be full enough if we are practical living saints of God.

Now, in opening this third view, he tells us to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, taking to us the whole armor of God, that we may withstand in the evil day; and having done all, to stand. The Spirit contemplate& that it is a war froth beginning to end. There may be certain battles; but, having done with the specific fight, you must still stand as in a war. Are. you prepared for finding human life a war? That is what this passage is pregnant with. Whether the specific fighting be present or not, your whole soul is to rest in the conclusion that it is incessant war, till you have done with this world, this flesh, and the devil. If two nations are at war, they may not be fighting every day; a battle may be a rare thing, but war has been proclaimed. The Lord forbid that you and I should not know that as long as we are in the body we are in a field of battle. " The evil day" is a specific battle. If we have won the victory, why are we still to stand? Because war has been proclaimed. Have you proclaimed war with the lusts that are in your members, and the spirit of the world around you? Your soul is to recognize, that while you are in the body you are a fighting man. That being your position, you are to put on the whole armor of God; " 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." Now, how do you understand this? Do you rest in the thought that wicked spirits are in heavenly places? It is abundantly taught us. In 2 Chron. 18 the Lord says, " Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel?" " I will entice him," says a spirit; " I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." This is a fruitful, lively expression of the thing that, is taken up in Eph. 6 It is beautiful to see the Spirit so at home in His own Scriptures. He takes it up as a settled thing that Satan is in heaven. He does not make a difficulty or a question about it. He assumes it as a thing sealed and accredited, and so takes it up. What does the Lord say? " I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," This was not a mere honorary expression. Then, in Rev. 12, Satan is cast down from heaven. Satan and the principalities and powers are now in heavenly places.

But what do these wicked spirits do? They come down with all their wiles, and lies, and deceivings, to practice them in your heart and mine; as in Micaiah's vision, the lying spirit came down with a wile to Ahab; and again, as Satan tempts David to number the people. The Old and New Testaments are pregnant with all this. Paul says, " We are not ignorant of his devices;" and again, " Oh, full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil." All these prove that he acts by wiles. He acts by violence, and by persecution also; but that is not contemplated here. If we go over the story of Satan in Scripture, we shall find him an accuser. Was he not an accuser of the

brethren in the Book of Job? And is not the very same character attached to him in the book of the Apocalypse? Thus we now find ourselves put in the presence of the enemy. I am in the war, and I can never get out of it, though I may get out of the evil day. What then am I to do? I am to take the whole armor of God. And now I just ask you to inspect each part of this armor. Is there one single piece of that which is declared to be the armor of God fitted to send you out into a field of battle with flesh and blood? Is that the way He armed Joshua and David? They were to meet flesh and blood, and they were carnal weapons which He put into their hands. Now, there is not a touch of that here. There are no slings, and stones, and jaw-bones of asses; but that is declared to be the whole armor of God. If this is not the armor I have on me, I am not fighting for Christ. Saints may take carnal weapons; but if I do-if, for- instance, I go into a court of justice to assert my rights, do not let me talk of being in the light of God. That is where dispensational truth is so important. I find here that the Spirit sends me into a field of battle, and I find that my security depends on truth, righteousness, faith, peace, and the sword of the Spirit. Now, supposing we were to describe a few of these wiles. Infidel heresies, superstitious vanities, evil doctrines, false expectations about the history of the world. - We are not here in company with our lusts, but in conflict with direct attempts of the enemy. We must withstand the temptations of our hearts in walking through the world, as in chap. 5. Here we are set face to face with Satan, the deceivableness of unrighteousness, doctrinal heresies. These are the things we are to withstand. And is it not perfectly right, that being delivered by the Seed of the woman, we should make our war with him who was our captor? How could you attach yourself to Jesus, and not turn round in 'the face of the enemy, and let him know that you are at war with him? Having passed this fervent scene, we find that, having this armor on us, if a quickened condition of soul be not maintained in communion, the armor will be cumbrous. " Praying always... and for me... that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds." Did you ever hear of such a thing as the ambassador of one nation being put in bonds by the nation to which he was sent Why, Christ has fared worse in this world than any -nation in it would. And, pray, what message did this ambassador bring? A message of boundless grace. And that is the way He has been treated. The law of nations would not allow it for an instant. Yet that is the way God, for 1800 years, in the person of His servants and witnesses, has consented to be treated.

Then he tells them that he sends Tychicus "that he may comfort your hearts." Oh, if we could be in that way -in prison, yet able to comfort others! As dear Saunders, a clergyman in the Bishop of London's coal-hole, sent to his wife, "Be merry, dear wife, be merry; we 're all merry here. We weep with Him now; but we shall laugh with Him forever." That is like Paul, sending from a prison in Rome a cheering word to his brethren at Ephesus. What cannot the Spirit of God work'?

The Lord grant that we may be taught by the doctrine, instructed in morals, and put in something of strength for the battle by this closing scene. AMEN.

HYMN.

"WE TALK OF THE LAND OF THE BLESS'D."

WE talk of the land of the blessed,

That country so bright and so fair;

And oft are its glories confessed-

But what must it be to be there!

We talk of its pathways of gold,

Its walls deck'd with jewels so rare;

Its wonders and pleasures untold-

But what must it be to be there!

We talk of its peace and its love,

The robes which the glorified wear;

The songs of the blessed above-

But what must it be to be there!

We talk of its freedom from sin,

From sorrow, temptation, and care,

From trials without and within-

But what must it be to be there!

See the answer to the above at page 473.

NO 19. MEDITATIONS ON SUBJECTS OF INTEREST. I. DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH.

WHEN souls surrender dispensational truth, they have committed themselves to the ocean of feelings and demands without a compass. If dispensational truth be not God's present revelation, what is it? And if it be, can I expect to walk in the present scene according to His mind, without the light which He in His grace has supplied me? Man knows nothing of God, except through revelation; how inconsistent then for a child of God to admit that he cannot see the necessity of adhering to that which is the revelation for this present time; for, as a Christian, he must own that, if it were not for revelation, he must have sunk into eternal darkness; and he has no right to reject or be indifferent to one part of the revelation, because it does not immediately bear on the question of his salvation.

God's revelation, in its full sense, and comprising all His arrangements on earth, is a structure of many stories, if I may say so. All the stories were not lighted up at once, but according to the need of those who would make use of the light. At one time it might have been sufficient to light up one story; but as the darkness increased (for in spite of what rationalists say, men are getting, in the spirit of their minds, every day further from God), there was of necessity a need for increase of light, which God, in His grace, vouchsafed for the use of those who would use it. Prophecy contained a suited and inexhaustible supply of the needed light; but this light could not act serviceably on any one who did not apprehend the order of God's counsels on earth. Such an one neither occupied the right story, nor did he (from not

understanding his calling) seek or receive that knowledge from God which would have made him, not only know his proper place before God, but would also have furnished him with grace and

power to act therein according to God's pleasure. How can God give a soul light to see the future of His purposes, if he be ignorant of or indifferent to the present? He who knows dispensational truth imperfectly, can never know prophetic truth rightly. If I disregard the manner of God's arrangements-the position of His people now according to His mind-how can I expect Him to unfold to me more distant things " To him that hath shall more be given." It is no excuse to say that the Church is in ruins; for if I cared for God's counsel in the Church, the more inexpressive of that counsel I found the materials to be, the more should I seek to maintain it.

God will not swerve from His own counsel; and surely it is marvelous grace that He should allow us to learn it; and still more, that according as we know and submit ourselves to it, He should entrust us with further purposes of His mind. The more difficult the times become, the more do I need dispensational truth. What other chart have I How can I solve any of the incongruities that encompass me, or discover a clue to my right course in them, if I do not know the order and intention of God, and how that has been counteracted and disturbed by the wickedness of man? From the smallest remnant of the Church I ought to be able to put together what the Church should be in God's counsels, and therefore to serve it according to His thoughts and love. In this relation to it I should most truly estimate what damage it had suffered, and what had inflicted the damage.

2. GUIDANCE.

One of the greatest evidences of how much Israel gained by leaving Egypt was, that God marked out their way for them, and always guided them. At His word (of which the cloud was the expression) they journeyed, and at His word they encamped. The two grand characteristics of the wilderness journey were, the guidance and the manna. Practically speaking, we are now in the wilderness; and if we are enjoying manna, we may surely conclude that we are entitled to enjoy guidance. Few saints would deny their title to this great privilege; but many, who would aver that they receive and feed on spiritual meat, would hesitate to say, with anything like confidence, that they are guided as distinctly and positively as were the Israelites in the wilderness.

Now this should not be so; for one is on the same ground as the other: the cloud was attendant on the wilderness march as much as was the manna. True, to Israel both were visible to the natural eye, and both are spiritual now; but they are not more difficult of realization to the spiritual man; and if I can asseverate with thankfulness that I am divinely fed day by day, and if I can only know this spiritually, ought I not with equal certainty to be conscious of my guidance in the spiritual mind? If I am entitled to one, I am equally so to the other; both are connected with the wilderness; blessed evidence of God's care of His people thus cast on Himself.

Why then is one spiritual blessing admitted and owned while the other, though valued, is little known, and more or less doubtfully expected? The feeling of Israel in the wilderness was that they did not know their way; they had no idea of it; and were so completely cast on God for guidance, because there was no one else there that could guide them; nor had He, blessed be His name! any other thought than to lead them Himself.

The first feeling in my soul then for guidance must be that I am in a wide desert, and that I have to depend on God, and on Him alone, to direct me. But how? By circumstances? Never. He did not guide Israel by circumstances improvised for the occasion, but by a cloud by day, and a pillar of

fire by night. These were His own appointed agencies. Anything below this is not guidance in its proper sense. It is true our gracious God, who, in spite of ourselves and our lack of dependence, will not allow us to lose our way, often uses circumstances to correct us and drive us back into the path of faith; and when in the path, He may allow them as, helps to our weakness; but they do not mark the path; they are never intended to guide us; and I believe the watching of circumstances, as indications of the path, is a preventive to many true-hearted souls from 'enjoying this their real and rightful privilege in the wilderness way.

Psa. 32 gives us the filling up of the Lord's grace to us as to this blessed privilege. " I will instruct thee in the way thou shalt go." "I will guide thee with mine eye." This is His appointed agency for us as distinctly as was the cloud and the pillar of fire for Israel But how am I to discern His eye? I must watch for it. If I do, I shall surely see it; if I do not, I cannot be guided by it. Where His eye is looking, there I ought to look. Unless I am spiritual, unless my soul is near Him, this will not be; I shall not look where He looks, and if I am looking to anything else for guidance, I shall not see His eye; but never is that eye hidden from the soul that watches for it. The " bit and the bridle " are God's alternatives for the soul that will not depend on Him, and be led by His eye; but the eye is there, lighting up the wilderness track for any who will discern and make use of it.

The Spirit has now come down to guide us into all truth; the spiritual man discerneth all things. The soul should wait on God, unable to proceed without Him, reckoning on His instructing it, and depending on nothing else for instruction but the spiritual sense of the direction of his own eye.

If I do this, I shall, as I go here or there, be assured that the eye of my Lord is directed that way; that such is the peculiar spot searched out by Him for me in the wilderness. The Lord lead us to exercise our souls more in this blessed nearness and dependence.

3. THE APPOINTED PATH.

The effect of the presence of the Lord on His disciples was always to constrain them into the mind of God, so' that He could say, " While I was with them in the world I kept them in Thy name." Wonderful is the effect of a presence which commands our veneration while controlling us into fellowship with itself. If we have no liking or drawing to it, we soon retire from it, for we cannot endure a restraint entirely foreign to our tastes. The taste may not be strong enough to sway us into the same line which the presence of one 'supremely powerful will sway us into if there be any real taste for it.

In John 11 we find that Martha, when the conference with the Lord becomes close, escapes from it. Not so with Mary; the closer it becomes, the more swayed is she by His all-controlling presence, and she walks according to God, side by side with her Lord, fulfilling everything in her path. Her grief at the death of her brother was none the less, nor her joy at seeing him raised up, and yet all the time her soul was gathering up that ointment of 'spikenard which was to be expressed at the proper time. She was lovely in the common walks of life; and, learning the heart of her Lord there, and walking with Him there, she could say to Him, when He came into His own house, While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." She was beautiful and useful in every position: she abode in the Lord, and therefore brought forth much fruit.

It is a very harassing and profitless occupation to lose time asking oneself, " What shall I do now I" If I were near the Lord, I should see in a moment what He would not have neglected; and the next

thing to be done is always at the very doorway; for the smallest thing often leads to the greatest results; and it is in neglecting these that the greatest misadventures have occurred. Nothing is neglected by God.

If at any time I am at a loss to know my true path, I shall ascertain it better by drawing near to the Lord than by cogitating the various bearings of the circumstances. I may be very laboriously fishing all night, and have taken nothing; but if the Lord is with me, I shall surely find the difficulties vanish.

While He was with the disciples, they lacked nothing; He was both a purse and a sword to them; but when He was going to leave them, He says, "He that hath a purse, let him take it; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." He was going to leave them there for that all-absorbing work of sin-bearing, and they could not reckon on His care for the time being. No greater picture could be given of their desolation.

The presence of the Lord gives a perception and power for doing things. Not only does it furnish me with power, but the possession of power provokes me to use it like vigor in a man of strength. I feel He is better to me than a purse or a sword, and He will always succor me if I am in my true path; for there alone are the proper difficulties to the faith which He gives me, or rather the proper exercises for that faith. If I turn aside from my path, I turn aside from the faith proper to it, and I must leave His presence, which could only attend me while walking according to God's will. Abraham sought to walk with God; and thus He entered into His joys and blessings. Lot sought to make a path for himself, and he was forever going from one sorrow to another, seeking to escape evil, instead of walking with God above it. There is no use in trying to better an evil or mistake. We must only, like Peter, abandon the ship, and cast ourselves on the Lord; and then the path will be open to us again, and we shall have grace to follow Him.

4. LIGHT IS AN AMOUR,

The great power and characteristic of light is, that it refuses the entrance of darkness on every side of it. Be it ever so small a light, there is no access to it on any side. It is isolated to everything but itself, though with itself it will so unite that you could not distinguish in the unity between the light furnished by the largest lamp and the smallest rush-light.

It is exclusive; i.e. it will not admit of any admixture; but the more it is increased, the more it will assert its isolation; though, at the same time, with each increase will it offer and present a benefit to any one in need of it, so that when most distinct, it is morally best qualified to offer and bestow, in a delicate, unobtrusive way, the the most valued services. In Rom. 13:12 we are told to "put on the armor of light;" in the original, the " arms of light;" i.e. the weapons-the powers of defense as well as attack. Light becomes not only a panoply, but a weapon; for "light is that which doth make manifest;" necessarily painful to that which is manifested and exposed, but preservative to that for which it acts.

Refusing all intermixture or association with anything but itself, it will nevertheless co-operate and coalesce with the smallest fraction of light, which only renders it stronger in its own intrinsic qualities. If I walk in light, I am unconsciously helping the smallest ray of it in my associates. Whatever be the measure of it in me or in them, the two coming in contact must necessarily blend, and act in delicate and conjoint co-operation. So that there is a mutual benefit, often unknown or undefined, save in the sense of being preserved from the works of darkness. Nature is rebuked,

but so rebuked on all sides that it is more subdued and less irritated than if, as in a guerilla warfare, it were attacked, now in one place, and now in another. Often when we are trying to behave well in given circumstances, and are making arrangements how we shall act, we shall find how vain our plans have been. Nature, though irritated, is not subdued by our forecasting; whereas if we walk in the least measure of light known to us, we shall most effectually preserve ourselves, as well as offer; and (if acceptable) bestow the best service to our surroundings. The higher we get, the more do we feel encompassed, and possessed of the " arms of light;" and the more we know what light is, the more truly shall we estimate all that is opposed to it.

5. IT THE EFFECT OF WORLDLY SOCIETY.

Have you ever considered the effect of association I believe we are affected or altered in some way by association with any of the human family. The Nazarite forfeited the hair of his separation by touching a dead body, even suddenly; and I doubt if he forfeited it in any other way. I am convinced that we never come in contact with humanity without being either injured or served by it.

Now, that which cannot serve us must injure, if we blend with it. I know it is possible to maintain an elevated region towards another; but then it is plain I am not blending. I am, on the contrary, in a sensibly distinct position, trying to myself, and I only submitting to it, for the sake of testimony, or the good of my inferior company. The moment I blend, the moment we are on equal terms in any line-my distinctness is gone, and my influence too. Could I ever help a person out of a slough by going into it myself? Is not my strength all the more applicable by my using every appliance in my power from the terra firma of a solid footing? By refusing intimacy I do not refuse help; for, in fact, I lose my power to afford moral help the moment I sink into intimacy; the very testimony to my own moral power being, that I keep myself from the slough or its neighborhood. If I meet on equal terms I fail to show that I am endued with power to help, or that it is a case that needs help. If I touch the dead body, if I lose my hair, my moral power, of what use am I?

A soul in true moral vigor and spiritual perception must feel the company of an unbeliever, or of the world, in any sense most irksome; for it must be braced up to testimony all the time, and guarding itself against any relaxation, which would rob it of its high standing. If I am right with such an one, I must not mingle with him if I fail to raise him to higher contemplation, I must not sink to his level; for if I do, I have lost my place of testimony towards him, and consequently forfeited my moral power. He has injured me; he has fed my old man, which I have suffered to rise up and act in denial of the new; and even though my intent to serve him may be honest, I defeat it.

Nothing so convinces another of power as seeing its action in oneself. When Isaac (in Gen. 26) completely retired from the land of the Philistines, THEN the king owned his superiority. So is it always. If I see that you can surrender the world and its refinements, I must be conscience-stricken that there is something mighty there.

Oh let us ponder this in the Lord's name! Let us preserve inviolably our love and allegiance to Him; and as our souls enjoy the holiness of His way, we shall see more clearly how such associations injure us, and how we neutralize our best intentions by gratifying self.

6. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERSHIP.

If we say we hold that the members of Christ's body are one with Christ, and that the Holy Ghost is down here forming one body in Christ; in short, if we hold the, great truths which characterize the Church of God, it is plain that although my individual place with Christ remains the same to me if I am personally faithful (see John 14:21-24), yet my place in the body down here, in which I am held by the Holy Ghost, suffers or gains according to the faithfulness of all other members as well as my own.

My testimony, my service, my worship in communion with the saints, is affected by the action or inaction of my fellow-members; consequently, wherever they are, their conduct is of material interest to me, independently of the regard I may have for my Lord's interest in them. And to seek to improve them, or preserve them right, is the only method I have of freeing myself from the embarrassment which they cause me.

If my Lord's word or judgment excludes any of them because of radical failure from a sustained union, then I am relieved from this (may I say. I) bodily encumbrance; otherwise, I have no remedy but the appliances of constitutional vigor to rally and reclaim them. If a gathering becomes dead and formal, and if, through mercy and discipline, my soul is kept lively and vigorous, I don't believe that I shall either help myself or them, or please the Spirit of God, by seeking another enclosure where I may congregate more kindred souls.

As long as I can' recognize the assembly as meeting on divine principles, I am bound to maintain my membership unimpaired and utilized among them. If they fail as members, I am not. My measure of power will be owned where there is life. As all measures of light blend and diffuse when brought together, so do all measures of spiritual life, through the power of the Holy Ghost, when acting according to. His mind and course. Amos 1 to tie up my arm because the greater part of my body is paralyzed? Ought I not rather to promote vitality by the limb which remains in health?

I am persuaded that a faithful member, acting his part, and proving his vitality in the midst of an enfeebled constitution, would eventually rally and re-animate whatever is genuine. All Scripture history supports this belief. Impatience or hastiness of feeling is always an evidence of want of power. If I have power, I have only use for it where it is wanting, and it is not the amount of power that is valuable, but the faithful, energetic use of it. Phinehas like, I do not desert the congregation of the Lord, if it be one; but the very fact that it needs so much, only makes the demand on me more imperative to maintain the truth in its midst according to the power God may give me.

The simplest and fullest evidence of divine power is the ability to apply the very quality of good suited to the attenuated existence of a weakly body. It is not the whirlwind, it is not the fire; it is the gentle and insinuating word that forms a place for itself in the soul, because the quickened soul feels that it is just what it wants. Christ presented according to the nature of the need, was the nature of the ministry prescribed for the declining churches of revelation. I believe that if we had grace, we should be like Elijah to the prophets of Baal, or any like them, we should let the latter have their full swing, and then in the Lord's name establish His grace to the souls that He loves.

7. PREPARATION FOR GLORY.

It is only as we enter into Christ's sufferings here that we can either desire, apprehend, or be prepared for His glory. Everything connected with the old man is contrary to Christ; for on account

of it He died. If I would enter into Christ's glory I must necessarily die to everything here which is contrary to Him. His life leads me into His glory. But if it does, it also puts me into the sense of moral death with regard to everything against it; so that in proportion as I am able to walk here in the sufferings with which His life was oppressed, the more do I desire and apprehend His glory. If I find everything here antagonistic to me, the glory is my resource so that I feel, as I am a co-sufferer with Him, I am also to be co-glorified with Him, and that this light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for me, in surpassing measure, an eternal weight of glory. The beauty and brightness of the glory itself does not move those who are not suffering with Christ here; and this explains why many who feel their need of Christ, and use Him to a great degree, have very feeble desires for or apprehensions of that glory. If I enjoy what Christ cannot enjoy, how can I enjoy what He does enjoy? And therefore the school or university for the glory is suffering with Him. There I must learn, and there I must graduate. It is only as I take up my cross daily, and follow Him, that I can either desire or be prepared to ascend with Him the holy mount. Death comes on us in many ways, here; not two of us die morally in the same way. Following Him will always disclose the nature of the death we have to die. Death is surrender of that which I should like to live in, and in which I could live humanly; but as I follow Him, find that I must surrender this; and then as I die thereto, following, accompanying Him, so to speak, do I find my soul enlarged in desire, apprehension of, and preparation for the glory. I feel that what I have to die to is against Him, but that the glory, where He is, is the joy and resource of my heart. When Moses felt the rebellion and hopelessness of Israel, his eye looked out for something beyond man; and his prayer was, " Show me Thy glory." When Stephen reached the confines of testimony to Israel as a nation, the glory was presented to him as his home. So with Paul in the prison at Rome; so with John in Patmos. As each was made partaker of the sufferings of Christ, he could rejoice that when His glory should be revealed he should be glad with exceeding joy.

8. THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE EYE

The first great point to establish, in order to ascertain the error of anything, is to obtain a perfect knowledge of what is true and right. That which is right must be singular, while the counterfeits may be endless in number and variety; A banker once said, on being asked how he knew a bad note, " I never consider whether a note is a bad one; I ascertain whether it be a good one." If I know what is right, it is very easy and simple for me to reject that which does not answer thereto. Many weary themselves to no profit in examining the suspicious, to see whether the grounds for suspicion exist; whereas if they had simply adhered to that which they knew was right, they could have discerned and rejected the pretender at once, even though they might not have been able to tell the exact grounds on which they rejected it. I may add, that when I have rejected any pretension as spurious, I may then, in order to convince others, examine the imperfections which prove its ungenueness; but the first occupation of my eye, whether in choice or in discernment, should not be with the imperfection or evil.

How then ought the eye to be occupied 'I If I am not able to determine this, I shall not find it very easy to determine how it ought not; whereas if I can decide the right occupation for my eye; I can easily perceive what is not so.

Here lies the cause of so much indecision and inconsistency. People have not defined to themselves what is right; and hence they make a trial of every offer on its own merits, instead of on

the merits of an ascertained standard. Now the right occupation of the eye must be determined by reference to the power that has a right to control it. If the Lord has this right, then its occupation must be in accordance with His mind and appointments down here while in the body. The engagement or occupation of any organ is characterized by the power which controls it. If the Lord controls my eye, it is occupied and engaged with what is interesting to Him. If my eye is controlled by my own will, it will be characterized by my carnal tastes and likings; and it is a very active agent in furnishing natural mind with provision for its enmity against God. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the eye; and this promoted in her heart an inclination to act in independence of God. It is wonderful how the verdict of the eye affects us about everything, and how much that judgment is the fruit of our own state of soul.

Two persons may see the same thing with totally different impressions, but the impression imparted to each is in relation to his own peculiar state and condition before his eye thus acted. One admires, while another turns away pained from beholding the very same scene. The body is the Lord's, and the eye is the Lord's, Either the Spirit of God is using my eye to embrace and survey all that is important for me to 'see in my course, or the natural mind is using it to furnish materials for its own support; and therefore the "lust of the eye" is classed with the "lust of the flesh," though no man over thinks that they could be placed together as morally equal. Both link us to the world which is not of the Father, and the "lust of the eye" is even the more dangerous of the two, because least feared or discountenanced, although Scripture abounds with warnings touching the dangers for the eye. Remember the eye sends back a message to the soul corresponding to the power which used it. If the Lord uses, it, then an impression furnishing materials for His will is conveyed to the soul; if my own mind has used it, the impression will, on the contrary, furnish materials for its own promotion, which, to a Christian, is a double loss; for not only does it deprive him of what he might have gained for the Lord, but it acquires for him that which hinders and shuts out his sense of the Father's love. How little do our souls ponder these things and take them to heart!

Ezra 1-4

When we enter the Book of Ezra, we begin the story of the returned captives; we see them in their circumstances, and in their behavior; and from both one and the other, we gather instruction.

In much of their condition we read much of our own; and from their behavior, we are either taught, or encouraged, or warned. As we trace their story, we may well be struck by the resemblance it has to our own; so that, from moral kindredness in their condition and ours, we may call them our brethren in

something of a special sense.

Having accomplished their journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, we find them at once in much moral beauty; they use what they have, they do what they can, but they do not assume or affect what they have not, and what they cannot. They have the Word, and they use it. They do their best with the genealogies, so as to preserve the purity of the priesthood and the sanctuary; but they do not affect to do what the Urim and the Thummim would enable them to do, for they have it not.

This is beautiful; they do not refuse to do what they can, because they cannot do all that they would. Their measure they will use, and not quarrel with it because it is small. And, yet they stretch not themselves beyond it, but wait till another comes with a further and more perfect measure.

They are quick to raise an altar to the God of Israel. They need not build their temple first. An altar will do for burnt-offerings and for the Feast of Tabernacles; -and, as a revived-people, as a people consciously standing on holy ground again, on the mystic day, the first day of the seventh month, they raise their altar, and begin their worship.

This was very fine! It was as the instinct that prompted Noah, as soon as he got out of the ark, to offer his sacrifices; or, as that of David, as soon as he reached the throne, to look after the ark of God.

Israel raised no altar in Egypt-they must go into the Wilderness, ere they could offer a sacrifice, or keep a feast to the Lord. Egypt was the place of the flesh, and of judgment; and deliverance out of it, must be accomplished, ere God could duly receive worship at their hand. And so in Babylon. Israel raised no altar there. One might open his window, and pray towards Jerusalem; three or four of them might make common prayer for mercy and wisdom; in a day of perplexity, they may all together hang their harps upon willows, refusing to sing the songs of Zion there,-but they raised no altar in that land of the uncircumcised. But now again in Jerusalem, the altar is built, and sacrifices rendered; worship is restored, as Israel is revived. The two things which God has joined together, the glory of His name, and the blessing of His people, are at once seen in the returned captives.

But, further. As soon as the foundation of the Temple is laid, a strange thing is heard that which could not but be a discord of harsh sounds in the ear of nature, a harmony of hallowed voices in the ear of God, and of faith. There are weepings and cries for sorrow, there are shoutings for joy. But, weighed in the sanctuary balances, all this was harmony, for all was real, all was " to the

Lord."

As now, some may observe a day, and some may refuse to observe it, and this may appear to be disorder; but each doing what they do " to the Lord," the highest order is maintained (see Rom. 14); the Spirit so esteems it.

There is, however, more than this. There is real confusion, and that in abundance, as well as this apparent occasional discord. The condition of things is incurably intricate and confused. What a godly Jew must have felt, when he found himself again in the land where David had conquered,- where Solomon had reigned, where the glory had dwelt, and the priesthood unto Jehovah had waited on its service!

Such an one may, at that moment, have given the first look at himself; and he would have had to recognize in himself a strange sight in the land where he then found himself, a subject of a Gentile power. Then, looking at his brethren, he would have to say, that some of them were with him, but some still far away, among the uncircumcised; and then, taking a wider gaze at the people of the land, he would have to see a seed of corruption, half Jew half heathen, in the place which had once been shared among the seed of Abraham, and them only!

What sights were these! What needed light and energy to deal with and act upon this strange mass of difficulties and contradictions! But that light and energy are beautifully found amongst them. They, who had maintained their Nazariteship in Babylon, would keep it, if need be, in Judea; they, who would not eat the king's meat there, will not have Samaritan alliance in the building of the Temple here. And they distinguish things that differ; they know the Persian, and they know the Samaritan; bowing to the sword and authority of the one, as set over them by ordination of God; refusing the proffered aid of the other, as being themselves untrue to the God of their fathers.

This is like an anticipation of the Lord's own judgment to returned captives in His day; Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And it reminds me of their fathers in the wilderness, where they knew the Edomite and the Amorite in their different relations to them; as here, their children know the Samaritan and the Persian. They do nothing in a spirit of rebellion. They will be subject to the " powers that be," as knowing them " ordained of God." But religious impurity they repudiate. It is full of instruction all this, and very pertinent to present conditions among ourselves. These things, or the principles which are found and involved in them, re-appear among the saints of this day.

Faith still recognizes, that- salvation " is the ground of worship " (John 4). That is, that while we are in the flesh God gets nothing from us; that the place of discipline, such as Babylon was to Israel, is to witness only the service and the rendering of harps hung on willow trees.

Faith still uses the written word in all things; affects nothing beyond its measure, while it does what it can according to its measure. It does not cast away what it has, because it has not more. It does not say, "There is no hope," and sit idle, because power in certain forms of glory does not now belong to us; but it will not imitate power, or fashion the image of what is now departed. And it waits for the day when all will be set in eternal order and beauty, by the presence of Him who is the true light and perfection, and who will settle all things in the kingdom according to God.

Faith, likewise, still listens with a different ear from that of nature. As I have already alluded to it, so here again, I may say, that Rom. 14, like Ezra 3, tells us. that that which is discordance in the ear of flesh and blood, is harmony in the ear of God.

And surely I may add, faith still recognizes confusion. If we see it in Israel, in the day of Ezra, we see it among the saints and churches in the day of 2 Tim.; and the day of 2 Tim. was but the beginning of the present long day of Christendom, or of " the great house." Strange, inconsistent elements surround us, as they did the returned captives. Gentile supremacy in the land; the offered aid, and then the bitter enmity of Samaritans; some of God's Israel still in Babylon, while others have returned to Jerusalem. All this did not afford them stranger, more singular or anomalous materials, to distinguish and act upon, than the present great house of Christendom, with its clean and unclean vessels, some to honor, and some to dishonor, affords to us.

We may, however, be encouraged as well as instructed by these captives; for, while ancient glory and strength are not seen among them, Urim and Thummim gone, ark of covenant gone, the mystic rod and the cloudy pillar no more known and seen, yet was there more energy and light, and a deeper exercise of spirit, in the returned from- Babylon, than in the redeemed from Egypt.

This is so, indeed, as we have now seen.

We soon find, however, that we have more to say; that if we be instructed and encouraged by the returned captives, so surely may we be warned by them. They need a revival, though now returned to Jerusalem, as they had needed it, when they were still in Babylon.

The decree of Artaxerxes had stopped the building of the Temple. Nature, or the flesh, takes advantage of this; and the captives begin to adorn their own houses, as soon as they get leisure, and are free of their labor in building the Lord's house.

What a warning this is! It has been said, that it is easier to gain a victory than to use it. We may conquer in the fight, but be defeated by the victory. The returned Jews had gained a victory, when they refused the offers and the alliance of the Samaritans. They were right to resent any help which would have compromised their holiness. But they now abuse the victory. The Samaritans had got a decree from the Persian king to stop the building of the Temple; and the leisure thus generated becomes a snare to the remnant. They use it in ceiling and adorning their own houses. Very natural. Very humbling to think of it. Abraham had done far better than this. With his trained servants, he gains the day, in his encounter with the confederated kings; but, then, one victory only leads to another, for he refuses the offers of the King of Sodom immediately afterward. But here, leisure conquers them who had but lately conquered the Samaritans. This was more like David, if unlike Abraham. David fought his way nobly from the day of the lion and the bear, to the day of the throne; but he betrays relaxation, carelessness of heart, on the very first occasion which occupies him as a king. He puts the ark of God on a new cart drawn by oxen!

" Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" says the convicting; rebuking Spirit by the Prophet Haggai.

This is humbling and yet a healthful warning. Our hearts well understand this-how nature takes quick and earnest advantage of these its opportunities. But though the captives be left under Persian rule, yet the Spirit of God is unbound, and can revive his ancient grace in sending His

prophets, to them. For this was His ancient grace. This had been His well-known way all along, from before the day of King Saul, till after the day of King Zedekiah; i.e. from the first of the kings of Israel to the last; from 1 Sam. 1 to 2 Chron. 36 All along that course of time, generation after generation, prophets had been sent again and again, to rebuke, or to instruct, or to encourage kings and their people. Samuel, and Nathan, and Gad, Shemaiah, Jahaziah, and Azariah, Elijah and Elisha, with others, had thus ministered while Israel was a nation; and now Haggai and Zechariah are sent, as kindred prophets with them, to the returned captives. The sweet witness that the old form of the grace of God towards His people was still to be in use, that they might know, in every 'age and in all conditions, that they were not straitened in Him.

God did not come forward to establish them on the original footing. "To do so would not have been morally suitable, either with respect to the position in which the people stood with God, or with regard to a power which He had established among the Gentiles, or with a view to the instruction of His own people in all ages, as to the government of God." This is very just. Things are left as the hand of God, in government, had put them. The Gentile is still supreme in the earth-nor does the glory return to Israel. The throne of David is not raised up from the dust, nor is Urim and Thummim given again, nor the ark of the covenant-but the Spirit is not gone from His place of service. He raises up prophets, and sends them to do the work of prophets, as in other days, when the throne of David was in Jerusalem, and the temple and its priesthood in their glory and beauty.

It would be profitable to mark the way in which these prophets conducted their ministry in reviving the returned captives. But this I do not here. The house, however, is again attended to, under their word-the zeal of the people revives, their faith and service live again; and in about four years, from the second year of Darius, when Haggai and Zechariah began to prophesy, to the sixth, when the house was finished, they work with renewed earnestness.

The dedication of the house then takes place. And this is a beautiful witness of the moral state of this remnant. It is but little they can do-little indeed-but they do it. Solomon had slain 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep at the dedication of the first house, while the returned captives can only render a few hundred bullocks and rams and lambs. But they do what they can-and who will say, that the mite of that earlier widow was not more than all the offerings of their richer forefathers? They did what they could, without blushing for their poverty. " Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee." There is preciousness in such feebleness, something specially acceptable in such sacrifices-when " in a time of affliction, the abundance of joy and deep poverty abounds unto the riches of liberality."

And then they keep their passover; they can do this, and they will do it. The house they can dedicate, and the feast they can keep, and they will; and priests and levites are alike purified now, as they had not been in the royal time of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:34; and Ezra 6:20). So that indeed, we may say, though the want of all manifested glory, such as shone in the day of Solomon, may be marked here, yet is there more attractive moral grace and power-just as the exodus from Babylon, some twenty years before, had been marked in contrast with the exodus from Egypt. There are features in the second exodus and in the dedication, features of personal beauty, which had not so appeared in the brighter, far brighter, days of Egypt, and of Solomon.

As we enter these chapters, we have passed an interval of about sixty years; and are in company with a new

generation of captives; and are about to witness a second exodus from Babylon.

This portion of the book gives us the story of Ezra himself. It consists of two parts. His journey from Babylon (7. His work at Jerusalem (9. 10.).

We find him, in each of these, eminently a man of God. He is in ordinary circumstances; no miracle distinguishes the action; no display of glory or of power accompanies it; nor have we the inspiration which filled the prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, on the last revival, as we saw in ch. 5. 6. All is ordinary-his resources are only what ours in this day are-the word and the presence of God. But he used them, and used them well and faithfully, throughout. Ere he began to act, he prepared his heart to seek the Lord:-and had meditated in His statutes, till his profiting, as we may surely say, appears to all of us. And as soon as he begins to act, and all through, to the very end, we see him in much communion and in secret with the Lord. And he will carry the word of God through every difficulty and hindrance.

He leads home from Babylon to Jerusalem, a comparatively small remnant; but he exercises a spirit of faith and obedience in no common measure.

In starting on the journey, he is careful to preserve the sanctity of holy things. In such a spirit had Jehoiada the priest acted, as he was bringing back Joash to the kingdom. He would not sacrifice the purity of the house of God to any necessity of the times (2 Chron. 23). And so now, in leading his remnant back to Jerusalem, Ezra will not sacrifice the sanctity of the vessels of the house to any hindrance or difficulty of his day. He will look out for the Levites to bear them home, though this may delay him on the banks of the Ahava for twelve days. He is far above King David in all this. David, in an hour when he might have commanded the resources of a kingdom, did not keep the Book of God open before him, but hastily set the Ark of God on a new cart. But Ezra is as one who has the Word of God ever before him; and, though in the zeal of David, takes care of the haste and heedlessness of David (1 Chron. 13).

It is very sweet to see a saint thus in weakness of circumstances, with nothing but ordinary resources, so carrying himself before God, and through his services and duties.- -And further, as we next see him, he is one that will not take a backward step. He had boasted of the God of Israel to the king of Persia, and he will not now (beginning a perilous journey) ask help of him, gainsaying in act the confessions of his lips. He will get strength from God, by fasting, rather than from the king, by asking.

There are beautiful combinations in all that we have now traced in this dear man. He used God's word and God's presence. Richly instructed as a scribe, he was much in secret with the Lord. He was a diligent, meditative student at home, but he was energetic and practical, and self-devoting abroad. He would not go behind his conscience or sacrifice the Word of God to any difficulty or hindrance-and if his confession did for a moment go beyond his faith, and he found himself not quite up to the place it had put him in, he will wait on God to have his heart strengthened, and not timidly or idly let his confession be reproached.

And yet all his circumstances were as ordinary as ours of this day. He had God's word and God's presence, as I have said; and so have we. But that was all-he had not even the inspiration of a Haggai or a Zechariah to encourage him. It was simply the Grace of God in the power of the Spirit, awakening a saint to fresh service by the Word.

If other portions of the story of the returned captives have instructed and encouraged and warned us, surely we may now say, this may well humble us. In Ezra's condition, how coldly and how feebly are our souls exercised in his spirit of earnest service and secret communion!

The journey was accomplished, the second exodus from Babylon is performed, and Jerusalem is reached by Ezra and his companions, without any mischief or loss by the way. The good hand of their God was with them, and proved itself enough without help from the king. The treasures were all delivered in the Temple, as they had been weighed and numbered at the Ahava. All that, in the days of Noah, had gone into the ark came out safe and sound. Not a grain falls to the ground of such treasures at any time, and here all arrive at Jerusalem that had left Chaldea.

In due time Ezra has to look around him in Jerusalem. He meets what he was but little prepared for; and the sight is overwhelming.. Decline among the returned captives had set in rapidly, and corruption had worked wonderfully. What a sight for the spirit of such a man! Ezra blessedly illustrates " the godliness of weeping for other men's sins"-a Christ-like affection, indeed; and this sample of it in this man of God may well further humble some of us.

Israel had again married the daughter of a strange god. The holy seed had mingled themselves with the people of the land. The Jew had joined affinity with the Gentile.

To maintain anything of purity in the progress of a dispensation, reviving power has to be put forth again and again, and a fresh, separation to God and His truth has to take place under that reviving virtue. So is it now with Ezra at Jerusalem. But we here pause for a moment, to consider some divine principles. When sin entered, and the creature and the creation became defiled, the Lord God had to set up a witness to Himself, that there was now a breach between Himself and that which had been the work of His hands, and the representative of His glories. The ordinance of clean and unclean did this service at the beginning (Gen. 8:20).

In the progress of His ways, we find two other operations of His of like character. I mean, His judgments, and His call. He separated defilement from Himself and His creation, by judgment, in the day of the Flood, about to make the earth the scene of His presence and government in the new or postdiluvian world. But when that world defiled itself like the old World, He distinguished between clean and unclean, by calling Abraham to Himself, to the knowledge of Him, and a walk with Him, apart from the world. And these are samples of what He has ever since been doing, and is doing still, and will do still.

Separation from evil is, in a great sense, the principle of communion with Him. The truth, the knowledge of God, life in Christ, is the positive principle or secret of communion; surely; but separation from evil must accompany that. For if we meet the Blessed' One Himself, we must meet Him in conditions suited. to His presence.

Ezra soon finds that the returned captives had practically forgotten all this. They had mingled themselves with the people of the land. They were involved again in that evil from which the call of God had separated them. They were defiled. For sanctification is by " the truth"; the washing of water is 'by the word"; and, if holiness be not according to God's word, and God's word as He applies it at the time; or dispensationally, it has no divine quality. There is no Nazaritism in it; no separation to God. The children of the captivity had been marrying, and giving in marriage, with the Gentiles. Ezra sets himself to the work of reformation, and does so, in the same spirit in which

he had set himself to be for, God, before his journey, and on his journey. And this is what we have very specially to mark in Ezra.. He -was, personally, so much the saint of God, as well as a vessel gifted and filled. This spews itself in Ezra more than in any who had served among the captives before him. He was a vessel that had, indeed, purged itself for the Master's use; and the reformation in Jerusalem is accomplished in the like zeal as the journey from Babylon; and the blessing-of God waits upon it. There is no miracle; no displayed glory; no 'mighty energy bespeaking extraordinary divine presence: nothing is seen out of the common measure, or beyond ordinary resources. Service is, if done and rendered according to the written word, for the glory of the God of Israel, and in the spirit of worship and communion. It is but a sample of what service with us at this, day might be, and, as we may add, ought to be. Ezra, throughout, does not listen to expediency, or yield to -a difficulty, or refuse diligence and toil; he maintains principles,. and carries the word of God through every hindrance.

Deeply do I believe, that the saints of God in this our day, may read the story of the returned captives, as very good for the use of edifying; and find plenty to instruct, to encourage, to warn, and to humble them.

"How precious is the book divine,

By inspiration given:

Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,

To guide us on to heaven."

REST IN JESUS.

Steadfast in thy work of love,

Continue blest,

And through the Spirit from above,

In Jesus rest.

O ne'er retard thee in the race,

The prize to win;

On, with firm step and steady pace,

And rest in Him.

Forward, toward that bright abode,

Where He is gone;

Onward, supported by thy God,

To wear the crown.

Stand fast, and let the Spirit's sword

Be ever drawn,

Till for a palm, at Jesus' word,
Thou lay'st it down.
Be patient in continuing
The seed to sow,
Have faith although the fruit it bring
Thou may'st not know.
O leave the issue to His care
Who knoweth best,
And constant still, with watchful prayer,
In Jesus rest.
And may the Spirit's threefold power
On thee be shed;
May God His richest blessings shower
Upon thy head.
May'st thou be blest abundantly,
Above thy need,
And in thy Jesus O may'st thou
Have rest indeed!

False Aids Judged

WHEN the soul descends to an association below its profession, there is assuredly a secret predilection for the association, one which has been hitherto cloaked to oneself as well as to others, by the profession. Hence the necessity in God's ordering for the predilection to be exposed, and the profession weeded of an element, which like a worm in the bud, prevented efflorescence, and hindered the full expression of the light which has emboldened us to make the profession. A man would not willingly associate where he had no inclination; but it is only in his misery that his inclination is distinctly ascertained. In a Christian, the activities of his nature are more or less dormant at first, and while there is no pressure to draw them forth, he feels himself in a new scene, and the power which enabled him to enter it for a time sustains him; and his profession is truly in accordance thereto; but all the time there may be a worldly element which has not been crucified, and this element will expose itself, when the dreariness of the earth, or persecution for the word's sake arises; for though simple persecution from man only invigorates the soul when the truth dwells there in depth and reality, still as a rule, persecution or distress will necessarily invoke any element of nature that remains uncrucified; and the strongest inclination breaks forth from its obscurity, and takes the lead.

When things are bright and easy around us, we may maintain our profession without much difficulty, but when there is famine in the land, as with Abraham, if we get occupied with it and not with God, we must consult our nature, and our nature by its counsel reveals to us its resources; which resources are nothing more nor less than its uncrucified predilections.

Abraham's nature counsels him to go down into Egypt for relief from the dearth; not, observe, into Syria, for Syria was the place from which he had departed at the positive call of the God of glory; and seldom will a true soul surrender what it has openly professed, or return to paths absolutely renounced; but there is an Egypt to every renewed soul, even after Syria is discarded; that is though the world, or

rather the flesh, may be abandoned, there is an uncrucified nature in us, which our profession and standing as Christians have hitherto concealed, and which the pressure of circumstances exposes, when in dreariness and loneliness, we turn to Egypt (i.e., nature, not exactly the flesh) for help and for alleviation of our suffering. Thus was it with Abraham; when he went down into Egypt all evidence of his profession was lost; and his exit from it was covered with reproaches for his unfaithfulness.

But this was not all: however searching this open and public discipline was to him, a still greater and more personal suffering awaited him, and one by which his soul was taught more deeply to rise above those resources of nature which had led him into Egypt. Something, therefore, acquired in Egypt must be used as a means of crucifying that element in his nature which had led him down there. How this was effected is detailed in that remarkable page of Abram's history which treats of Ishmael, son of Hagar, the Egyptian woman; and do you not think that after all the sorrow he endured about him, when he had to cast him out, a thing " very grievous in Abram's sight because

of his son" (and who can wonder that it was so?), that he did not, from his heart, repent having ever set his foot in Egypt? But still-so tender and blessed are the ways of our God-it was not till after the birth of Isaac that this painful demand was made on him, though long before necessary, in order that the element of opposition to faith in the soul might be silenced in crucifixion.

The Lord's way with us when we are learning, is to attach us to Himself first, and then detach us from nature. It was not until after the weaning of Isaac, and the feast consequent thereon, that Ishmael was cast out by the requirement of Sarah and the command of the Lord. How many years had elapsed since Abram had gone down into Egypt, seeking to mitigate the dreariness and famine which beset him in Canaan! yet only now comes the moment for the crucifixion of that which led him there, in the summary and relentless casting out of his son as a wanderer in this cold world! But Abram's soul, now full of the unfoldings of God's love to him in the gift of Isaac, is prepared, though sufferingly, to surrender the fruit of his own nature, which for five-and-twenty years has been allowed to remain only partially rebuked.

The Lord will teach us how tender and full is His love, and how absolute is His holiness in detaching us from every support which obstructs our enjoyment in Himself.

The Typical Character of Genesis 1-3

THE first chapter of Genesis, with the first three verses of the second, evidently forms a distinct section of the book. It represents creation as the work of God, and the rest consequent upon the work being finished. Nothing else is allowed to mix itself up with this. It is God's work and God's rest.

I believe it also to be a type of new creation; meaning by that God's work of recovery when creation was fallen-recovery, whether of the individual fallen man or in general of the world, from the time the first ray of light from the promise broke upon her darkness until the glory of God lights up a " new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.",

I find in it accordingly two distinct applications, yet interwoven one with another-one dispensational, the other moral, and relating to the individual.

Let us take first the dispensational view.

We have presented to us at the outset the necessity for God's working-" Earth was without form, and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep." The language seems to suggest that this was not its primitive condition, but one into which it had lapsed after the hand of God had first created it. However this might be, it needed, that is certain, God's interference. There was no " womb of nature," as one speaks, out of which the present fair order of earth and heaven-fair still, even while bearing the sad marks of defilement-could be produced. God must come in to produce it. How true of a ruined world!

The agents in new creation are the Word and the Spirit of God, the Spirit making the word effectual. And "the entrance of thy word giveth light." So it is here: " God said, Let there be light: and there was light." And so we find it in chap. 3., " The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." There the light shone upon the darkness of the world, and Adam's heart received it with joy. " He called his wife's name" (her name by whom death came) " Eve; because she was the mother of all living."

Yet it was long before the sun came, He whose rays had begun to light the earth from the beginning. Long men looked and waited. Day after day passed over, and then He came. It was after. "the third day "-after resurrection-the lights were placed (Christ and the Church) in heaven. His is a full-orbed, unchanging, underived light; hers a reflected, inconstant one. Yet is it said, "The moon to govern the night," just as it is, "The sun to rule the day." " Ye are the light of the world," just as " I am the light of the world." But Christ is absent, and it is now night; although, thank God, " the night is far spent, the day is at hand." How strange would a day be for the world-and yet many look for it-without the sun /

On the fourth day, therefore, I find in type the present or church period come in.. But on the sixth day man is created in the image of God, and set over the lower creation, the woman being united. with him in this glory; just as in the coming kingdom the Church reigns. with Him who is the " image

of the invisible God," the second Adam. A beautiful little picture of millennial days is suggested by the limiting of the food of man and beast, which follows in the concluding verses of the chapter. A picture of that time when there shall be no more bloodshedding; but, under the reign of the true Solomon, "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox."

The three verses of the second chapter, which belong rather to this, show absolute rest-a day without any following "evening," and in it only God. Work is at an end, for creation is finished: rest follows absolute and unbroken, but the creature is not seen in it; God only is there. So, past the millennial age, beyond the final outbreak of Satan's enmity, all trace of sin gone; death, the last enemy, destroyed; we look on to the perfect rest that remaineth, where no shadow lengthens, no voice of discord breaks the ineffable peace, to see redemption-work completely finished, and the 'full harvest of joy and gladness gathered in. " And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son Himself also be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

We go back now to consider the individual application. Man is a fallen being. So fallen that he needs, just as much as "earth without form and void" ever needed, the interference of the divine power. We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

In this case also the entrance of the Word giveth light, and the Spirit of God is the agent. We are born of the Word "- born of the Spirit." This is man's quickening-regeneration. But here too, although there be light from the first, a full-orbed Christ does not necessarily shine upon the soul at once. Resurrection-day must come to it before this can be. Often there is a long interval between. And when the light breaks in first, darkness is not banished by it: only limited, having still its times of return, and seasons of prevalence. And, moreover, the light brings out nothing lovely-a waste of unquiet waters was all that met the sight during the first day; yet God blessed the light, and divided it froth the darkness; "and the evening and the morning were the first day." With us too, blessed be God, it is first evening, and then the morning; and when the morning shall be fully come, the shadows and the sorrows of night shall have fled forever. It is said of new Jerusalem, "There is no night there."

The next day sees the heavens made, though not yet has the finger of God garnished them with splendor. So when light has broken in upon the soul, immediately we find that heaven and heavenly things begin to take their proper place in it. Faith; the "evidence of things unseen," has come, even although yet all is as disquiet and seemingly as barren as ever.

But now the waters must give place, and the dry land appear. On the third day, resurrection-day, this is accomplished; for "the power of resurrection" known gives to the soul firmness and fertility. As it was with the darkness, so with the waters now; they are not wholly removed, but controlled and bounded. So we may say of all that causes the uncertainty, disquietude and barrenness of the soul, It is not removed; but God has given it its bounds, which it cannot pass, nor turn again to cover the earth; and the time comes when it will be said, As "there is no night" more, so also "there is no more sea."

And earth becomes fertile too. Fruit is brought forth, " whose seed is in itself." True of all Christian fruit-it is reproductive. If you " let your light shine before men, they shall glorify your Father which is in heaven."

And now, when resurrection-power is fully known, the third day ended, Christ is seen, full-orbed, in the heaven. And with the sun, the moon; with Christ the church. The relationship between the two is grace; on the one part merely giving, on the other merely receiving. " What hast thou that thou didst not receive'?"

The soul established in grace, higher fruits of life appear. Earth, hitherto bringing forth the herb and tree, now brings forth the living creature. And even the waters-in the love of Him who makes all things work together for our good-become productive. Even the sadness of evil experienced innate in the soul, giving thoughts of the quiet and joy of home-of its holiness, changeless and eternal.

Accordingly, at the close of the sixth day the joy and perfectness we long for is come in the "kingdom which cannot be moved." Man is in the image of God; the conflict is over forever, and the victory is come: he too " shall not learn war any more."

What remains but the joy of Him whose work we are-of Him who calls us children, and whom we call Father, and whose rest from His work finished shall not again be disturbed, no, not forever!

The Hopes of the Coming

IT is remarkable, that Paul, in his epistles to the assemblies, only twice addresses any of them as " in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." Both of these occasions were in his writing to the Thessalonians. He addresses them in the first epistle as " in God the Father," and in the second epistle as " in God our Father;" but with the exception of this variation, the superscription is the same to the Thessalonians on both occasions, and is peculiar to the letters addressed to them.

The first of these epistles shows us many of the blessed bearings of the coming of our Lord Jesus; the second guards against the abuses of the doctrine. But in both letters the Hope of the Coming has a place preeminent. This is recognized by all; and is, indeed, evidently on the face of each of the chapters.

Among the first, if not itself the first, of Paul's epistles, this 1 Thessalonians is supposed to be. This, if so, gives a peculiar appropriateness to the superscription, even as the superscription certainly is peculiarly appropriate to the doctrine of the two epistles. For in Scripture there is moral connection between the various parts of things treated of, and a responsiveness of one part to another constantly to be traced.

And, indeed, what could be more natural than that as the infant church became first manifest to the eye of the Apostle, his thought from the Spirit should be of it, as being in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church was a divine thing, something for God, as much as of God and by God, and it had no human precedent as had the kingdom; it was something, too, for heaven, and as to earth merely a pilgrim on it. With the Church in its early infancy; there seems to be as much consistency in the words, " in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," rising to an inspired apostle's mind and dropping from his pen,-as there is harmony and consistency between the commencements and the salutations found in connection or with the first appearing of her Lord in the gospels.

The Lord Jesus Christ in God the Father (in heaven), and a Church sentient and conscious of such its place on high, and on earth of grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:-such is the blessed revelation to us, through the Apostle's pen. Well might he give thanks to God always for them; well might he remember such a people always in his prayers (ver. 2); and that not only because he knew the spring opened for them on high, where their fountain and spring was, and what the blessed streams were that flowed down from on high to them; but that he knew that (ver. 3) they also, even as he had been, were partakers of the faith, love, and hope of the gospel of a risen and ascended Lord. The God, whose love they now knew by faith, would realize to them, in due time, a glory and a portion worthy of Himself and of the Lord they served; and this, too, they knew.

God had been manifested in flesh and seen on earth; the Son of Man is now seen by faith in heaven, on the throne of the Father in the majesty of the highest, and seen there as our Life. " Ye

are dead and your Life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3); " for the time spoken of by the Lord is come, in that day ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye in me and I in you." (John 14:19,20.)

In connection with such a blessing as Paul had tasted and knew to be a portion and blessing common to himself and the Church, or assembly, of God-there were three things-as he states them to the Corinthians in his first epistle and thirteenth chapter-faith, hope, and love; or, in the order in which he names them here, faith, love, and hope. These three were not found in connection with Judaism, or with the law, or with the 'governmental ways of God in the same way as they are with Christianity. Paul knew very well that, while he was Saul, these three were not known, to him; that when he was converted, he learned somewhat about faith, love, and hope-such as he never knew before, and that what he had learned that he had to preach. For the governmental ways of God are not the same as the revelation of His heavenly grace.

Sight or sense, righteousness and possession-rather than faith, love and hope-had characterized him while he was Saul. And there were two reasons for this; one on God's side, the other on man's. Until Christ came, man was being tried, to see whether anything could be made of him, in himself. This necessarily supposed that 'God, restricting His action to what man was, should deal upon the ground of what was in man, and upon the ground of righteousness, and of what was seen to be in man. On the other hand, man, being a sinner, while under the process was blinded; had a veil over his heart; was self-righteous; and really self-deceived. The law was the claim of the King of Israel, as creator too, over Israel for works; Sinai was a visible display; there was no aggressiveness of love in the law. It blessed a man if perfect,-cursed him utterly if short of perfection in one single thing. It restricted itself to Israel, and shut Israel up in itself,--upon the ground of righteousness too, and of blessings already received. The gospel was the opposite of all this. It was by the foolishness of preaching; faith not works,-faith built upon a report of something in heaven, and not seen down here as yet-; love too came out, for its proclamation was that God was seeking the lost, and this upon the ground that. His Son had died for those who were His enemies, sinners without strength; and it taught strange and marvelous things to come. Judaism, the law, governmental ways had a being and something tangible to sense, apart from any; thing to come and believed in. Christianity is a delusion-if there is not an unseen world of invisible realities, and if there is not a world to come. Faith, love, and hope, were new doctrines of Paul-they were not his while he was Saul.

The declaration-The seed of the woman shall bruise thy [the serpent's] head was the expression of God under the circumstances of the fall of man, and presented the truth in itself, that to man as ruined, an unseen God was the alone stay and deliverer. Surely His character shined out therein; and, where He is known, His character communicates itself to those that rest on and hope in Him. When " Hope shall change to glad fruition,- faith to sight and prayer to praise' then, still LOVE. will abide. God will then be known as a present God, in whose blessed presence we shall be,-whose glory we shall then enjoy;-Himself, God, is love; ourselves filled into all the fullness,-for God shall then be all in all. Though man kept not his first estate in Eden's paradise, God will introduce the believer who hopes in Him into the paradise of God; the world, the flesh, and Satan, notwithstanding.

The faith, love and hope of the Thessalonians were theirs, and exercised by them " in the sight of God and our Father" (chap. 13). His presence were the springs of these-faith, love, and hope; and

faith, love, and hope -in them too, were in exercise (happily for them) in the presence of God and our Father. Yet, on the other hand, they were spoken of by the world, and by the men in it among whom their practical results were seen (ver. 7-10). It is only when He, who is in the presence of God, and is the object and subject of faith, love, and hope, is seen by us, as ourselves being in that presence, that there is vigor and power in us: but, when we live in that presence, then both they that believe and the world have help and testimony from us; such, too, as forces itself home upon them.

And mark, here, that there was, in these Thessalonians, not only an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia (ver. 7); nor only an anticipating of the need of the Apostle's speaking anything among men where the report of their faith was spread abroad (8-9), but also, in the sight of God, there were practical proofs in them, that if their springs were in Him, He had also His testimony made good in them-your work of faith, and labor of love and patience of a the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world knew that the faith was the plea of these Christians for the work of turning from dumb idols; that they professed to have so known the love of the living and true God as to have left all to serve him; and that they plainly declared that they waited for God's Son from heaven.

It is said of them of old, that they looked for a city which bath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. But God's Son from heaven is that for which the believer now looks:-a person rather than the blessings which He will surely bring with Him. There may be light about the glory to come without the Person who is the introducer and center of it all being looked for; but, if He be looked for, the glory is looked upon as His a glory and the heart counts its treasures in His presence; and not by their suitability to us (contrasts to scenes now present), but by their connection with Him. It is of importance to keep Himself before us, that Himself bear our sins in His own body on the tree; that Himself, a living anointed man, who is upon the throne of God in heaven, cares for us; that Himself will come again to receive us to Himself, that where He is there we may be also. For otherwise the Spirit will be hindered in the free communication to us of the place, portion and expectation which belong to those that have Christ Himself as our exceeding great reward. And, moreover, it is His person which shows the unity and the harmony of who He is, and of what He has done, is doing, and yet will do. Our faith, our love, our hope are all Himself, and from and in Himself.

There is a moral propriety, a graciousness and a divine power in the coming of the Son being our hope which ought not to be lightly passed over. If the Church be the Church of the living God, it was chosen in and formed for Christ. Who ought, or who could, God put forward as the opener of His glory, the introducer of her to Himself, save this Son of His love. And how gracious to us-ward the being turned from the lust of our own hearts to wait for His son from heaven. On the other hand, it is, according to the power of God,--the power of God, both according to His glory, in which we shall meet Him, and according to all the weakness and manifest infirmity found in us until then-that the hope is to meet His son. God has thus marked as the goal an event which brings with it all that God desires in us,, and all that we can think to be necessary, in order for us to stand in perfect freedom in His presence.

When the Lord is come I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is. This corruptible will then have put on incorruption, and this mortal have put on immortality; not one thing absent from me

which the heart of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ can desire to see upon one who is predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son that He may be the first-born among many brethren; not one thing absent, but everything abounding to me which my own heart (then fully taught in all the Spirit's thoughts) could wish. The salvation of my soul, I have: for the salvation of my body, I have to wait.. The body which I have now is sinful, al] its circumstances too, here below, tell of sin and conflict; true, I can, by faith, look up to Him in heaven who is at once the answer of a good conscience to me,-and in whom I find God's faithful promise of my change of body, and transfer to other circumstances than these here below. But, so far as I am spiritual, I now groan from and by reason of the wilderness, and for or after the glory. The goal of the redemption is, as to myself, His coming. Then, all that God has to change will be changed for me,-for us; all that God desires, or intends to give to, to put into me,-to, into us, will be mine,---will be ours. That bourne reached, and then, farewell all humiliation to our human selves, welcome then all the divine portion. And heartily does the soul own that this climax is fitly connected with the Lord Jesus's taking possession of the place and the glory which His love, will share with us; fitly is it made dependent upon the hour of His leaving, as Son of Man, the Father's throne, to take possession of the place which, in love, He will take and share with us. I shall see God then; and be with Him,-a son who will have nothing, as now, about him unfit for that presence (though the ready answer to that unfitness is now in Christ, whether that unfitness in us be of deficiency or of evil; or in us or around). The living God will then have glorified sons, and the glorified sons will have perfect rest before Him. His presence too our abode. Now this is an honor which God has reserved for His son at His coming. I am now in the wilderness in a body of sin and death; my soul has its perfect answer in Christ as to itself, as to the body, as to the circumstances around it. But I have to wait for Him, who will change the body as well as take me into His own circumstances then; circumstances glorious in heavenly places, and such as He can share with me, with us. If called to leave the body now, I leave it to His care who knows alone where the dust of a Paul, of a Peter, a Stephen or a John is; my soul goes on high to Himself: but the position is an anomalous one for a man; for the soul to be in one place and the body in another was not part of the order of creation or of Eden. Divine power call do it in judgment. The wicked go to their own place, their bodies to the dust, just sentence upon sin until the general judgment.. The justified by faith, judged according to their faith in Christ, lay their bodies 'down, bodies of sin and death still in a world of sin, but themselves go in soul and spirit on high, fruit of God's judgment of the worthiness of His Son; absent with the body, present with the Lord. With the Lord' is enough to faith, enough for faith; this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise' was enough for the poor thief. About paradise he knew little, its peculiarities were not the matter of consolation to him, but with Me' was enough for him to whose heart 'Christ was known. Absent from the body, at home with the Lord, is enough for us too.

If we examine the why and wherefore of the want of power by the saints (alas, of our own selves I), as to this hope, we may find profit.

Perhaps with most of us, that which gave power to the revelation to our souls of the coming of our Lord, was emphatically its blessedness as something to be brought to us, whether we might be alive in the body and ' remaining until the coming, or whether our bodies might then be in the grave. Fraught with blessings to our own selves, to our souls, and to our bodies, that coming most surely is; and it is sweet to think how grace divine has anticipated a portion for us, the hope of

which forms our hearts after God's mind. Not only a portion which will meet every desire which we now can have in spirit, but a portion to the which we must be formed, and the forming of our thoughts to which is by the hope set before us. But God who has shown it, He will bring it. The bringing of it is not my work. I have to wait for it, and by having my heart and mind set upon it, to be formed for it. God is the counselor, the planner, the introducer of it, the revealer of it to us; an exceeding and eternal weight of glory it is. But, then, I find that many a soul which was first caught with the grace of God's being the propounder and setter forth of this hope, and which was bright in the joy of it at first, has so got occupied and' absorbed in the suitability to itself of the blessings that it has lost sight of that fullness of weight found in it when it is looked at, not on the side on which it bears on us, but on that in which it reveals God Himself and His Christ.

True, nothing but seeing my Lord for myself ever can enable me to say " satisfied." And truly I am glad that my full satisfaction waits upon him, and is, by divine wisdom, made to hang upon the, next great public act of that blessed One in obedience to His Father; He will bid him, in His own time, to rise up from the throne of the Father; to come forth from the majesty of the highest, and I shall see him and be satisfied. (1 Thess. 1:3,10). Then too my, our, walk will issue in the kingdom and glory to which we are called; and worthily of which we have now to walk (chap. 2. 12, 19, 20).. Truly, then all the conflict of the wilderness now, with its ever-varying face of woe, will then have its issue to me, to us, in a permanently established unblamableness in holiness before God, even Our Father (chap. 3. 13.) But, besides all this, as we see by the allusions of chap. 4. 13-18, God's counsel and plan is, that He who as Son of Man is at His own right hand now, hidden from man, and who is there the spectator of the working of Satan in the heavenlies and in the earthlies (space and place being to all appearance given up to the adversary), He will rise up and come forth. Oh, the delight of God in that blessed One! and may we not, with reverence, say it-Oh, the joy of God over Him when the hour comes for his manifestation; His own joy, too, in the revelation of that Father's faithfulness to Him, and to those He loves, -His joy in the consciousness that it is in and by Him, as Son of God and Son of Man, that, at that time, the full vindication of God and His people, and of the faithfulness of God, will be made. He will descend from the throne on high into the heavenlies,-they purged and all the enemies driven out,-He will search all the dark corners of the grave (prison-house of Satan), find all the dust of those whose faith was in Him,. display His divine almighty power in uniting the souls that were with him to bodies now glorified; change the living, and catch all up into the air The movement rolls through space from the throne of the Father, from the majesty in the highest, down to the prison-house of the grave and its keeper, and Himself, the leader and power of the movement, shows forth what God is to those that, in spite of all appearances, put their trust in Him. Oh, the blessedness of His taking thus the lead in action as Son of Man! and heaven above in the highest being witness that this Son of Man, whom it thus sends forth a second time, can tell forth, as man, in the heavenlies, in the earthlies, in the parts below the earth, of the faithfulness of God to his man-rejected Servant, and that the blessedness of all those who have put their trust in him is His joy and his reward.

Body, soul, and spirit now sanctified to him, and preserved blameless, shall, in that day, in fields of light, 'witness for Him (chap. 5. 23.) It must be so. God has not forgotten the son of His

love that served Him. The counsel is firm. The plan is complete. If he tarries in the execution of it, it is not because He has two minds, but because he is still adding to the number of those who are to stand in the glory.

But the glory of the Son of Man in heaven, and the glory of those that believe in Him, is a sure part of the divine work; work that divine glory makes needful and counts to be due to Christ. It is this, the divine side of it, this the way in which the coming of the Lord (next grand expression of God's actings in redemption) presents that which God desires and purposes for the manifestation of the Son of His love, which alone, I conceive, can keep the heart lively as to it, and occupied with it, under all circumstances.

Such a view of it is as bright to a dying man, while --a-dying, as to a man toiling through life.

The end of my life here below, the fruits of it, they are each and all to be found in that day; and how bright will they then be to the heart! and how important to keep that in contrast with things present within or without one ever before the soul! But there is also God's side of it-God's view and portion in the coming; and in that view we measure (not by contrast with things within and around us now, but measure) as those let into divine counsels, plans, and thoughts; measures according to God's honors put upon THE Man whom He delights to honor-Our Lord and adorable Savior. That the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches,' and the lusts of other things choke 'the word, is in the nature of things but too true; that nothing but purpose of heart and a walk in which, through grace, we firmly put self down and lay aside earth, seeking heaven and eternity, can enable the soul to be lively, is conceded as true also; but, over and above this, the soul needs to see the hope in its highest and brightest aspect, so as to have

the full benefit of its power.

Set between the first coming of Christ and His second coming, we are; and, as such, what manner of persons ought we to be?

Thou dolt not ask 'for worthy saints,
Sinners Thou called'st solely,
Whose root lay deep in bitterness
In birth and life unholy.
I durst not cry-I've done my best,
And so prepare to meet Thee,'
'T was Thou didst bare Thy loving breast
'T was then I flew to greet Thee.
Then Satan raged, and bade me own
Thy Word was all a fable;
From him I turned to Thee alone-
Thee who alone art able-
Doubt to dissolve, in blaze of day,
The seeds of life to nourish;

To scare the invader from his prey,

And bid the soul to flourish.

Sunday, April 13th, 1862.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

(By a pleasing coincidence, Veratrum Album, a plant yielding a most soothing medicine, is called the Christmas Rose.)

THERE is a flower all flowers above,

Unlike the flowers of earth,

It tells a mystery of love-

A flower of Heavenly birth.

It blows not when the summer sun

Has bathed the world in light,

But ever seeks its race to run

In winter and in night.

It blows when storms have swept the sky,

When streams forget to flow,

When fair broad fields all hidden lie

Beneath a robe of snow.

Fair flower, in thee my Lord I see,

In thee I love to trace

His undiminished love to me,

His beauty and His grace.

When sin its bloody plowshare drove

Across my quivering breast,

Thy soft white leaves a covering wove,

And soothed my soul to rest.

When all around is dark and drear,

And Summer flowers depart,

Then is the time thou com'st to cheer

The Winter of my heart.

Whate'er bright summer tints are given

To garnish flower or tree;

While Jesus lives and loves in Heaven,

The Christmas Rose for me.

April 23rd, 1862. B.

Judah's Captivity in Babylon

THE Babylonish Captivity, considered as an era in the progress of divine dispensations, was most important and significant. We may well treat it as a very principal station in our journey along that path of light and wisdom which is cast up in Scripture for God's wayfaring men to tread, and tarry there for a little, and look around us.

We may speak of it, generally, as the great conclusive judgment upon the people of Israel in Old Testament times; but it was preceded by a long series of other judgments of an inferior or less weighty character. And it is well to trace them shortly, that we may be moved and humbled by such a sight as they afford us of the incompetency and unfaithfulness of man under every condition of stewardship and responsibility.

These judgments began, I may say, by the retirement, for forty years, of Moses, in the land of Midian. Israel, then in Egypt, lost their deliverer, because they knew not that by his hand God would redeem them; as we read in Acts 7:25.

After they left Egypt, and got into the wilderness on their way to Canaan, they are doomed, or judged, for another forty years, to wander there, because they did not receive the report of the Spies, but disesteemed the promised land.

When they have reached Canaan, and are settled as a nation there, they are judged again and again for renewed iniquity, by the hand of their neighbors; but at length are more signally judged, by being put under the tyranny of King Saul (see Hos. 13:11).

In process of time, they flourish into a kingdom: God gives them the choicest of His people; the man after His own heart to reign over them. This was one of God's gifts; Saul had been one of His judgments. The reigns of David and Solomon were the exhibition of strength and honor in Israel. But the house of David becoming reprobate, judgment visits it by the revolt of the Ten Tribes.

The kingdom of the Ten Tribes is thus erected-erected as a judgment upon the house of David, as the kingdom of Saul had afore been raised in judgment on the nation of Israel. But that kingdom of the Ten Tribes, proving reprobate in their day, judgment visits them. (carrying Israel captive), by the power of the king of Assyria.

The house of David, during this time, was borne with. As a dismantled thing, having but two tribes instead of twelve, as its inheritance, it still provokes the anger of the Lord; and then judgment visits Judah by the hand of the Chaldean, as before judgment had visited Israel by the hand of the Assyrian. Judah is a captive in Babylon. So this, as I said, was the great conclusive judgment upon the people of God during the times of the Old Testament. The Lord God of Israel had linked His name and His glory with the house of David, and with the city of Jerusalem; and when that house had fallen, and that city was spoiled, judgment in that measure, and at that time, had completed its work.

Our business from henceforth is with the captives of Judah in Babylon-Israel in Assyria is lost sight of. They are not kept in view by the Spirit of God. They are called "backsliding Israel," as a people whose distinctness, for the present, is lost and gone; but the prophets of God anticipate their future, and we can foresee that they will be manifested, and brought home, and set in their place again in honor and beauty..

Ere looking at the captives of Judah in Babylon, I would consider the new conditions in which all things are set by the captivity. itself. The Glory (the symbol of the Divine presence), the Gentile, and the Jew, are all affected by it, and at once enter into new conditions.

The Glory leaves the earth, and goes to heaven. It had been with Israel from the days of Egypt until now.

It had seated itself in the chariot-cloud, and led Israel out of Egypt, and through the Wilderness, and then it seated itself in the sanctuary between the Cherubim: Israel was the place or people of its dwelling upon the earth earth. But now, as Ezekiel saw it, it takes its leave of the earth for heaven, or for the mountain (Ezek. 1-11).

The Gentiles become supreme in the time of Judah's captivity. The sword is formally and solemnly put into the hand of the Chaldean by God. Himself; and subjection to him, as ordained to be chief in political, national authority in the world, is demanded by God for him. But the glory does not accompany the sword. Chaldea is not the seat of a theocracy; divine worship is not established there.

The people of Israel become strangers on the earth. "Ichabod," the glory is departed, in a more fearful sense than ever, becomes true of them. They are ruined for the present, as a nation once set in glory, honor, strength, and independency. Judah is a captive and a stranger.

Such are the new conditions into which all have now entered-the Glory, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel.

But here I must notice, for it is a subject full of interest and value to our souls, that there is character unfolded in each of these, by reason of their new conditions.

The Glory shows itself most graciously reluctant to leave its ancient dwelling-place. We see this in the early chapters of Ezekiel; the glory is there seen in uneasy, restless action, as I may say. The time had come for its leaving Jerusalem, and it feels the sorrow of such a moment. It passes and, repasses between the threshold of the house, which still connected it with the temple, and the wings of the Cherubim, which were waiting to bear it away; and this is a sight of deep, mysterious consolation. What a secret does it carry to our hearts! The holiness which must depart, could not cool the love which would fain, if it could, remain: and what a shadow of the Jesus of the Evangelists this is! Israel could not be the rest of either the glory or Jesus. They were polluted; but the glory will linger on the threshold, and Jesus will weep, as He turns His back on the city. Nor will the glory seek any other place on the earth. It had chosen Zion for its rest, and if its rest there be disturbed, it will leave the earth; it will be faithful to Israel, though Israel grieve it, and send it away. These are the perfections- that" character to the glory, as I may speak, in this the day of its departure from Jerusalem-the day of Judah's captivity in Babylon.

The Gentiles, in this same day, betray a far different thing. No moral beauty distinguishes them-altogether otherwise. They become proud. Elevation under God's hand lifts them up in their own esteem. They have no care for the sorrows of God's people, but avail themselves of their depression, and rise, all they can, upon their ruins. As Ezekiel shows us, as we have already seen, the moral or the character of the departing glory, Daniel shows us the profane haughtiness of the Gentiles in this same day. It becomes intolerable, as we know, and ends in judgment.

The people of Israel, now humbled, are exercised. Psa. 137-is a breathing which speaks a very gracious state of soul, in the midst of the captives at the waters of Babylon; and such men as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, among the returned, and such as Esther and Mordecai, among the dispersion, tell us of a generation or a remnant, in character, beyond what may have been commonly known in Israel; and thus, as is common with men, prosperity did moral mischief to the Gentile at this time, while depression and trial worked healthfully for the Jew.

This interval of the captivity must, however, come to a close. The rod of the tribe of Judah could not be broken till Shiloh came (Gen. 49). To fulfill this promise, rehearsed in various ways, as it was, again and again, by the prophets, Judah must return out of captivity, and be at home, to receive, if they will, the promised Messiah-the One who, as we see in Ezekiel, had left them, with such reserve and reluctance.

A return is therefore accomplished and it is marked by much of the fruit of that healthful exercise, which I have already observed as giving character to the captives. There was nothing of the same glory as that which marked their earlier return from the land of Pharaoh.

In that respect, the exodus from Babylon was a very inferior thing to the exodus from Egypt. There was no-rod of power to do its marvels-no mystic cloud-'conductor'; no mediator standing in intimacy with the Lord for the people; no supplies from the granaries in heaven. But there was the energy of faith on the journey; and spirits awake to the presence of God, His mind, His will, His glory, and His sufficiency for them.

This return, however, was not universal; nor, even as far as it extended, was it simultaneous. There was still the dispersion; as well as the returned captives. The books of the captives Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, give us something of the story of each. Mordecai was of the dispersion; and of those who returned, some came at an earlier moment, like Zerubbabel; others afterward, like Ezra at one time, and Nehemiah at another.

But I would here inquire, under what warrant or authority were the captives in Babylon enabled to make a return? It will be said, and justly, that God had so purposed and promised it by the mouth of His servant Jeremiah. He had declared that when the captivity had numbered seventy years, it should end; and, according to this, Daniel, who lived through the whole age of the captivity, but never returned to Jerusalem, made his supplication for this promised mercy, just as the seventy years were drawing near to their close. The return, we therefore fully own, is to be dated, so to speak, from the sovereignty and counsels of God. The great source of it lies there. But there was a secondary and more immediate warrant for it; the occasion of it, as we speak-and that is, as clearly, seen in the decree of Cyrus, the king of Persia; a decree which he passed in the very first year of his reign, or as soon as God had transferred the sword from the hand of the Chaldean into his hand.

Babylon, who had been the captor, was not given the honor of being the deliverer of Israel. That honor was reserved for another, and for such another as was as distinctly named by the prophets of God, as the period of seventy years had been named.

Cyrus is mentioned in Isa. 44 and 45., his own very self appears there, and had been there two or three hundred years ere he was born. And he is mentioned as the one who was-to be the builder of the Temple at Jerusalem. We cannot say that it was so; but we may suggest that he heard of this amazing fact from some of the captives; and if he did, this was the instrument by which the Lord stirred up his spirit; and enough, and more than enough, to put him upon that great and generous action which he accomplished, and the record of which closes the Books of Chronicles, and opens the. Book of Ezra.

But be this so or not, his decree, as we know, was the immediate cause, and the full authority for the return.

Further, however, as to this great event and era. The times of the Gentiles, as the-Lord Himself speaks, began with the Babylonish captivity; the Gentiles then became supreme, as we have already said, one kingdom succeeding another. And these times of the Gentiles continue still. The return from Babylon has made no difference as to this; for that event left Gentile supremacy unaffected. But these times will end in the judgment of the apocalyptic beast, and his confederates (Rev. 19), when the stone cut out without hands smites the image.

And we may further say, as to Israel, that this captivity worked a reformation among them. From that time to the present, "the unclean spirit," as the Lord Himself also speaks, has been " out. Idolatry has not

been practiced since then; but though the Jewish house be thus emptied and swept, it is not furnished with its true wealth and ornament. Messiah has not been accepted; and, in principle, Israel has returned to, Babylon, where they will remain till the day of redemption and the kingdom, under the grace and power and presence of the Lord Jesus.

Meditations on Subjects of Interest

1.- HIGHER SERVICE: WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR IT?

I REMARK that some Christians, when they decline from any measure, of light which they have received, become in proportion more formal and legal. Carnal activity is adopted to compensate for the spiritual consistency. Those who went to the battle gave one out of five hundred to the priests; and those who did not go (those may I not say, who have not been spiritually exercised) gave one out of fifty to the Levites.. They gave more and received less. Spiritual exercise fits us for using the spoils won in conflict priest-wise unto God, and the same portion of spoil possessed by the one who has tarried at home (the unexercised soul) will never lead him beyond Levite service.

The highest order of service is comprised in those 0 words, " Lovest thou me?-Feed my sheep." When we love a person, it is wonderful how quickly and accurately we find out what will please him, and how grateful it is to please him; but we only attain this by studying his mind and taste. We do not impose our own likings on the one whom we wish to gratify, or if we did, we should plainly declare that we were more occupied with our own tastes than with his; and we are found seeking (perhaps unintentionally, yet in very deed, for one's acts reveal one's heart) to make an impression, that is, to be acknowledged as doing and conferring favors rather than as really desiring to yield ourselves so as to render service, and afford gratification to the object who so interests us. Thus, if I do not know what is the Lord's desire, in fact, what is His mind, I can never meet His mind so as to gratify Him; but the more. I know Him, the more I shall study him, in order to do what love dictates.

If one is much in intercourse with the religions of this day, one will be conscious of the difficulty of simply referring service to this test: " Does it proceed from love to him, and does my love express itself in accordance with the tone of His mind at the present moment?" This test obliges me to take quite a different course and view from all the great popular laborers of the day. I shall find myself at one side and they at the other; but my comfort will be, that I am exercising my heart in its love to my Lord and Master.

Man's good and blessing is the avowed aim in the present day, and not that the Chief Shepherd of the sheep may have the testimony of love and obedience from the hearts of his servants. No doubt man's real blessing can never be brought about independently of Christ; and I might argue, if I seek this, I must prove my love to the Lord. In a sense this is true; but where I am at fault is in making a result my aim, instead of (the parent of every part of the result even) the heart of Christ.

Nothing can form the saint but Christ, and faith in Him as He is. Any one who does not make this primary must become latitudinarian, and will be found to be seeking mere men, and not Christ. One man faithful to, and valiant for, Christ, will do more real good than a million of latitudinarians-even devoted ones. It is one grand test for all questions, viz., " Does this accord with the mind of the one I love?" Any one else's mind I do not consult. If I can respond to that, I am happy, and I am useful.

Amos 1 ever troubled at my little usefulness? To be sure I am. But, I ask, what is my path? Amos 1 to seek to satisfy my own feelings in working; or to do exactly what He may define for me? Do I execute the little He places within my range efficiently, and as He would wish? If I must, with shame, answer "No," how can I expect Him to introduce me into a sphere where I might see myself more useful, but where He would not be the end I sought. I believe that, according to the measure in which Christ is in us, we shall serve acceptably. I cannot tell where or how; but the widow who cast in two mites exceeded all the rest. It is the motive, not the act, that determines the condition. The Lord has, in one sense, no higher occupation for us here than serving Him. How great that honor I But in one sense He never wants a servant; that is, He can easily provide Himself with servants for general things; but He has very few confidential ones: these he seeks, and before they are such, they must be educated in His mind. This, I believe,, is very often the higher occupation which our natures are prone to undervalue, as possibly Moses did in Midian, or Joshua in retirement, or Paul in Arabia. Work and service are great snares in the present day. The alabaster box is too often given to the people instead of to Christ.

What is a " Father?" (John 2:13.) One who knows " Him that is from the beginning "-Christ. That is the highest, the grandest attainment. Let our aim be to learn Him, in order that He may use us as He pleases. Our service will then be of the true priestly character, and that most grateful and honoring to Him. (Continued from page 225.)

2.-TAKING A STAND, OR BEING ESTABLISHED.

The inquiry as to how a soul is established is an interesting one. I believe there is what I should call a general establishing and also a particular one. Rom. 1:11, plainly intimates that the Apostle expected by his ministry to have so helped the saints that they would be established. This I should call general; but I doubt not that there is a particular establishing with respect to almost every distinct truth received.

We may observe that many young believers pass through a period of vacillation, be it long or short, and that this indecision is not so much from unbelief of the -truth, as from uncertainty as to how we should act when trial occurs; for it is temptations in the large sense which test the faith and the power of truth in our souls. If we withstand the assault as Samson withstood the young lion, we are so far established, and we take a stand; our inability to do so is, I am sure, the secret reason why so few are really able to take a stand. Peter is directed to establish (translated strengthen) his brethren when he himself was converted. To take a stand would be what I should designate being established in a general way, and this is the meaning of 1 Peter, v., for there the subject is suffering for persecution, and out of it the soul was to emerge, not only established against the suffering, but also in a general and larger sense: "After you have suffered awhile, make you perfect (put you properly together), stablish you" (make a stand), and so on.

But it seems to me that the word " establish" is used more frequently with reference to some particular truth, practice, or trial, against which you must make a stand, and which when you are clear about in the power of the Spirit's intelligence, lends you a strength which enables you to stand. The question respecting it may have discomposed you; but now, being convinced, and, consequently, established, you derive strength from the truth or trial which, when an undetermined question, made you restless and uncertain. And not only so, but this establishing on a particular occasion necessarily imparts steadiness and fixedness to the character. Its effect is by no means

confined to the truth or correctness of any question, or intention of any trial, which gave rise to it; but this confirmation respecting any particular point imparts to the whole character a decision which the word "establishing" peculiarly conveys.

You will see even old saints confused and uncertain because they are troubled by some question of doctrine or practice which has arisen, or by some trial; and until this is cleared up, their hearts are not "established."

There is, as I have said, an establishing in the truth as first received, which the Apostle speaks of in Rom. 16:25: "Now unto Him who is able to establish you according to my Gospel;" but in all the other passages, though the effect would be to produce the general establishing, yet the necessity for it arose from some particular cause. Peter was to establish his brethren evidently on the particular point in which he had failed himself. In 1 Peter 5:10, it was the suffering and pressure of persecution which required establishing, and produced it. With the Thessalonian saints it was also in reference to distractions from persecution, and questions which had arisen about the day of the Lord.

The more blessed way of learning, is first to be established, if I may so say, in one's title, for till then no "stand" can be taken; and after that, always to encounter every question or disturbance with the determination to be established, with respect to it; for there can neither be strength, comfort, nor testimony until you are able to take a stand on the point of difficulty which occupies you for the time.

3-OCCUPATION WITH THE WORD, OR WITH EXPERIENCES.

We may observe that some souls are more occupied with the Word of God, and others with their experiences Of Him and His presence.

Without in the least depreciating the latter, should say that the former is safer and surer; because when the soul loses the sense of His presence, as it often does, it falls into darkness and depression; whereas when it is kept before the Lord by His Word, it is always conscious of the support of it.

"He has set His word above all his name." The word, if truly engaging my soul, would always introduce me into the path of Christ's sympathies; and thus, Himself would be revealed to me. It conducts me to His side, and then I ascend from the wilderness, leaning on my beloved: I may have very true feelings, but feelings are not the material for conflict or growth, though they are the consequences of progress and victory. They are unreliable for a moment beyond the present, and a change in circumstances would soon affect my feelings.

Faith, even, is not a sword) though it is a shield, and - therefore we shall find that faith without the word to sustain it will not be sufficient to support the soul on trial. My feelings may be quite genuine and honoring to the 'Lord, but they belong more to the banqueting-house than to the soldier, or to the one who needs to have his feet like hind's feet, that he may walk on high 'places: We sometimes seek the cheer of the banqueting-house, without seeing that we are provided not only with entire title to enter, which the wedding garment expresses, but that we are invested with the panoply of God, so as neither to be prevented nor dislodged. I must see that I am suited to the

host; I must wear costume which He has provided, viz., the enjoyable apprehension of how He accepts, "accepted in the beloved"; but if I am in an enemy's country (as we are while left below), I must also see that the host's enemy will be powerless in his attacks on me. Though in a hostile country, the army of occupation may be feasting with the general; that is no reason that the guard should not be mounted. On the contrary, the guard should be all the more careful and watchful at such a time, lest there should be any surprisal. In other words, though I may be prepared to enjoy my Lord in the condition worthy of Himself, I must also be provided and armed against all the attacks of Satan, who would try to disturb my happiness; and this can only be by the Word which, dwelling in us richly, 'will in the end make melody in our hearts.

The study of Scripture, which is really invigorating, is that which does not dwell with abstractions, but with a person. The enunciation of a precept or an idea by a person, Himself the witness of it, not only enforces conviction, but communicates power to retain it.

The soul feels the gradual adoption of the truth in power, not so much from the conclusiveness, or the authority with which it has been propounded, as from the imprinting on it by the personal application. You cannot abide (mentally and morally abide) with a greater without adopting his likeness.

A glass which has covered an engraving for a certain time, will often show the outlines of the picture for a day or two, after which it will fade away, the similitude only depending on the association with the original, which must ever be kept up. This is a faint illustration of what association with the Person in the study of the Word would produce on us.

"Our failures are worked into the texture of the eternal plans which cannot fail, and never falter."

The New Birth

I DESIRE to meditate a little on the third chapter of the Gospel of John and its connection with some other parts of Scripture, more particularly in reference to the new birth. I desire to do so for the profitable understanding of what the new man is, and the place in which we are set as made partakers of it, as we now are, in Christ. I shall necessarily go over some ground with which Christians are familiar in speaking of such a subject; but this is necessary, in order to connect with it the further developments and distinctions which lead me to treat of the subject.

Many believed in Christ when they saw the miracles which He did; but Jesus did not commit Himself to them He knew what was in man. (Chapter 2:23-25.) Their conclusion about Him was a just one; but it was a conclusion drawn by what was in man. It was perfectly worthless; left man in his own nature, and under the motives, influences, and passions to which he was subject before; nor did it take him out of the domain of Satan, who had power over the flesh and the world. The conclusion was right; but it was only a conclusion: the man remained what he was-unchanged. Jesus, who knew what flesh was, had-could have -no confidence in it.

But Nicodemus (chap. 3.), under God's leading, for our instruction goes a step further. The others believed it, and left it there. But where the Spirit of God is at work, it always produces wants in the soul, craving and desire after that which is of God and godly; and so the sense of defect in ourselves. There is at once, instinctively too, the consciousness that the world will be against us; consciousness too of its opposition and scorn. Nicodemus comes by night. There was a want of something better in his soul; but his being a ruler, and especially an ecclesiastical ruler, made it more for him to go to Christ. The dignity of one set to teach is not a facility for going to learn. However, conscience urges him to go, and he goes; the fear of man makes him afraid, and he goes by night. How poor is that dignity which tends to hinder one learning of Christ. Nicodemus, though spiritual craving had led him to Christ, goes on the same ground in his inquiry as those who had no such want at all. Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." (5. 2.) It was a conclusion drawn from proofs, perfectly just; but that was all. Still he wanted something from Him who showed them; but he took for granted that he was, as a Jew, the child of the kingdom, and would have teaching. The Lord meets him (for he was sincere and known of Him) at once by declaring that the whole ground he was on was wrong. He did not teach flesh, nor had He come to do so. God was setting up a kingdom of His own. To see that, a man must be born again, completely anew. The kingdom was not yet come visibly, not with observation. It was there among them, but to see it a man must have a wholly new nature. Nicodemus, arrested by the language, does not understand how this could be; stops as a human reasoner, though sincere, at the present difficulty; and in truth does not see the kingdom.

But two great truths have been brought out here already. First, God is not teaching and improving man as he is. He 'sets up a kingdom, a sphere of power and blessing of His own; 'there He acts. And, secondly, man must have a new nature or life. He must be born again, in order to have to say

to God who so works. Flesh cannot even perceive the kingdom. Both facts are of supreme importance. A new

divine system is set up where the blessing is-a new nature is needed, in order to have to say to it.

But the Lord does not leave the inquiring Nicodemus here. He shows definitively the way of entering into the kingdom: "A man must be born of water and of the Spirit." (v. 5.) Of the Word and Spirit of God. The word of God-the revelation of God's thoughts-must operate in the power of the Spirit, judging all in man, bringing in God's mind instead of his own, supplanting it by God's, and an absolute new life from God, in which these thoughts have their seat and living reality-a new nature, and life. It is not that two births are here, but two important aspects and realities in being born again. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (James 1. 18); "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5:26); "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3.) It is not teaching flesh, which has its own thoughts, but supplanting all its thoughts by God's. We are born of water. Next, it is a nature coming from the Spirit-"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6.) Everything born follows-is of-the nature of that which begat it. So here. The water acts on man as man; his person is not changed; but the Spirit communicates a new life, which is of itself [the Spirit] -just as flesh's nature is flesh-in that which is born of it. We have now, not flesh taught, but the thoughts of God, operative in power, and the partaking of the divine nature which is imparted by the Spirit. The mind and nature of God vitally communicated to us. This is my life, as mere flesh was before. This clearly opens out the blessing to Gentiles. "Marvel not," said the Lord to Nicodemus, "that I said unto thee, Ye [Jews] must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth;... so is every one that is born of the Spirit."(3: 7, 8.) The sovereign communication of a new nature (needed by the Jew as much as by the Gentile, when we come to his nature) as an entirely new thing, a new nature given in which the man thenceforth lives with God, is as applicable to a 'Gentile as to a Jew. For thus a man, as to his life, is neither [Jew nor Gentile]. "He is born of God." This truth is here not unfolded; only the groundwork is laid down for it. The far deeper truth of the fact of the divine life, and that sovereignly imparted, is what is taught, only the other is directly implied.

This again stops Nicodemus. He does not come forward with, "We know;" he must be silent, to learn. And now some other truths come out, which associate us with heaven. But first the Lord shows what Nicodemus ought to have known-that as to even earthly promises the testimony of God was clear, that Israel had to be born again-born of water, and of the Spirit. The thirty-sixth chapter of the prophet Ezekiel is clear as to this:

"But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within

you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive he more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own, sight for your own iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel." That is, to enjoy the blessings of God's promises in the land, Israel must be born of water and of the communication of a new nature Spirit; must be cleansed, according to God's thoughts, and be renewed by the Spirit of God. The statement of the Lord is more simple, more full and absolute, because He is laying down the truth in itself: how man can enter into the kingdom, and therefore, brings out the need of the communication of a wholly new life in terms, with the blessed assurance' that it is a being really born of the Spirit, so as to partake of the nature of Him of whom we are born. " That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (v. 5.). But Nicodemus, as the teacher of Israel, ought to have known that such a change was needed for Israel, in order to partake of their earthly blessings with God.

But this brings out the difference, of the Lord's instructions and their character here, from the way in which the prophet had spoken of the matter. He had stated it prophetically, as the practical operation of Jehovah's grace; and that was all right, and in its place. But the Lord had another kind of knowledge. The prophecy had perfect, divine authority, because the prophet said what he had been inspired to say. But the Lord knew the things themselves in their very nature. He could tell absolutely what was needful for God, because He was God, and came, from God.

This is indeed divine teaching-teaching of infinite price. We learn from Him, who essentially knew it, what is needful for God. It tells us what the Christian is He has the knowledge of God from God Himself, according to His own nature, and is partaker of that nature-in order to know it, and to be able to enjoy it-without which he does not know it. And this brought down in man to us. But as the Lord spoke that which He knew, so He testified that which He had seen. He could tell of the heavenly glory, and what became it; what was needed to have a part in it. Man did not receive this testimony. The human mind understood human things; what was heavenly and spiritual-not at all. That which was heavenly and spiritual was darkness and foolishness to it. Those who received this witness were born again. (1. 12, 13.)

Let our hearts dwell a little on this blessed truth. In Christ we have one fully revealing God Himself. His words told His nature, the nature of God Himself, told it to man, so as to reveal what was needed in man in order that he might have to do with God in blessing, but told it directly, fully. His words were a revelation of the divine nature, which He knew. We are in the full light with God Himself. We have-not merely messages, however true and however blessed it be to have them from God, but what leaves nothing behind-the revelation of God Himself, and in His nature; so that what is perfect in blessedness is revealed, and revealed perfectly. Here it is in nature first of all, then the fact of what He had seen; but it is the competency of witness specially which is expressed in this verse. But this necessarily leads to the nature of the things. No prophet could say, " We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." (v. 11.) God revealed future things to them,

or sent messages to the people, and they announced the one and the other. But if Christ announced what He knew, and testified that which He had seen, these were necessarily heavenly things. Of course He knew what had been foretold of God; but, in speaking of the nature needed in order to have to say to God, and of that which He knew and had seen, He goes beyond that-to that which is above. Thither consequently He leads us. " No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." (v. 13.) No one had gone up to bring down word of what was there. But He came thence; and He could tell perfectly what was there, and was ever there, for He was God. But this divine knowledge was knowledge for man; for it was the Son of man had it. Heaven and man were connected in the person of Christ. If man out of Christ, as all yet were, had not in any sense entered there, still there was one who was, in His person, the revealer of that which was heavenly. But how could man -who could not, even if a teacher of Israel, understand the reality of the new nature (even as needed for the known earthly things), for he thought in the old nature--understand heavenly things? But this brought out another truth, the necessary door of what was heavenly; but if so; it is the open door to every one that should believe. Not only was it necessary to be born again, even for earthly blessings, but there were further counsels of God.

The Son of man, for Jesus was more than Messiah, must, in the counsels of God and in the need of man, be lifted up, rejected from this earth. But this lifting up was this rejection by the world. Christ could not, for man was a sinner, take His place as Messiah in blessing to Israel. He was to suffer in the character in which He had to say to all men, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness" (v. 14), so, instead of a living Messiah, they were to have a rejected, dying Son of man. The cross was healing, saving power for man. Whoever believed in Him would not perish, but have everlasting life! for God so loved the world-an immense truth then which opened the way to the fullest display of God and of grace, if one should not rather say it was such. It was an efficacious work of God, not to fulfill prophetic promises merely, but to bring to God, " that who so ever believed in Him" (this Son of man), " should have everlasting life." It was needed. Atonement must be made, redemption must be accomplished, if sinful man was to have to say to a holy God. If there was a revelation of the divine nature, and man's partaking of it was connected with his having to say to God, there must be atonement as well as a new birth; the Son of man, He who as man was to have in man's nature the inheritance of all things, and who took up man's cause, must be lifted up, like the serpent in the wilderness, made sin for us, that men might look upon Him and live. This met the need of man, but it was only one side of the truth. When men rest here they see what meets the holy nature and judgment of God, but God stands as a holy judge; nor does this therefore give full liberty to the soul. It is the propitiatory, the needed, side of Christ's death. But how did this come about It was that God so loved the world that the Son of man, who must be lifted up, was the Son of God, whom He had given in love. God so loved that He gave. Thus, though propitiation was needed, love was the source of all. The holiness of God's nature, His righteous judgment, maintained as regards sin, but His love manifested. The Son of man was Son of God. Both with a view to one wondrous object-that sinful man, whosoever believed in Jesus, should have eternal life. This was the final test of man too. We have thus the nature of God revealed, and a twofold work wrought, which, while it fits man to enjoy that nature by his being born of it, glorifies it too in all its character; so that the gift of eternal life maintains and displays the love and holiness and righteousness of God. And this is what is essential and blessed. But the full, peculiar, dispensed character of this, as wrought out in grace, is not brought out here; and it is this

which I would now endeavor to bring out, the gracious Lord helping me. °, If the Son of man was lifted up, died to bring us to God, where and how is life '? It is in resurrection. This too leads us to another important element of truth. If risen, I am risen from the dead. I have died in Christ. This we shall see has a double character. I may look at myself as having no spiritual life; hence as dead in trespasses and sins; or I may look at myself as alive in sin and the flesh, and then I speak of having died to it. Christ could speak of a new nature needed in order to enter the kingdom; but He could not then call on any one to reckon himself dead. He could connect that nature with God directly, in the statement of what it was, and what He was; and that was peculiarly suited, as is evident, to His person-a divine revealer of what He knew and of man's partaking of the divine nature. This was indeed the excellent part. But for our deliverance another truth was to be connected with this-the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We receive. Christ as our life when He has died and risen. He is a life-giving spirit. Because He lives, we live. He is our life; that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. But for sinners to have-righteously, and according to God-part in this, Christ must make the 'propitiation, must die. He died to sin once; and now, alive in resurrection, lives to God. We receive Him through the Spirit in our hearts, and have life. " 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." (10. 11, 12.) But. He whom we receive is the dead and risen One, our life-the true " I," in which I say of sin, this is no longer I. " I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is the life of Christ as risen from the dead in us-the power of life in resurrection. We are alive for faith only in and by Him, though the flesh be in point of fact there. Yet I do not own it as alive and part of myself, but only as an enemy which I have to overcome. Thus in Rom. 7 we find, " When we were in the flesh " (v. 5); in Rom. 8, " Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," (v. 9.) Many other passages illustrative of this point will come before us in pursuing our subject.

I have said that this view of the divine life in resurrection comes before us in two ways in Scripture. Man may be viewed either as alive in sin, or as dead in sin. His flesh is alive and active as, regards evil; it is utterly dead as regards God-not, one movement of soul in the natural man towards Him. The epistle to the Romans presents the former view; that to the Ephesians the latter. They coalesce in presenting the man as risen with Christ, though the epistle to the Romans barely reaches this ground, but just touches on it. Their epistle teaches, fully Christ's being raised by God the Father, but only just touches on our being alive to God. The Ephesians saw, as regards the doctrine of their epistle on this point, Christ as dead, and the sinner dead in sin (2. 1), and both raised up together. This flows from Christ' being seen exalted on high and the Church united to Him. Man is not contemplated doctrinally as wickedly living in sin, although the fact is recognized; but in the full apprehension of his state in relation to God he is dead in sin. And the whole condition of the Church is the result of the same power being exercised in raising Christ Himself and every believer spiritually. (Chapter 1,2.)

In the epistle to the Romans, Christ is seen risen from the, dead, but not ascended (save an allusion in one verse of chap. 8.), because the object is to show the putting away of the old state, and the introduction in life and justification into the new; not the glorious results, save in hope. Man's guilt is largely proved. Christ has died for us; but Christ has risen also, for our justification; we are justified-dead to sin and alive to God-delivered from the law.

The epistle to the Colossians is between the two in doctrine. It views man as living in sin, but the Christian as having died and as now quickened with Christ. Our new nature there, as born of God, takes, when our condition is fully displayed, the character of our having died and risen again with Christ, and even of our sitting in heavenly places in Him.

But my object now is our condition in life. Let us recall, that Christ, as thus risen; is our life. The work of atonement must have been accomplished, or no sinner could have been united with Him. He could have given no life according to God to any. The corn of wheat would have abode alone. Not that life and the power of life was not in Him, but that the righteousness of God would have been in abeyance.

But that work has been accomplished; and now Christ-not the first Adam-is my life as a believer. But then I say, When I was in the flesh. I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The first Adam in His sin and responsibility is not my standing before God at all; but the second, who has become my life. I am in Him as my righteousness; He is in me as my life. Now, I say, I have died to sin; I am crucified with Christ; I am alive to God through Jesus Christ. " In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves." (Rom. 6:10,11.) This is what Paul insists on in the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. "We were baptized into His death " (v. 3.) " planted together in the likeness of His death." (v. 5.) We are dead to sin. "If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." (v. 8.) Hence (for, as I said, the apostle only just touches this ground) we are to reckon ourselves alive to God through Him. (v. 11.) So in the epistle to the Galatians, " Christ liveth in me" (chap. 2. 20); "the Spirit is life because of righteousness." (Rom. 8:10.) But we are not said to be risen with Him.

And remark, in the elements even of this doctrine, necessarily, from its very nature, we are not called to die to sin. No such thought is in Scripture. We are called upon, as alive in Christ, to mortify every movement of sin; but not to die to it. We are alive in Christ who has died, and we are viewed as dead; and called upon to view ourselves as dead, because Christ, who is our life, has died. " I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20.) "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh." (Chapter 5:24.) "Reckon yourselves to be dead." (Rom. 6:11.) "You have been planted together in the likeness of His death" (v. 5); "buried with Him unto death. (v. 4.) " Ye are dead." (Col. 3:3.) Such is the uniform language of Scripture. All the sentimental talk about crucifying being a lingering death, is the setting aside the plain and imperative sense of these passages. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20.) We have died in Christ; that is the doctrine of Scripture.

The epistles to the Galatians, the Romans, and the Colossians, etc., all alike teach this, and press it on Christians. I am, wholly delivered from the whole system in which I lived as alive in the flesh. So the apostle appeals: " If ye be dead with Christ... why, as though alive [living] in the world, are ye subject to ordinances I" (Col. 2. 20, 21.) This is life then, being born of God, as possessed by the Christian, now that Christ has died and become, as risen, his life.

The epistle to the Ephesians goes a step further. It does not, as I have said, view Christ as alive in blessed love and godliness, and man in sin; but man dead in sin, and Christ is first seen as dead, which was for and to sin. That is, the apostle sees man down in the ditch and grave of death through sin, and Christ has come down into it in grace where man was by sin. But so He has put away the sin, as guilt, and come down to save and redeem out of that condition. God raises up

both by the same power. " What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe,... which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." (Eph. 1:19,20.) Of " His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." (Chapter 2:4,5.) Thus we. are God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." (v. 10.).

Thus as the third chapter of John's gospel taught us the nature of the life which we receive, (that as born of the Spirit it is spirit; divine, morally speaking, in its nature)

so do the epistles show to us the position in which the possession of this new life places us, inasmuch as it is the life of Christ risen, after being delivered for our offenses and having died to sin once. And what is the consequent effect as to our relationship to sin and to God 1 The epistle to the Romans, as indeed that to the Galatians, teaches us that we have died with Christ, and that we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin, that our old man has been crucified with him; but that we are alive to God. That it is not we that live, but Christ that lives in us. The epistle to the Colossians teaches us that we have died with Christ, and that we are risen with Him; and further,, that when dead in sins and the uncircumcision of our flesh, God has quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses, brought up from the dead with Christ into newness of life as to ourselves; but according to the blessed efficacy of His death, entirely forgiven all the sins and state of sin in which we were till thus raised, consequent on the efficacy of His death. This last point the epistle to the Ephesians takes up fully and exclusively, and shows us quickened with Christ and raised out of the death of sin by the same power which raised Christ Himself. It is not merely the divine nature become our life, but death to sin, life to God, raised up, forgiven and accepted, as in the state in which He is as risen; yea, sitting in heavenly places in. Him. The nature is divine; that is, supremely excellent; but by death and resurrection having come in, and our being united to Christ, our whole relative condition is changed; we are not, for God and for faith, accounted as alive in the old man; we are not in it at all; have put it off. It is-for the reckoning of faith, and that according the possession of and being alive in a new life-dead and gone. We are in Christ, and Christ is our life; alive in Him and alive in what He is alive to-to God. Our standing is not consequently in the first Adam at all. We have died as in the first Adam to all that he is; but alive in the last Adam, the Lord Jesus, according to all the acceptance in which he now lives before God.

Thus the third chapter of John's gospel teaches us the intrinsic excellency of the life we receive of God, and shows it in direct connection with what is divine-Christ speaking what He knew, and showing that we must have a nature froth God, and fit for God Himself. Christ speaking thus, that which He knew is of the deepest interest, the direct communication of what is divine. This life is there shown in its nature and origin as contrasted with flesh. Its proper character and excellency is more seen in John. The epistle to the Ephesians, however, confirms it in result: " That we should be holy and blameless before Him in love." (Chapter 1:4.) But in its condition and state, the epistles are more full as to this life, There-inasmuch as Christ died-living in the life of Christ we are [looked at as] dead to sin, the life being a new thing wholly distinct from the old man, and we alive in Christ. We are not in the flesh; we have died and are risen again. Being regenerated is being dead and risen again; for we receive Christ as life. It is having left Adam, his nature and fruits, condemnation, death and judgment, behind; and being, as delivered from all these things in necessary and righteous acceptance, according to Christ's acceptance before God. The natures are distinct. I am not in the flesh; I have died; I am risen again. I am accepted in Christ risen. I am

partaker of the divine nature, and to enjoy its fullness in God. (2 Peter 1: 4.) J. N. D.

LINES IN ANSWER TO HYMN, PAGE 442.

"'Tis good to be here," was the word

Once heard from that country so fair,

In glory beholding the Lord-

This tells what it is to be there.

The glories and joys of that land

The traveler could not declare-

His rapture, and silence alone,

Must tell what it is to be there.**

In sight of that city on high,

Its walls deck'd with jewels so rare,

He fell, overwhelm'd with the joy,

And tells what it is to be there.***

With Thee, Lord, forever to be,

In the hope Thou hast left with us here-

'Tis enough, Lord-forever with Thee!

It is this, it is this, to be there.'

" WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN RUT THEE? AND THERE IS NONE UPON EARTH I DESIRE
BESIDE THEE."-Psalm 78: 25.

JESUS, 'tis Thou Thyself I need,

At every time, at every hour!

Oh, wilt Thou guide my feet, and lead.

And keep me by Thy Spirit's power,

That from Thee I may never stray,

But still press on the narrow way?

Close to Thy side I fain would cling,

And learn the mysteries of Thy love,

Into Thy presence entering

With boldness through the precious blood:
Oh, Jesus' love is vaster far
Than all our poor conceptions are!
It is this love my soul would know,
Would learn it in its heights and depths,
Would mark it in that hour of woe,
When on the cross He tasted death-
Would ponder all His wondrous ways,
And never cease His name to praise.
That precious, name, it cheers the heart
When burdened, or with sin opprest;
Then to that blessed one I turn,
And always find a place of rest;
There on His bosom calmly stay,
And then-all else may pass away.
Yes, everything may pass away;
In Him my all in all I've found;
And having Him, sure I can say,
Now I have all things, and abound.
My precious Lord, to Thee I bow,
And own no other Lord but Thou.
It was the power of Jesus' cross
That turn'd my darkness into light;
Now for His sake I'd count but loss
All that might dim this precious sight:
Full well He knows the flesh how frail,
Yet in His strength I shall prevail.
Still 'tis Thyself, O Lord, I need,
A sense of Jesus always near;

His love the joy on which I feed,
His presence all I need to cheer:
With this I'll sweetly journey on,
And wait till He, my Lord, shall come.

"IN Everything GIVE THANKS: FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD
IN CHRIST JESUS CONCERNING you."-1 Thess. 5:18.

"IN everything give thanks."

My God, is this Thy will?
Give thanks for disappointments given,
For prayers unanswer'd still?
Give thanks! In vain I've pray'd
That I might useful be,
And by Thy Spirit's helpful aid,
Bring many souls to Thee.
Give thanks! when in the place
Of health and usefulness,
Through sickness, Thou hast paled my face
With pain and weariness.
Give thanks! If 'twere Thy will
Submission to demand,
I then might bid myself be still,
And bow to Thy command.
But hush! beneath my eye
I see, in words of blood,
" Will He who gave His Son to die,
Refuse thee any good r
Give thanks! Yea, Lord, t do,
And by Thy help I will,
Give thanks for blessings not received,

Although expected still.
Give thanks for mercies given,
Unnoticed oft by me;
Give thanks for sins forgiven,
Known only, Lord, to Thee.
Give thanks in word and deed,
For Thy surpassing love,
That sent Thy Son on earth to save,
And now to plead above.
Give thanks for tender love,
That our Redeemer show'd,
Who, in the absence of Himself,
A Comforter bestow'd.
Oh grant me by Thy grace
To walk by faith alone,
Until before my Father's face,
I know as I am known! J. G. B.

"UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US, AND 'WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN
His OWN BLOOD, AND HATE MADE VS KINGS AND PRIESTS
UNTO GOD AND His FATHER; TO HIM BE
GLORY AND DOMINION Forever
AND EVER.

AMEN!

Rev. 1:5,6.

END OF 'VOL. 18.

Meditations on Subjects of Interest

1.-The Aim of Ministry

GOD'S object and end ought to be ours. The means ought never to supersede the end with us. What a strength and power in the words, " To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that 1 might bear witness to the truth!" Paul says, he labors to present every man

perfect in Christ Jesus. What an aim was this In my mind, responsibility to Church truth, so far from being lessened by the new, wonderful, and gracious evangelic work which has lately arisen, is the rather greatly increased. A man's aim gives a character to all his acts. A low aim can never carry a man high, but a high one has power to attract from a very low position; and when it is divine, it will be like the path of the just, becoming more positive and clear, the more it is pursued. No minister of the gospel ought to be satisfied with a condition for any believer inferior to what would satisfy the heart of Christ, not only with regard to the infancy of such a soul, but to its fruitful maturity. " Feed my sheep," is the claim of true affection for Christ; but if His present organization for the Church, and His future glory in her, he now disregarded, or untaught, are not the most precious secrets of His love suppressed or overlooked? One, who, in ministering to God's people, proposes to himself God's end and object for them, and nothing short of it, while feeling increasingly the responsibility of the trust, knows also that he need only deal out honestly and faithfully what has been committed to him, and abundantly will the need be supplied.

Truth is so fallen in the streets in these days, that the call to each is to be valued for the truth, and not merely to be convinced of the rightness of a position. Truth, being fully revealed by our Lord Jesus Christ, there will be no further revelation of it. If any part of it be misrepresented, there will be an imperfect evangelization; for the Gospel is, that " grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ." Are we sufficiently alive to the responsibility of seeing that the truth of God so long undeclared, but now fully declared by our Lord Jesus Christ, should not suffer in our attempts to expound the fullness and greatness of it? What painful misrepresentations of our Lord's doings and intentions down here, do we find in the current religious publications of the day! Therefore, I am bold to say, that if a soul does not see how he is called to vindicate Christ in these days, I see little use in gaining his approval of my position. If we were called to vindicate God, we must at once retire from a work for which we are utterly incompetent; but the Lord Jesus has vindicated Him by declaring the truth; and it is only a veritable adherence to what He has done that we are called to. If the "Spirit of truth " be working in a soul, there will be exercise as to what is truth, and, in teaching souls, how necessary to be assured that they are learning the truth, that the Spirit is thereby guiding them into it.

Full truth alone can keep us from slipping off from our proper place; the more fully we know it the better we know our position; for truth is but the mind and judgment of Him, whom the better we know, the more are we bound to, for we thus find how absolutely He is for our blessing. The more one line of truth becomes diffused, the more does every other line require to be pressed, or there will be departure from the moral symmetry belonging to the Body of Christ on earth. The Lord keep us loving His truth-the unfolding of Himself! He is but a poor friend who would not like to know more, and all about me, or I must be very unworthy. How blessed to be allowed of God to set the seeds of His truth in the souls of His people; and how we ought to rejoice at every apprehension a soul gets of the truth of our God!

"This God is our God forever and ever: He shall be our Guide even unto death."

2.-THE BLESSING OF WORSHIPPING THE TRUE. GOD.

If the heart be in secret true to our God, it is marvelous how much of our own ways we are allowed to follow, in order to find out the folly of them,. without losing our place of confidence in Him. David is the man after God's own heart, because God was always His God. He was a man of many

errors and failures, but in his extremities God was always His resource. If I have a false God I have no real resource; therefore, as long as the soul is really zealous for the truth of God, and maintains it, though it may yield to many vacillations in practical life, yet it will ever revert to Him, as the needle to the pole: the nature of God is not misrepresented; and the heart turns thither from its own perversions.

Peter may fail, but his faith in God must not fail; and, by it, he is restored. If the soul has a true Christ, be the vacillations ever so many, still, in the end, there it must gravitate. And, therefore, it is so necessary for souls to get a right idea and apprehension of Christ. If we have not, we are like the disciples when on the sea, and Christ on the land. If we have, though, perhaps, equally unbelieving with them, we have, at any rate, the assurance that he is in the ship with us. It is while running the race, that we discover the many impediments which our nature obstructs to our progress; and, as we discover them, if really desirous that our pace be not abated, we deprecate and shake them off: But in order to this the eye must be on the goal.- If it be, the swifter we run, the more we may have to discard; because the more sensible shall we be to the embarrassments occasioned by our natural activities; these always hamper the spirit. We know the fable of the sun and the wind. The blast may cause us to wrap up our coverings around us, but when the sun breaks forth we soon cast them aside. So with any moral encumbrance, or natural burden. The eye on Christ always affords evidence of our position, and is the only true means of deliverance. from every false way.

The soul that is looking at its difficulties seldom overcomes them. It is in keeping the eye above, or, rather, the heart there, that we conquer; and it is amazing, how disproportioned the same class Of difficulties will appear at one time, and another; simply, because the heart is either with the Lord (and when with Him the armor is always on), or, it is thinking of its trials. Our enemies are always morally diminished by our power to meet them. If we have power, and are sensible of it, we meet them calmly and confidently. As a babe, a bird might have terrified you; and, why not now? Because you feel you have power immensely above it. It is the sense of power that we want, and that is only obtained by keeping near the Lord. To keep near Him is the entire matter. " Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." " He that eateth me, even He shall live by me." Never despair! If you did not see where you fail, you would not know where to conquer. We fail in our weak point; but where the weakness is, there the strength of Christ is needed; consequently, our several trials are just suited to expose our weakness, in order that we may be supplied with His strength, so that even our failures work together for our good.

If we cannot conquer where we are, we could conquer no where.

There is no fear but we can overcome, unless we are in a false position; and then, overcoming would be to get out of it.

3.-OUR WORK PROVES US.

It must have been a very trying exercise to the Nazarite after he had defiled the hair of his Nazariteship, to begin all over again, No matter, how long or how beautiful the hair, it must go.. Thus, is it with us. if we have done the Lord's work with mixture; all must come down; the Lord will rescue the true souls, but the ship must go to pieces.

I believe, that often where there has been much apparent blessing, there has been some, covert evil influence at work, and Satan has deceived souls, and prevented them from seeing the defiling thing, by means of the ostensible state, seemingly proclaiming progress and blessing. He sometimes refrains from a general opposition, in order that he may mature, under the cloak of spiritual advancement, a more deadly hindrance to the truth than would be effected by open hostility. When such is the case, the way to introduce real blessing, is to "begin anew." Many a one will admit how wrong he is himself, who will not admit how his work must have been affected by his failure; and it is remarkable, that our failures are sure to transpire in our works; that is, that our works will affect or afflict us in that very point where we have failed to minister, in consequence of our imbecility to supply the line of truth which would have provided against the failure. Let a congregation of saints be only instructed in their sensibilities, or moral beauty, and, sooner or later, the teacher will surely suffer from them himself; that lack of conscience which he had overlooked. His weakness or willfulness will betray itself in them. God does not hear the prayer, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Such a prayer was only an evidence of Abraham's distance from God at the time. We must take care not to administer help before faith is at work in the soul; for if we do, we spoil the soul for faith.

"Patient continuance in well doing" is wonderfully effective; and faithfulness in a little is a guarantee to: our being faithful in much. If equal to every occasion; whether small or great, we shall always glorify the Lord and His grace, and add to our own rest and joy in Him.

4.-THE TRUE ACTION OF THE WORD.

We know that we can delight in hearing the words of the Lord as a lovely song, and yet be unwilling to follow them; for the heart goeth after its covetousness. In a measure, I suppose we all know what this is, and we must be careful that we adopt the truth we hear, as well as enjoy it; that is, we must be conscious that we are submitting to its demand upon us. This is properly receiving it in an "honest and true heart." Truth, understood and received, always affects us most where we most need it; as heat in a room will always address the dampest part; and, therefore, if I have received truth, I must feel it acting oil my soul where my defticiency is the greatest, and where, naturally, I least like it to act. If I am allowing my weak part to be probed by the Word, then I am learning, though I may not be very happy while the process is going on; yet the happiness that follows is of a different and a higher order. We must take care not to be content with expositions of God's truth apart from their demand on ourselves; for it is very possible to see their beauty and admire them, while totally failing to appropriate them.

The Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit." Faith is the shield which protects you from your adversary; but protection from, is not subjugation. Faith may protect me from my foes, but it will not rid me of them.

Nothing but the word of God will do that; and must have the right word to hit in the right place. The Lord Jesus not only protected Himself (He was always protected by His faith); but He baffled and put to flight the wicked one by the Word of God.

Accustom yourself to prove all things by the Word of God, and to test every action and judgment, and you will find that many things are done for which there is no scriptural warrant; and, on the other hand, that much professedly for God, is unscripturally carried out. This is a day in which

names of truths are retained, but their real definitions often marred or ignored. For instance, "What is a Christian?" Does the common definition of the word, in any way, approach to the scriptural one? The word is the test, as well as the sword; but if it probes and searches us, it also invigorates and strengthens.

5.-ON THE LINE.

There is nothing so difficult for any soul as to, keep on the line-yet if we at all get off the line, it happens to us as to a railway carriage-all is in danger and confusion. The line of one may not be that of another; the race set before each of us is one peculiar to one's own individuality; what might be suitable for one would be unsuitable for another, but with the Word in our hand, if read by the Spirit of God, it is easy to tell when any one-is off the line:- I observe when it is so-the soul is often like Peter in John 21 very hard at work " fishing," and "naked" too! There is a rushing and perturbation of manner, and a constant desire to vindicate oneself-but when on the line, there is no effort, all goes on in calmness and tranquility.

Nothing will keep us on the line, but the presence of a risen Christ walking with us in a world which rejected Him. I am afraid we know more of what it is to walk seeking to be useful, than in the consciousness of the influence which His presence superinduces. We may know the person who is under the rule of His presence, because such an one involuntarily manifests the interests which engage Him. If I am under the influence of one whom I revere, imperceptibly, and yet distinctly, I adopt and declare the great subject of his thoughts and ways. In fact, if I did not, it might be truly said that I did not revere him, and that his presence had no particular influence with me. The influence of personal presence is so peculiar that no art could conjure up anything like it. If the person be absent, no memory or effort of mind can recall it, but the moment he reappears, all the influence returns. We may recall the words of an absent friend, but not the peculiar interest which his presence afforded. Now-like the disciples going to Emmaus-your heart may burn within you, while the Scriptures are being opened to you, but the recognition of Christ's presence will have an effect far beyond what the most wonderful opening of Scripture could produce. They returned the same hour of the night to their brethren at Jerusalem. This was the fruit of the energy which they derived from recognizing the Lord's presence. I deplore it for myself, that the Lord's opening to me the Scripture is a more constant source of exhilaration to me than an actual recognition of Him, the risen Lord, with reference to all things here.

6.-- CHRIST OR HIS GIFTS?

--The gourd-draws out the affections of Jonah; but the removal of it discloses all the insubjection which the presence of the gourd had cloaked or suppressed for a moment. If our hearts are more taken up with God's: gifts than with Himself, we shall find, sooner or later, that the gifts have concealed us from ourselves, and that we have not grown (growth is the development of the nature of Christ in detail) as we should have done if the Lord had been the resource of our hearts. Satan said of Job that he thought more of the gifts than of God, and though Job turned to God, yet he had to discover the nothingness of himself in God's presence; not to make him more miserable, but to establish his dependance on God more absolutely, and make him independent of himself and of everything but God. When the gifts go, you discover whether your heart is set on God or the gifts. The former cannot go; and if I know Him like Abraham or Mary, I can, though widowed indeed, trust, in God to restore the Isaac, or raise the Lazarus.

I often see souls who have learned the grace of God, and are walking in full peace of acceptance, and even devotedly serving Him, who have their affections very little centered in Him. The best proof that I am loving Him, -that my heart is set on Him, is that I am loving like Him. The heart which has learned the grace of God. in our Lord Jesus Christ, learns for the first time that to a veritable man it may and ought fully to confide itself, and, if it did, it would always be happy and never appointed; but this it generally has to learn slowly, and: by various ways. Nothing so thoroughly suits and. satisfies the heart of man as this sympathy and friendship. He seldom attains it to any perfection among men; He can and ought with the Lord; but for this the heart requires to be taught, by one process or. another, that it cannot find it fully any where else. Sometimes one is allowed to find a resemblance to it in humanity, if only used as, an illustration of what the Lord is i. e., it sometimes learns by the human, which is so close to it,: the variety and activities of His love. Human friend ship, used in this way, is to me what a go-cart is to a child learning to walk; but if, on the other hand, I so engross myself with the human, as to be in any degree independent of His sympathy and friendship, it is very evident that the very gourd He may have sent me, is a hindrance to my full blessing, and He must remove it; yet all the time (though I may have superseded the Lord's friendship by a lower one) I have become so accustomed to the delights of friendship even- in the lower one, and that he knows, my heart must seek for the higher, even Himself-the " widow indeed" trusted in God. There is a blank which never can be repaired in humanity, there is a sorrow which neither time nor toil can assuage. The Lord knows well what. human sorrow is; He never met with anything but sorrow in the heart of man; for joy comes from God; and to break down our nature, in order to fill us with the fullness of God, is the purpose of His love which passeth knowledge. He will see to your sorrow; where did He express so much feeling as for Mary when He walked to the tomb of Lazarus? What ought to distress us is, the discovery of how- dependent we are on other things beside Himself; and this is really the only barrier to our full, relief.

7.-THE EFFECT OF ASSOCIATION.

In every association, and the more so the closer it be, the tendency of human nature. is to descend morally rather than to ascend; therefore the great wrong, and loss to one who allies himself with what -is morally or spiritually beneath him. Such associations cannot long exist without affecting either the higher or the lower element; and the tendency of the higher sinking to the lower, is because there is in us a kindred- evil to any that we are brought in contact with, and this contact must occur the moment the communications are on equal terms. By equal terms, I mean where I can freely blend, accommodating myself to a lower order of -things than my light would approve of. When this inequality exists as to the things of God, it is, of all cases, the most to be deprecated, for, apart from the question of the sacrifice of

truth, 'the highest ideas. and sensibilities on the most valued subject must remain unimpaired and the consequence invariably is, that either both parties gradually decline, or the one emerges, and every day feels-the other more unsuitable and irresponsive to the better activities of the soul. We should bear this. in mind, whether as to natural or spiritual associations, for to deprecate such inequalities is not high-mindedness; quite the contrary; the more I know of the Lord or His truth, the less I must think of myself; but the more zealous I must feel for His honor.

But though always to be deprecated, it is too true that these inequalities exist, and are constantly entered on; and still more, I observe that the Lord often permits us to do things and enter into alliances, which indicate the true condition of the soul, or at least meet a line in us not yet subdued. One of fine spiritual sensibilities will not find much interest in one below them. If I do, however, I may think or imagine that I feel so, my company reveals my real likings, and because I don't judge myself on account of my real likings, the Lord allows me to bind Myself to that which truly indicates my predilections, and thereby carries on the discipline needful for me. The Lord must have seen Peter carrying the sword, and yet he never rebuked him for it, until he had committed an overt act, and Peter might have alleged that He told him to take it: but it was needful for Peter that his own act should expose how little he was in sympathy with his Master's mind. It is humbling when the low state of our souls-necessitates such a course of action on the Lord's part, but it may be the only way to convince us of the subtlety of our hearts.

When an unequal association is entered on irrevocably (for it is not always possible, or even allowed to us to retrace a false step), the position, 'even if not actually Wrong, is always perilous, and the only way to avoid a fall, towards which there will constantly be a tendency, is to lean on the Lord, and seek His strength to maintain, unflinchingly, the measure of light which we have received. Light is most generous and expressive, and always communicative of its power to aid any one in darkness. If I have light and am walking in the light, I shall know the gentle, insinuating, yet direct and effectual way in which light encounters darkness; but if I assume darkness in-order to spare darkness, there is no doubt but that my light will be turned to grievous darkness. There is nothing more difficult than to maintain to a Christian below you in light and knowledge of the Lord's grace (though possibly above you in practice), that power of testimony to truth which would make his conscience feel that your presence was acting on him, and that you, on the other hand, are not surrendering the truth of God in order to be in fellowship with one below it. It is very searching (but let us not shrink from it) that light is often, as it were, absorbed by ourselves, and when it is so, there is no emanation, or testimony of its power. " If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining candle doth give light." I understand by this passage that if I am myself under the influence of light perfectly, (i.e., if light has taken possession of me) then others will see it, as the shining of a candle. That it is not so with us, may account for our constant failure in setting forth a power of light. Not being under the influence of it ourselves, it does not emanate from us as the clear light of a candle. In conclusion, I may add, that the lower element gives way to the higher one, if the higher one abides in itself, though this must necessarily be with more or less painful action on the one in darkness; but the lower corrupts the higher, the moment the latter stoops to fellowship with it. May we seek to walk with the Lord in His elevation, and not oblige Him to descend in His ordering for us to our own level.

FRAGMENTS.

" Trying to right circumstances is waste of time. Christ did not seek it. Let faith be in exercise in the circumstances, and that will right yourself."

"Try the rough water as well as the smooth. Rough water can teach lessons worth knowing."

Psalms

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE book of Psalms has evidently a peculiar character. It is not the history of God's people or of God's ways with them; nor is it the inculcation of positive doctrines or duties; nor the formal prophetic announcement of coming events. Many important events, doubtless, are alluded to in the Psalms, and they are immediately connected with various prophetic revelations, as, indeed, with precepts, and with all the other parts of the divine word to which I have referred; but none of these constitute the character of the book itself. The subjects, too,-of which the various parts of Scripture I refer to treat-necessarily find their place in the thoughts expressed in the Psalms. But the Psalms do not directly treat of them. The Psalms are-almost all-the expression of the sentiments produced in the hearts of God's people by the events (or I. should speak more correctly if I said-prepared for them when in the events) through which they pass, and, indeed, express the feelings not only of the people of God, but often, as is known, of the Lord Himself. They are the expression of the part the Spirit of God takes, as working in the heart, in the sorrows and exercises of the saints. The Spirit works in connection with all the trials through which they pass and the human infirmity which appears in those trials; in the midst of which it gives thoughts of faith and truth which are a provision for them in all that happens. We find in this book, consequently, the hopes, fears, distress, and confidence in God, which respectively fill the minds of the saints. Sometimes we have the part which the Lord Himself takes personally in them, and (this too occasionally exclusive of all but Himself) the place which He has held that He might so sympathize with them. Hence a mature spiritual judgment is required to judge rightly of the true bearing and application of the Psalms than of other parts of Scripture: because we must be able to understand what dispensationally gives rise to them, and judge of the true place before God of those whose souls' wants are expressed in them-and this is so much the more difficult, as the circumstances, state, and relationship with God, of the people whose feelings they express are not those in which we find ourselves. The piety they breathe is edifying for every time, and the confidence they often express in God in the midst of trial has cheered the heart of many a tried servant of God in his own. This feeling is carefully to be preserved and cherished, yet it is for that very reason so much the more important that our spiritual judgment should recognize the position to which the sentiments contained in the Psalms refer, and which gives form to the piety which is found in them. Unless we do this, the full power of redemption, and the force of the gospel of the grace of God is lost for our own souls; and many expressions which have shocked the Christian mind, unobservant of their true bearing and application, remain obscure and even unintelligible. The heart that places itself in the position described in the Psalms returns back to experiences which belong to a legal state, and to one under discipline for failure and trial in that state, and to the hopes of an earthly people. A legal and, for a Christian, unbelieving state is thus sanctioned in the mind: we rest content in a spiritual state short of the knowledge of redemption; and while we think to retain the. Psalms for ourselves, we keep ourselves in a state of soul in which we are deprived of the intelligence of their true use and of our own privileges, and become incapable of

the real understanding of, and true delight in, the Psalms themselves; and, what is more, of the blessed and deeply instructive apprehension of the tender and gracious sympathies of Christ in their true and divinely given application. The appropriating spirit of selfishness does not learn Christ as He is, as He is revealed, and the loss is really great. There are comforts and ministrations of grace for a soul under the law in the Psalms, because they apply to those under the law-and Souls in that state have been relieved by them: but to use them so as to remain in this state, and to apply them prominently to ourselves is, I repeat, to misapply the Psalms themselves, lose the power of what is given to us in them, and deprive ourselves of the true spiritual position in which the gospel sets us.

I purpose in this study of the Psalms to examine the book as a whole, and each of the Psalms, so as to give a general idea of it. The most profitable manner of doing this-though the character of the Book of Psalms renders it more difficult-will be to give the meaning and object of the Spirit of God, leaving the expression of the precious piety which it contains to the heart that alone is capable of estimating it, namely, one that feeds on Jesus through the grace of the Spirit of God.

I. The Psalms, and the workings of the Spirit of God expressed in them, belong properly, in their application and true force, to the circumstances of Judah and Israel, and are altogether founded on Israel's hopes and fears: and, I add, to the circumstances of Judah and Israel in the last days, though as to the moral state of things those last days began with the rejection of Christ. The piety and confidence in God with which they are filled finds an echo, no doubt, in every believing heart, but this exercise, as expressed here, is in the midst- of Israel. This judgment, the truth of which is evidently demonstrated by the reading of the Psalms themselves, is sanctioned by the Apostle Paul. He says, after citing several Psalms, " Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law."

The Psalms then concern Judah and Israel, and the position in which those who belong to Judah and Israel are found. Their primary character is the expression of the working of the Spirit of Christ as to, or in, the remnant of the Jews (or of Israel) in the last day. He enters into all their sorrows, giving expression to their confessions, their confidence of faith, their hopes, fears, thankfulness for deliverances obtained: in a word, to every exercise of their hearts in the circumstances in which they find themselves in the last days; so as to afford them the leading, the sanction, and the sympathy of the Spirit of Christ, and utterance to the working of that Spirit in them, and even in Christ Himself. In addition to this, the Psalms present to us the place which Christ Himself when on earth took among them, in order to their having part in His sympathies, and make their deliverance possible, and their confidence in God righteous, though they had sinned against Him. They do not, as the epistles, reason on the efficacy of His work; but, in those which apply to Him, present His feeling in accomplishing it. They intimate to us also the place He took in heaven on His rejection, and ultimately on the throne of the kingdom; but, save His, present exaltation, which is only mentioned as a fact necessary to introduce, and to give the full character to Israel's ultimate deliverance, all that is revealed of the Lord in this His connection with Israel is expressed, not in narration, but in the utterance of His own feelings in regard to the place He is in, as is the case with the remnant themselves. This feature it is which gives its peculiar character and interest to the Psalms.

They teach us thus, that Christ entered into the full depths of suffering which made Him the vessel of sympathizing grace with those who had to pass through them -and that as seeing and pleading with God in respect of them. In the path of His own humiliation, He got the tongue of the learned to know how to speak a word in season to him that was weary. They were sinners, could claim no exemption, count on no favor which could deliver and restore. They must, if He had not suffered for them, have taken the actual sufferings they had to undergo in connection with the guilt which left them without favor. But this was not God's thought. He was minded to deliver them, and Christ steps-in in grace. He takes the guilt of those that should be delivered. That was vicarious suffering as a substitute. And He places Himself, in the path of perfect obedience and love, in the sorrow through which they had to pass: as obedient, He entered into that sorrow so as to draw down, through the atonement, the efficacy of God's delivering favor on those who should be in it; and be the pledge, in virtue of all this, of their deliverance out of it as standing thus for them, the sustainer of their hope in it, so that they should not fail.

Still they must pass through sorrow according to the righteous ways of God, in respect of their folly and wickedness, and to purify them inwardly from it. All this Christ entered into, to be a spring of life and sustainer of faith to them in it, when the hand of oppression should be heavy without, and the sense of guilt terrible within; and hence no sense of favor but that one (who had assured to them and could convey Ibis favor) had taken up their cause with God, and passed through it for them. The full efficacy indeed of His work in their deliverance, in that one man's dying for the nation, will not be known till they look on Him whom they have pierced. They are purposely left (and especially the remnant, because of their integrity, for the rest will join the idolatrous Gentiles for peace' sake) in the depths of trial, which, as ways of God in government, bring them through grace to the sense of their guilt in a broken law and rejected and crucified Messiah, that they may truly know what each of them is, and bow before' an offended Jehovah in integrity of heart, and say: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.' But though the deliverance and a better salvation be not to come till then, still, in virtue of the work wrought to effect it, Christ can sustain and lead on their souls to it, and that is just what is done in these Psalms. These are his language to, or rather in, their souls when they are in the trouble; sometimes the record of how He has learned it. Hence, too, souls yet under the law find such personal comfort under them. Let not any soul, let me remark as passing, suppose that deep heart-interest in these sorrows, of Christ is lost by passing from under the law to be under grace. There is immense gain. The difference is this-instead of using them merely selfishly, (though surely rightly) for my own wants and sorrows,

I, when under grace, enter in adoring contemplation and joyful love into all Christ's sorrows, in the deeper competency given by His Spirit dwelling in me. I go back, now in peace, as He is on high, and trace with divinely given interest and understanding (whatever my measure) all the sorrows through which He passed when here, tracing this " path of life " in love to us across a world of sin and woe, glorifying God in it, through death itself; to the righteous glory in which He now is. Christ comforted his disciples in John 14, though not indeed as under law; but He says at the close, " If ye loved me, ye would be glad that I said, I go to my Father." Under law, the Psalms may comfort us in profitable distress-under grace we enjoy them as loving Christ, and with divine intelligence.

But to return. The great foundation which had to be laid to make sympathy possible was, that Christ did not escape where the remnant of Israel will, because He must suffer the full penalty of the guilt and evil, or He could not righteously and for God's glory deliver them. Thus Christ must

pass personally fully through the sorrow, as He did in spirit; and, besides that, make atonement for the guilt. He passed through it, save in atonement work, near to God, and makes all the grace and favor of God towards Him, all that He found God to be for Him in sorrow, available, through the atonement, to those who should come to be in it, that they might thus have all the mind of God toward them in grace in that case to use when they found themselves in it, even though in darkness. If it be said, how can they use it when they have not yet learned that God is for them in, the atonement? These Psalms, entering into every detail, are precisely the means of their doing so according to Isa. 1., already alluded to. In truth, many Christians are in this state. They cling to promise, feel their sins, are comforted by hope, see the goodness of God-use the Psalms as suiting them, and do not know redemption, or peace.

The Psalms, then, belong properly to Israel, and in Israel to the godly remnant. This is the first general principle which the Word itself establishes for us, as we have seen stated by Paul-What they say they say to those under the law. In examining the Psalms themselves, we shall find other elements of this judgment, which are very clear and positive. The Psalms distinguish (Ps. and commence by distinguishing (Psa. 1) the man who is faithful and godly, according to the law, from the rest of the nation. " The ungodly are not so," nor shall they " stand in the congregation of the righteous." Indeed, Isaiah teaches the same truth doctrinally just as strongly. Their characteristic subject is the true believing remnant, the righteous in Israel. (Psa. 16:3 and many others.) It is, therefore, the portion and hope of Israel which are in view in them. In the first Psalm, this is definitely and distinctly presented. But it is the hope of a remnant, whose portion is from the commencement distinguished in the most marked way from that of the wicked. 2°. Again, it is evident, and it is the second general principle I would notice, that it is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of prophecy which speaks. That is to say, it is the Spirit of Christ interesting Himself in the condition of the faithful remnant of Israel. This Spirit speaks of things to come as if they were present, as is always the case with the prophets. But this does not make it the less true that it is a spirit of prophecy which speaks of the future, and which in this respect often resumes its natural character. But if the Spirit of Christ is interested in the remnant of Israel, Christ's own sufferings must be announced, which were the complete proof of that interest, and without which it would have been

unavailing. And we find, in fact, the most touching expressions of the sufferings of Christ, not historically, but just as He felt them, expressed as by His own lips at the moment He endured them. It is always the Spirit of Christ that speaks, as taking part Himself in the affliction and grief of His people; whether it is by His Spirit in them, or Himself for them, as the sole means in presence of the just judgment of God, of delivering a beloved though guilty people. Hence we see the beautiful fitness of the language of the Psalms in a point I shall touch upon further on. In the Psalms which speak properly of atonement Christ is alone, and thus His work is secured. In those which speak of sufferings not atoning in their nature, even though they go on up to death, parts may be found personally applicable to Christ, because He did personally and individually go through them, but in other parts of the same Psalms, the saints also are brought in because they will have a share in them, and thus His personal sufferings are presented to us, but His sympathy too is secured.

In sum, then, the Psalms are the expression of the Spirit of Christ,. either in the Jewish remnant-or in that of all Israel-or in His own person as suffering for them, in view of the counsels of God with

respect to His elect earthly people. And since these counsels are to be accomplished more particularly in the latter days, it is the expression of the Spirit of Christ in this remnant in the midst of the events which will take place in those days, when God begins to deal again with His earthly people. The moral sufferings connected with those events have been more or less verified in the history of Christ on the earth; and whether in His life, or, yet more, in His death, He is linked with the interests and with the fate of this remnant. In Christ's history, 'at the time of His baptism by John, He already identified Himself with those that formed this remnant; not with the impenitent multitude of Israel, but with the first movement of the Spirit of God in these " excellent of the earth," which led them to recognize the truth of God in the mouth of John, and to submit to it, Now it is in this remnant that the promises made to Israel will be accomplished; so that, while only a remnant, their affections and hopes are those of the nation. On the cross, Jesus remained the only true faithful one before God in Israel-the personal foundation of the whole remnant that was to be delivered, as well as the accomplisher of that work on which their deliverance could be founded.

There are some further general observations on a point to which I have already alluded, which, while in a great measure they are drawn from the Psalms themselves, yet through the light the gospels also cast on it may aid us in seeing the spirit of the whole book, and entering into the purport of many Psalms in detail. I mean the sufferings of Christ. We have seen in general already that the book brings before us the remnant, its sorrows, hopes, and deliverance, and Christ's association with them in all these. He has entered into their sorrows, will be their deliverer, and has wrought the atonement which lays the foundation of their deliverance, as it is of the deliverance of any living soul-but He died for that nation. Of course His own perfection shines out in this; but here we are to look for its connection with Israel and the earth, though His personal exaltation to heaven be mentioned, from which their final deliverance flows. We are not, however, to look for the Church mystery, which at this time was hid in God, nor for Christ viewed in His associations with the Church. The Psalms furnish most exquisitely all the earthly experiences of Christ and His people which the Spirit of Christ would bring before us. We must look to the New Testament (as in Philippians, for example, and elsewhere) to find the heavenly ones of those He has redeemed.

Now Christ passed through every kind of moral suffering the human heart can go through, was tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart. Nor can anything be more fruitful in its place.(for it must not be too long dwelt on in itself, and entirely separated from the divine side of His character, or it becomes profitless or hurtful, because really fleshly sentiment) than to have the heart engaged in contemplating the sorrow of the blessed Redeemer. Never were any like His. But the Psalms will bring them before us, and I refrain from entering on them here. In these introductory remarks, I can only shortly refer to the principles on which, and the positions in which, He suffered.

There are, I think, three.

He suffered from man for righteousness and love, for the testimony He bore in that which was good, in which He bore testimony to and revealed God.

He suffered from God for sin. These two distinct characters of suffering are very simple and plain to every believer's mind.

The third kind of suffering supposes somewhat more attention to Scripture. It is said of Jehovah's ways with Israel: " In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them." This was (as to the last part, yet will be) most especially fulfilled in Christ, Jehovah come as man into the midst of Israel. But the sufferings of Israel, at least of the remnant of Israel, take a peculiar character at the close. They are under the oppression of Gentile power, in the midst of utter iniquity in Israel, yet are characterized by integrity of heart (indeed, this is what makes them the remnant), but conscious of, for that very reason, and suffering under, the present general consequences of sin under the government of God, and the power of Satan and death. The deliverance which frees them from it not being yet come, the weight of these things is on their spirits. Into this sorrow Christ has also fully entered.

During His whole life, even up to death itself, He suffered 'from man for righteousness' sake (See in connection with this Ps.- 11. and others). Besides this, on the cross He suffered for sin, drank the cup of wrath for sin, the cup His Father had given Him to drink. But besides these two kinds of suffering, He bore in His soul, at the close of His life, we may say from after the paschal supper, all the distress and affliction under which Israel will come through the Government of God-not condemnation, but still the consequence of sin. No doubt He had anticipated, and, so far, felt it, as in John 12, the coming cross; but now He entered into it. It was, as He said, apostate Israel's hour then and the power of darkness. But He was still looking to His Father in the sense of faithfulness. Nor was He yet forsaken of God. He could still look to man's watching with Him. What could watching do when divine wrath was upon Him.

But the distinctive character of these kinds of suffering is clearly seen if we, as taught of God, weigh the Psalms, which speak of them respectively. Thus we shall see that when He suffers from man He looks, as speaking by.

His Spirit in and for Israel, for vengeance on man. Others too are then often seen to suffer with Him. When He suffers from God He is wholly alone, and the consequences are unmingled blessing and grace. As to suffering from man, we can have the privilege of so suffering, having the fellowship of His sufferings. In suffering from God as under wrath, He did so that we might never have the least drop whatever of that cup; it would have been our everlasting ruin.

In the sufferings He underwent under Satan's power and darkness, and death, when not yet actually drinking the cup of wrath, besides, what was due to the majesty of God in view of this (see, Heb. 2:10), He suffered to sympathize with Israel in their afflictions, which they come into through their integrity and yet in their sins. Every awakened soul under the law will find comfort in this. All these sufferings are entered into in the Psalms as to Christ, and as to Israel.

It is to be remembered that, though all three principles of suffering are essentially different, and all very, clear and important in their character, at the close of Christ's life all coalesced and united in the sorrows of His last hours-save that I doubt not in coming out of Gethsemane the pressure of Satan's power on His Spirit had been gone through and was over, but on the cross He suffered from man for righteousness, and from God for sin only. I am persuaded that this last, when fully on His soul, was too deep to leave it possible for the other or anything else to be much felt.

Having made these general observations, which appeared to me necessary in order to understand the book, we will now examine, with the Lord's help, its contents; and may He indeed guide both

myself and my reader in doing it. If it does depict Christ's sufferings, and His interest in His people on earth, it behooves us to search into it reverently, yet with child-like confidence, and to wait-as indeed we ever should-upon His teaching, that we may be led and taught in our search. That which speaks of what He felt should be touched with confiding love but with holy reverence.

The Psalms contain five books. Each book has a special object.

It is generally known that the Psalms are divided into five books, the first of which ends with Psa. 41; the second, with Psa. 72; the third, with Psa. 89; the fourth, with Psa. 106; and the fifth, with Psa. 150 Each of these books is distinguished, I doubt not by an especial subject. Our examination of the Psalms contained in each will give the fullest insight into the character of the several books; but it may be well to give here a general notion of their contents.

The subject of the - first book is the state of the Jewish remnant before they have been driven out of Jerusalem, and hence of Christ himself in connection with this remnant. We have more indeed of the personal history of Christ, in the first, than in all the rest. This will be readily understood, as He was thus going in and out with the remnant, while yet associated with Jerusalem. I use Jewish here in contradistinction with Israel or the whole nation.

In the second book, the remnant are viewed as cast out of Jerusalem. Christ, of course, taking this place with them, and giving to the remnant its true place of hope in this condition. The introduction of Christ, however, restores them, in the view of prophecy, to their position in relationship with Jehovah, as a people before God (45.46). Previously, when cast out, they speak of God (Elohim) rather than Jehovah, for they have lost covenant blessings; but by this they learn to know Him much better. I doubt not, the history of Christ's life afforded occasion to His entering into the practical, personal 'sense of this condition of the people, though, of course, less historically His place in general, In li. the remnant owns the nation's guilt in rejecting Him.

In the third book, we have the deliverance and restoration of Israel as a nation, and God's ways to them as such; Jerusalem, at the close, being the center of His blessing and government. The dreadful effect of their being under the law and the centering of all mercies in Christ, are brought out in 88, and 89. closing with the cry for the accomplishing of the latter. Electing grace in royalty for deliverance, when all was lost, is presented in 78.

In the fourth, we have the Lord at all times the dwelling place of Israel. Israel is delivered by the coming of the Lord. It may be, in its main contents, characterized as the bringing in the only-begotten into the world. Jehovah having been always Israel's dwelling-place, they look for His deliverance. For this the Abrahamic and millennial names of God, Almighty, and Most High, are introduced. And where is He to be found? Messiah says, " I seek them in Jehovah-the God of Israel"-There He is indeed found. Thus there will be judgment on the wicked, and the righteous delivered. The full divine nature of Messiah once cut off is brought in to lay the ground for His having a part in the latter day blessings, although once cut off. He is the unchangeable, living Jehovah, the Creator. Then comes blessing on Israel, creation-judgment of the heathen, that Israel might enjoy the promises. But it is the same mercy which has so often spared them.

The fifth and last book is more general, a kind of moral on all; the close being triumphant praise. Having spoken of the details of their restoration, through difficulties and dangers, and God's title to the whole land, the wickedness of the antichristian tool of the enemy, the exaltation of Messiah to

Jehovah's right hand, till His enemies are made His footstool, and the earthly people made willing in the day of His power, we have, then, a rehearsal of God's ways, a commentary on the whole condition of Israel, and what they have passed through, and the principles on which they stand before God, the law being written in their hearts. Then the closing praises.

As this rapid sketch will have shown, and the details I shall now enter on will show more clearly still, there is far more order in the Psalms than is generally supposed by those who take them up as each an isolated ode to serve as the expression of individual piety. They are not connected, it is true, in one continuous discourse or history, as other parts of scripture may be; but they express, in a regular and orderly way, distinct parts of the same subject—that is, as we have seen, the state of the remnant of the Jews or Israel in the latter day, their feelings and Messiah's association with them. These topics are treated in the most orderly way. The Spirit of God who has superintended the structure, as He has inspired the contents of the whole scripture, has stamped the unequivocal traces of His hand on this especial part of it. Who collected these divine songs, the work of diverse authors, and written at different epochs, I do not pretend to say. This the learning of divines may discuss, but the result cannot, I think, leave a doubt on the mind of any one who enters into their purport, as to whose power wrought in it.

I have already noticed, generally, the subject of each of the five books:—The distinction of subject which I found in them had led me to divide the whole book of Psalms in the same way, before my attention had been drawn to the well-known fact of its being so divided in the Hebrew Bible. But this principle of order is carried out also in the details of each of the books.

Book I. The order in the first book, and the contents of the psalms which compose it, are now to occupy us. It is, perhaps, the most complete in the general and characteristic view it gives of the subjects treated of in the Psalms, and so far the most interesting. The others naturally pursue more - the details which carry out the general idea thus given. It will be remarked that the following principle runs through it, and indeed, more or less, the 'others, when it is applicable. Some great truth or historical fact is brought forward as to Christ or the remnant, or both, and then a series of psalms follows, expressing the feelings and sentiments of the remnant in connection with that truth or fact.

Psa. 1-41—The first book may be in general thus divided into distinct parts. The first eight psalms form a whole, an introductory whole to the entire collection of Psalms. This series may be subdivided into the first two, which, in a more particular manner, lay the basis of all that is taught or expressed in the Psalms, 3-7., and, finally, the eighth. The character of these I shall enter on immediately. At present I proceed with the order of the book.

Psa. 9;10. form the basis of the psalms which follow to the end of 15. They give, not the great principles which are at the foundation of all Israel's latter-day history, but the historical condition of the remnant in the latter day.

Psa. 11-15 unfold the various thoughts and feelings which that condition, and the circumstances in which the pious remnant find themselves, give rise to.

Psa. 16-24 present to us Messiah formally entering into the circumstances of the pious remnant, the testimonies of God, the sufferings of Messiah, and the final manifestation of His glory when He is owned as Jehovah on His return. The remnant are found in this series, as in 17., 20., and 23.;

but the main subject spoken of in them, with the exception of 19., which gives the testimony of creation and the law, is Messiah.

Psa. 25-39 present to us the various feelings of remnant under these circumstances. The whole book closes and is complete with the true source of the Messiah's intervention, in the counsels and plans of God, the place He took in humiliation, and the blessing of him who could with divine intelligence discern and enter into His humbled condition and that of the righteous remnant who were associated with Him; for so indeed they were, and this is what the Psalms especially bring out. It is extremely important that, on the one hand, some psalms should personally bring before us the Messiah, but it is also important that the moral traits which form the beauty and excellency of His character in God's sight, and the attractive object which God delights to bless, should be brought before us also, that, on the one hand, we may delight in them; and, on the other, the indissoluble moral connection between Christ and the remnant may be brought into view. This connection of moral character and its display in Christ is very distinctly brought before us in the beginning of the sermon on the mount. There blessing is pronounced on those who exhibit certain moral traits and qualities. These characterize the remnant; yet, if they be carefully looked into, they will be found to be morally a description of Christ Himself. Hence it is that we find Hint and the remnant so mixed up together in many psalms, while some, as I have said, present distinctively the great foundation of blessing in Himself. We may apprehend also thus the difference of the associations of Christ with the remnant of Israel and -those of the Church with Him. Those of the Church begin when redemption is accomplished, and Christ is already exalted on high. By the Spirit sent down from heaven the saints are united to Christ there; and their experiences as Christians flow from their position as united to Christ consequent on accomplished redemption, and then in conflict with the world. Previous to the knowledge of redemption and for that very reason, saints may now pass through experiences analogous to, and in principle the same as, those of the Psalms, and find, in consequence, great comfort from them, but their own place, as Christians, is in union with Christ. The Lord's associations with the remnant are different. They pass through their trials before the knowledge of redemption or its application in power to them. Their experiences are not the fruit of union f with. Christ. Christ has trod the same path, in grace towards them, not that they were united to Him, for He was alone; but He was afflicted in their affliction and oppression by the world, death was before Him; the fruits of the penal government of God on them, manifested in the state in which Israel then was, He has entered into it in grace, as we have seen. Suffering under wicked Israel and oppressing Gentiles as the remnant will in that day, He thus, by His Spirit prophetically, associates Himself with them in all their sorrows, and gives a voice by His Spirit to them on their way up to the discovery of redemption. This makes the tone and purport of the Psalms very plain. The "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was on the cross when atoning work, the fruit of grace, was going on. Judgment on Israel was thus suspended and the Holy Ghost blessedly took this cry up by the mouth of Peter' in Acts 3:17, where the return of Jesus to them, as the children of the prophets and the people in whom the blessing of the nations was to be, was proposed on their repentance. This grace was useless then; but in the last days, all the fruit of that cross and that cry on earth will be made good on earth, when they have repented and looked on Him whom they have pierced. But this demand, as its final accomplishment will be, also, was founded on atoning work, accomplished with God alone, which was based on grace and will bring grace; and not in connection with His sufferings from men, which bring judgment on men His adversaries. The Psalms constantly present to us this

consequence of the wickedness of men against Christ, and the wish of the remnant that it may arrive. Such a wish will never be found expressed by Christ in the gospel. He pronounces prophetic woes on others for hindering those that were entering in, but this is love to these souls. No call for judgment is found. In the Psalms, on the other hand, no such passage, as " Father, forgive them" is found; though the fruit of grace, after his own deliverance from the horns of the unicorns, is most strikingly unfolded. The gospel was the good news of the visitation of the world and of Israel in love by the Son of God. The incarnation was Christ entering alone in this path of love towards all. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Naught else was, naught else could be, revealed and unfolded then. It was what He was personally in the world. But the remnant of God's people were to go through these sorrows. The only possible means of their deliverance was the destruction of their enemies. We shall go up from the midst of our sorrows to meet the Lord in the air; we have no need to wish our enemies destroyed in order to our deliverance; we have in the gospel to do with grace, with a heavenly Christ that is not passing through sorrows, and glory.

The remnant of Israel therefore call for this execution of judgment on their enemies. They have to do, not with that heavenly, sovereign, abounding grace which gives us a place with Christ clean out of the world, not of it as He was not of it, who was loved before the world was founded, but with the government of this world. Objects, no doubt, of grace themselves, (and of mere grace, for they have rejected the promises in Christ presented to them in the truth of God, and have been concluded in unbelief that they might be objects of mercy,) still they are the nation in whom the government of this world centers, and in respect of whom it is displayed. Hence they await judgment, and the display of the righteous exercise of that government and the cutting off of the oppressor and the wicked. Hence Christ who has entered into, and will in spirit enter into, their sorrows, but was himself cut off instead of seeing His enemies cut off, accomplishing a better and more glorious work, did not then ask for the world, but for those that were His, and that they might be with Him, where He was. John 17 marks the formal contrast of the two systems. He would not call down fire from heaven, would not execute righteous judgment. It is intimated indeed in the sermon on the mount that He was in the way with Israel-as in John, that the world had not known Him. Still the Christian path is to do well, suffer for it, and take it patiently, as He did. Hence while passing through the sufferings He could only prophetically be associated with the desires and aspirations after judgment which will have their righteous place when the time of public divine government of this world and judgment is come. Hence already in the second Psalm this is the place we find Him set in. All the Psalms are constructed in view of that. Thus the remnant in suffering, calling for judgment, reach back to Him who, though he never sought judgment for Himself, did suffer and will seek judgment for them and execute it-Himself the center of that center of earthly government divine. He is seen by the prophetic Spirit in the same circumstances, and the cry for judgment is heard. But it will be found that wherever this is the case, as we have remarked, the remnant-other men-are found besides the Lord himself.

In principle, any suffering Jew might so speak; only, as Christ suffered above all, the terms used in the Psalms, where the demand of vengeance occurs, sometimes rise up to circumstances which have been literally true in Him in His sorrow on earth. But the point of departure of the feeling, and of the whole of what is said, is any godly Jew whatever in the last days. Into that Christ has entered. The proper or exclusive personal application to Himself is only true when it is proved by

the circumstances and the terms of the passage. The point of moral departure is always the remnant and their state. He is merely associated with them in the mind of the prophetic Spirit; though, as to the facts, He entered into deeper sorrow than they all. Hence, the immense importance of first of all seeing the position and necessary thoughts of the remnant in the Psalms. Christ is merely associated with them and their position in grace; though He must be the center and preeminent, wherever He is found. There is no possibility of understanding the Psalms at all otherwise. All interpretation is false which does not take this principle or truth as its point of departure. When, we get into a prophetic and governmental order even in the New Testament, we at once find the same demands of vengeance. It is judgment and not grace. The souls under the altar in the Revelation desire their blood' may be avenged; and the holy apostles and prophets are called to rejoice over the destruction of Babylon. This important principle, then is to be laid down: that in every Psalm in which the godly remnant can have a part, that is, where the person of Christ is not the direct subject, (we have seen there are some, as Psa. 2;102, and others, which speak personally of Christ), the whole is not to be applied to Christ, nor the Psalm itself; in general, primarily. It belongs to the condition of the remnant, and speaks of it; and the principles of God's dealings with them, though Christ is often given as the great example of the sorrow of the suffering godly. And hence in the circumstances it refers to, it may rise up to such as literally depict those through which Christ has passed, so as to show the way in which Christ has entered into their circumstances. This last may be evidently the most important part of the psalm. But this does not change the principle. There may be psalms where the remnant are introduced collaterally, as objects of blessing in result; but where a particular part maybe evidently applicable to Christ only who procures that result. Psa. 22 has a distinct and peculiar character, because there Christ, while speaking of sufferings common in kind though not in degree to Him and the remnant yet; as in them already, passes into that in which He was entirely alone. Indeed, the bringing these out in contrast is the very subject of the psalm. The godly have been-the remnant will be-in suffering: but the godly were delivered when they cried; so will the remnant; but Christ, perfect in the fullest sorrow, was not. So that Christ is really alone here, though, in order to show the contrast of this suffering with others in which saints could be and had been, this last character of suffering is mentioned. The fact already mentioned, - that in the psalms expressive of the godly man's suffering from men there is always the call for vengeance on the part of the speaker, and that in Christ's life, as the gospels give it to us, that is, according to truth, as personally come into the world, and standing as a witness alone in the world, he never does so; but the contrary when on the cross, and in His life-time forbids it, reproaching the disciples, with not knowing what manner of spirit they were of,-evidently has the most important influence on our judgment, how far and in what way we find the living, historical Christ in the Psalms as a direct object.

To turn now to details.

Psa. 1-19-The attentive reader will remark that in the order, of which I have spoken, of the Psalms of the first book, a principle I have referred to is fully exemplified: that is, that standard psalms with some great principles or fact come first, and then a series expressive of the thoughts and feelings of the remnant produced by these. Thus 1. 2. are followed by 3.- 7., which depict the state of things as felt by the psalmist connected with 1. 2., Christ being rejected: closing with the result in 8.

Then 9. 10., the state of facts in-the latter days.- 11.- 15., the various feelings of the remnant connected with them.-Next 16.- 24., Christ; and the whole testimony of God, and Christ on the cross or atonement, having been set before us, the feelings consequent on this are depicted from 25. To 39. Sins are acknowledged for the first time in Psa. 25 Trials and deliverance had been spoken of before; but sins could not be confessed but in view of, and as building on, the foundation of atonement, when God really taught. So it will be indeed historically with Israel in the last days; though that is not entered on here.

I will now pursue in details what the Lord may graciously afford me on the psalms of the first book. I have already said that the two first psalms lay the ground of the whole collection. The moral character and position of the remnant, and the counsels of God as to Christ-King in Zion.

Psa. 1-The first psalm is the description of the godly remnant, and the blessing that accompanies their godliness, according to the government of God. This blessing, save in the heart-comfort and peacefulness of an upright mind, has never been accomplished; but it is given in the same manner as the portion of the meek when Christ presents the kingdom (Matt. 5). They shall inherit the earth; but the kingdom was not, has not yet been, set up in power, (this is the subject of the second psalm.) Hence the Lord in Matthew speaks of suffering for righteousness' sake. The kingdom of heaven is the portion of those who do; and if suffering for His name's sake, here heaven itself comes in, and their reward there is great. In the' first psalm, however, we have simply the godly remnant on the earth. I say remnant, for the subject of the psalm is spoken of as characterized by individual faithfulness. The ungodly, sinners, and scornful, are around him. The law is his delight. He is a godly Jew, keeping apart from the ungodly, and is blessed, and prospers. Such is the principle of the psalm. But to make it good, the earthly judgment must come in. There the ungodly shall not stand; nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous-then left free from the pressure of those who cared not for God. The psalm gives us the general character of the godly man, and the result under the judicial government of God. Another element is then brought in. Jehovah knows, the way of the righteous-the way of the ungodly shall perish. It is a judgment on one side, and a moral approbation before that judgment come on the other, which is connected with the covenant-relationship of Jehovah with Israel. We have seen that Christ was on earth, this godly man, and took His place among the faithful remnant, these excellent of the earth, and was perfect in that place. So far this psalm takes Him in; but that is not yet directly spoken of. Its subject is the character of the godly, and the result under the government of God, Jehovah, in the midst of His people. It is not yet suffering because of this. That is a circumstance which will come out in its time. It is the character of the godly man in presence of the wicked, and the result measured by the abiding principles of God's government.. Jehovah knows the righteous others shall positively perish. The first psalm is the moral character of the remnant, their position in the midst of the ungodly, and the general government of God, and the connection of -Jehovah and the righteous. Besides this, remark that the psalm places both in presence of a proximate judgment, by which the wicked are driven away like chaff ' and the righteous form the congregation; that is, it refers definitely to the remnant in the last days. The principles of this psalm, the character of the persons spoken of in it, and their position, are clear enough; and important as laying one great part of the basis of the whole superstructure of the psalms, - God's government, and the trials of the remnant, which seemed to deny the government here spoken of, which is only to be made good in judgment when the mystery of God shall be finished. We are on the ground of Israel's place and of God's

government according to the law, but the righteous distinguished from the wicked, and blessing, not the portion of all Israel as such, but of the righteous who shall form the congregation. Blessing is on the righteous, but these shall be the people when the ungodly shall be driven away as chaff.- It is just the doctrine of the end of Isaiah. (See chaps. 48. 22; 57. 20; 65., 66.) Only in the last passage the judgment reaches the nations also.

A godly remnant of the people, delighting in the law and the judgment of God, resulting in the congregation of the righteous, according to the true character of Jehovah, the wicked being driven away-such are the first truths presented to us-the moral government of God on the earth made good by judgment in Israel. Hence the last days are clearly in view.

Psa. 2-The next great element of the condition of Israel and the government of God is Messiah. The counsels of God concerning His Anointed. Here the heathen are brought in, and form the subject of the psalm; and again we find ourselves in the last days; when Christ's rights will be made good against the kings of the earth and all opposers. But Israel is again here the center and sphere of the accomplishment of these counsels of God. The Anointed is to be King in Zion. The adversaries are the great ones of the nations, the evil reaching, alas, to the heads of Israel who, as we shall find, " shall die like men, and fall like the princes an ungodly nation" (Psa. 82); and as Peter also him- self has taught us in applying this psalm. I have said that the counsels of God as to Messiah are the element here introduced to us of the ways of God treated of in the Psalms; but the psalm opens with the rising up of the nations to cast off His authority, and Jehovah's who establishes it. The apostate Jews, as we have seen, being engaged in this great rising, alas, against God. The nations rage, the peoples imagine a vain thing-the kings of the earth and rulers would break, the bands of Jehovah and His Anointed together. But this rising only brings in wrath and displeasure, against which all resistance will be vain. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh-Adonai has them in derision-Jehovah, in spite of all, has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion. Such is the sure counsel of God, made good by His power. Man's presumption in resistance only brings his ruin. But more is then brought out. This King, who is He? Jehovah has said to Him,_' Thou..- art- my Son, this day have I begotten thee." It is one who, begotten on what can be called to-day, that is, begotten in time, is owned Son by Jehovah. It is not then here the blessed and most precious truth of eternal sonship with the Father, though it is not to be dissociated from it, as if it could be without it, but One who, the Anointed Man, and that holy thing born into this world with the title, by His birth there also, of Son of God, is owned such of Jehovah. Thus, St. Paul tells us (Acts 13:33), this raising up Jesus (not raising up again) is the accomplishing the promise made to the fathers, quoting this psalm in confirmation. He quotes another passage for His resurrection and incorruptibility (see v. 34). Thus we have Christ born into the earth, owned Son of God by Jehovah. But large counsels flow from this title. He has only to ask of Jehovah, and the heathen are given Him for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. He will rule them with a rod of iron and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel-break with resistless power, ruling in judgment all that impiously and impotently rise up against His throne. But this execution of judgment is not yet accomplished. The psalm itself' invites the kings and judges to submission and humbly owning the Son, lest they perish if His wrath be kindled but a little. He is Himself to be trusted, and who can claim this but Jehovah. This summons to the kings of the earth is founded, remark, on the establishing the title of Christ to royal judgment and power on the earth. But is Christ set King in Zion? He was cast out of it and hung upon the

cross for better blessings and higher glory, even that He had with the Father before the world was, yet cast out of Zion to which He presented Himself as King; and as to the heathen and the earthly inheritance, He has not yet asked for it; when He does, in the Father's time, He will surely give it, and so His foes be His footstool. He declares (John 17), that He did not ask about it, but about those given Him out of it.. The kings of the earth reign on, many bearing His name, to be found yet in rebellion when He shall take to Him His great power, and the nations be angry, and His wrath come. No rod of iron has yet touched them-the potter's vessel, broken as nothing, is not now their image. The Lord is not yet awakened to despise it. They reign by God's authority. But there is no king in Zion. Christ has been rejected.

We have now the great elements of latter-day history, a Jewish remnant awaiting judgment, the wicked being still there, the heathen raging against Jehovah and His Anointed, He that sits in heaven laughing at their profitless rage, Jehovah, setting Christ surely King in Zion, yea, upon His asking, giving Him all the nations for His inheritance; the submission of all being to be enforced by resistless judgment. No sorrows here, not even as to the remnant in the first psalm; the counsels and decrees of God and power such as none can resist. In a certain sense the kings of the earth did stand up and the rulers take counsel together, and-as to earthly power and scenes-succeeded. Christ is rejected, and did not resist.

Psa. 3--- 7.-Where, then, is the remnant viewed in the Jewish scene of this world's history? What place have they? The great principles on which they stand are unfolded in the Psa. 3, to 7. It will be easily seen now how the two first psalms form the basis of the whole book, though the great body of its contents are the consequence of their non-fulfillment in the time to which those contents apply. Indeed, in this, the structure of the book resembles that of a great multitude of psalms. The thesis stated in the first or few first verses, and then the circumstances, often quite the opposite, through which the saint passes, to arrive at what is expressed at the beginning of the psalm. These five psalms, then, unfold to us in general, and in principle the condition of the remnant and the thoughts and feelings produced by the Spirit of Christ in them, in the state of things consequent in Israel upon His personal rejection. The circumstances in which they find themselves, are not historically alluded to till the ninth and tenth psalms, hence these psalms give the working of the Spirit of Christ in them in the suited moral fruits, so as to display the state of the godly remnant, the holy seed 'that is in Judah when all is ruined. The principles of their state, the elements of feelings unfolded in it are brought before us. There is not the strong expression which flows from the pressure of circumstances; but each moral phase is exhibited, the different feelings to be produced by the Spirit of Christ in relationship to God.

Psa. 3-The first of the number (viz, the third Psalm) gives the condition in general in contrast with the second Psalm, and the support and confidence of faith in it. The troublers of the godly man are multiplied, haughty and triumphing over him as having no help in God; but Jehovah is his shield. He lies down in peace, and by faith sees his enemies smitten and their power destroyed. Salvation belongs to Jehovah and His blessing is upon His people. Here again, remark, we find the latter days; and though surrounded by his enemies, the godly man rests in peace, and prophetically sees their destruction and blessing on Israel. It expresses confidence in God in the midst- of hostile numbers and without resource, Christ has surely fully entered into this; but the place of the psalm is in the latter days, after proof of the non-accomplishment of Psa. 2 at his first. presenting Himself as Messiah to Israel.

Psa. 4--The fourth Psalm differs in this respect from the third, of which we shall see other examples, that it is not simple confidence but appeals to righteousness against the sons of men, who turn all the glory that belongs to the people of Jehovah, and especially to their king, into shame, but Jehovah has chosen the godly. The light of Jehovah's countenance is his resource. In both 3. 4 and 4. 1 the experienced mercy of Jehovah is referred to.

Psa. 5--In the fifth Psalm the cry of the godly is presented, and the character of God, as necessarily responding to that of the godly, is appealed to as necessitating His hearing him and judging the wicked. If the godly love godliness, surely Jehovah does; if the godly abhor wickedness, surely He does. It answers to the righteous Father of the Lord in John 17, only there the answer was, heaven; here, earth, the necessary consequence of the difference of Christ's position on earth and that of the remnant.

Psa. 6--In the sixth Psalm the remnant take another ground. They are oppressed, their soul vexed, the extremity of distress presses on their spirit, and gives the fear that Jehovah would be against them in anger, and they look that Jehovah should not rebuke them in anger nor chasten. in hot displeasure, which they had as a nation deserved, but which the redeemed heart deprecates. They looked to be saved through mercy and saved from death, and call on the wicked to depart, for Jehovah has heard.

Psa. 7--The seventh Psalm appeals to Jehovah on the ground of the righteous and more than righteous, dealing of the godly with their enemies, that Jehovah may arise and awake to the judgment He has commanded, and that thus by the deliverance of the remnant by judgment, the congregation of the various nations of the earth would compass Him about. He would then judge the peoples. Another point is brought out here. The Lord judges the righteous man. If a man turn not, but go on in his wickedness, His wrath will follow him. In all this we have the Spirit of Christ as it associates itself with the Jewish remnant, and in certain respects Christ Himself called to mind; that is, as passing through the circumstances which enabled him to enter into theirs with truth; for we have seen that the effect on His soul personally was never what it is in the remnant. It is not His history, but His sympathy with them. There are two principles which connect Christ and the remnant in the latter days. He takes them in grace into His place as on earth, and He enters into theirs. As to the nature and principles of their life, the righteous have the sentiments of the Spirit of Christ as it would work in their state. Their appeals are the expression of this. And God allows their claims, though they have not clear intelligence respecting this, furnishing in the Psalms expressions to them. It is a need, and a desire too, which the life that is in them legitimates to His heart, who can take account of the ground Christ has laid for blessing, which makes Him righteous in forbearance, though the righteousness, as to the Jews, be not yet manifested. Their knowledge of what Jehovah is as respects integrity and oppression-what He has ever been-makes them look for a deliverance which seems impossible. There is another expression to note here-" how long?" It expresses the expectation of faith. God cannot reject His people forever. How long will He deal with them as if He did, and take no notice of oppression? Hence in one place He says, " There is none that knoweth how long." As a whole, then, these Psalms are a general exhibition of the state of the remnant of the Jews before God in the latter day, and the principles on which their souls stand as godly-not as yet the strong outpouring of their feelings under the trial of circumstances. Is Christ then absent from them all? Surely not, or the Psalms were not here. Christ entered in sympathy into their condition,-forms the faith of their hearts in it by His Spirit,-is thus fully found in

their low estate in the best way. His own personal feelings when on earth they do not express, though He has learned by His own sorrows in like circumstances -blessed truth!-to have a word in season for him that is weary.

Psa. 8-We have now come to the eighth, which closes this unfolding of the condition of the remnant, and the counsels of God as to the rejected Anointed of Jehovah. What is said is still by the mouth of the now delivered remnant. O Jehovah, our Lord! In vain have the heathen risen up against Him! How. excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens. It is not now a king in Zion-though surely that will be true; but a glory set above the heavens. It is not now merely the people of the great king blessed; but wherever the children of men dwell, Jehovah's name, Israel's' Lord, is great. Is it now as setting the Christ on His holy hill of Zion? No, it is as setting the Son of man, not merely over the children of men, but over everything His hand has created in all places of His dominion. He is set over all the works of His hand; none are excepted. He only is excepted who put all things under Him, And who is this Son of man? It is one made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned now with glory and honor, and set (which the Epistle to the Hebrews shows us is not yet accomplished) over all the works of God's hands. He could not be rejected as Christ (even if that title was afterward to be made good by Him who laughs from heaven at the impotent rage of the kings of the earth) without His having a yet more glorious place destined to Him in the counsels of God-the being gloriously crowned in heaven, and set over all things. Son of God and (Son of David) King in Zion was His title on earth. But His first rejection in this character throws Him out into this wider glory He had faithfully acquired too,-what belonged by divine committal to the Son of man. Hence we see in the gospels the Lord charging his disciples to say no more that He was the Christ, for He was now virtually rejected by Israel, because the Son of man must suffer and be rejected, delivered to the Gentiles, die, and rise again: This was grace to Israel, therefore; but to man, to man in Christ. Still, Israel's Lord,. Jehovah, was thus excellent in all the earth. This is that with which the psalm closes, as the proper result in the mouth of the remnant, though it was brought about by and dependent on a much higher glory. God, in the presence of the rage and ill will of His enemies, and to silence the oppressors and the pride of the enemy, and of the relentless, pitiless persecutors of His saints and people, has chosen the weakest things of the earth to perfect praise. We have had an example of this, a little anticipative example of this, in the reception of the rejected Christ riding into Jerusalem. It shall be fully accomplished in the last day. Then He had witness given to Him as Son of God in raising Lazarus-as Son of David in thus riding into Jerusalem----as Son of man when 'the Greeks came up. But then He must die to save this last glory. (John 11;12) In the last days all shall not thus fail on earth. It shall be accomplished in power. Meanwhile; He is crowned with glory and honor in a better place. The psalm has an elevated and enlarged energy, as is suited to the great deliverance celebrated. Creation makes man so little in himself.. What is he when we consider this vast and shining universe? But glance at Christ, and you see all its glories grow dim before the excellency. of Him under whose. feet all is put. Yea, they are lighted up again by that glory. Man is indeed great and above all in Him the Son of man set over all things. it is not the place here to enlarge on the use of this psalm in the New Testament; but it makes its use and import very clear. In 1 Cor. 15 we see that it is accomplished in resurrection. In Heb. 2 we see that the subjection of all things is in the world to come,- that they are not yet put under Christ's feet, but that He is crowned, already with glory and honor. Eph. 1 shows that the Church is united to Him in this place of glory, but that does not at all enter into the scope of the. Psalm. It was part of the

mystery hid from ages and generations.

Before passing on, I would briefly review the ground we have gone over in these introductory Psalms. First, the remnant in the latter day is set before us, then the counsels of God as to Messiah, but the kings of the earth and the rulers setting themselves against Jehovah and His Anointed. Yet He will be set king in Zion.. Then 3. To 7. present the great principles on which the remnant will have to walk under the circumstances in which they find themselves. They do not afford us the deep expressions of feeling which the extent of distress brings out, but only the sentiments produced by grace in their position, so far as they are needed to give a voice to the feeling of grace and faith in it: 3. To 5., confidence:.. 6., 7., bowing of heart under distress: 3., simple confidence: 4., appeal to the God of righteousness and the path of the righteous marked out: 5., he cries to Jehovah, because he discerns between the evil and the

-good, and the wicked thus must be-removed and Jehovah bless the righteous that trust in Him: 6., mercy is appealed to-as, distressed in spirit, he entreats Jehovah not to rebuke him in anger, and Jehovah has heard him in his distress, to save him from death: 7., he appeals against his persecutors, contrasting their conduct and his own towards them-but Jehovah judges His people. These are the great elements of relationship between Jehovah and the remnant of His people in that day. How precious it will be for the remnant to have their faith sustained and given words to, above their fears, by these gracious witnesses of the Spirit of Christ to guide them and justify their best hopes and calm their justest fears. It is not difficult, I think, to understand why Christ could not personally have the feelings and desires here expressed, and yet could animate by His Spirit prophetically these same desires in the remnant, and enter into all their circumstances in sympathy. He came from heaven, and never lost the spirit that breathed there, though He was in the circumstances which earth brought upon Him, but that spirit is love. He was above evil in the power of love, and the consciousness of divine feelings which the Son of Man, who is in heaven, would have, though he passed through every sorrow which the Son of Man on earth could be subject to. He went through all the distress that sin and man's relentless enmity could bring upon Him; but, while only the more sensible to it, and feeling it the more deeply because He was perfect, He was above all the evil in, love in the personal perfection of good. The remnant will not be so. They will be sustained of God; but not only in the midst of evil, but under it, pressed by it, by the sense of guilt, by. fear of wrath-not merely the deep sense of wrath, but a personally sifting dread of it. There is no deliverance for them without the destruction of their enemies, and they desire it. These are the Lord's enemies too, and their desire is right. (See Psa. 6:5,7,10.) This, Christ, as we have said, did not.. He was above all this enmity in heavenly love and through known communion with His Father, whose will He had peacefully to do in known approval: until, in the end, He entered into that dark valley, where, for our sakes and Israel's, He was indeed to meet wrath, but there His converse was with God, and as to His human enemies, He only says, " If you seek me, let these go their way,". and all were prostrate before Him, and it is His to tell them, in peace-" This is your hour and the power of darkness." Hence Himself, love divine, passing through every sorrow that Israel or we may have to pass through, He did so personally, in love. All was felt, but He was above the evil in love to men, being in perfect communion with heaven, and its loving favor. In this He is a pattern for Christians, not for Israel. But He really went through all that the remnant can ever go through, yet was free enough from any power over Him to feel for others in it. This He does perfectly, and prophetically inspires the expressions of faith to those who, not

knowing yet heavenly love and deliverance, are pressed under it; and gives utterance, by the prophetic spirit, towards God (as the Spirit would in such), to the sense of their oppression of heart, which circumstances give occasion to, when divine favor and deliverance are not known. No one can enter into another's sorrows under this oppression so well as one who knows the causes of it, and what that produces in respect of relationship with God, but who is not in it. Christ has been in all their affliction, and felt it, but not felt, as to others, what those who are under it, and 'necessarily and rightly occupied with themselves, feel. He felt for His oppressors with heavenly love. His sympathy, being perfect, has, by the prophetic spirit, entered into all the remnant's circumstances and feelings, and given divinely furnished expression to them. The heart may rise up and 'say, It is an easy thing to give it by the prophetic Spirit if He is not really in it. I answer, He was in every part of the affliction to the full, and infinitely more than the remnant ever will be-but, does His having a better feeling in that which He entered into, hinder His having perfect sympathy with them? It enables' Him to have it. As regards all the distress, which came from Satan and from God; when there was no question of feeling for those from whom the distress came, He went through all in the same way, only much more deeply than they will; and, as to a part and the deepest part of it, took on Himself what they never will have.

When the remnant are in the same sorrows, not knowing divine favor, He will minister to them, and, through the means of these psalms, all the feelings which God can look upon with approbation and listen to. He will conduct their souls through them. How often in trial when we hardly dare to express what we feel, for fear of offending God, in the uncertainties of a cloudy faith, does a text which utters our sorrows in a way which, being in, the word, must be right, assuage the heart; and give confidence in looking up to God. So will it be them Psa. 9;10-In the ninth and tenth Psalms we enter, historically, on the circumstances of the remnant in the last days in the land. The great principles having been previously laid down, viz., the remnant, Messiah, trial in the midst of Israel through his rejection, a path He had learned in person, glory in the Son of man, we get, in these, a preface as regards the circumstances, a laying of them down, that the scene of the exercises, the state of things which gives rise to these, and the deliverance wrought by the judgment of God, may be plainly before us.

We may remark here, in confirmation of previously-expressed judgments, that Messiah, the righteous -man, according to the counsels of God but rejected (with the consequent sorrows of the remnant into which He thus enters), and in result glorified as Son of man, and set over all the works of God's hands, having been brought before us in the first eight Psalms, we find ourselves at once, when entering on the historical detail of circumstances, in the last days, the righteous remnant being under the oppression of the wicked and the heathen. Messiah, in Spirit, in the oppressed remnant, owns the righteousness of Jehovah in judgment, sitting in the throne judging right.

Remark here, in passing, the great difference between the celebration of the righteousness of God, sitting on the throne judging right and vindicating the righteous man

from the oppressor, and Christ on the cross, who vindicated on the earth, but declares Himself forsaken of God,--His enemies, outwardly, having all their will against Him--and then, righteousness being established in a heavenly way, God's righteousness in setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. " Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me

no More." As regards this righteousness, He was taken completely out of the world, so that the disciples, as in flesh, as was the case with the Jews, saw Him no more. He had glorified God, and was glorified in God, as God had been in Him. The righteousness which judged the oppressor, though executed by God, who alone is really righteous and has power, had its sphere and measure in earthly government, and in discerning the righteous and the wicked among men, the oppressed and the oppressor. It was connected with the righteous government of God. The clear apprehension of this difference is a key to the whole frame of thought in the Psalms.

Another point, it may be useful to remark, is this. In the English translation several words are translated people **■ ■ ■ ■** (in the singular) people, or my people (Israel); **■ ■ ■ ■** heathens or nations: that is those outside, who are in contrast with Israel as the people of God (Israel is once so designated to mark its guilt,- Psa. 43:1.); **■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■** the peoples and nations in general on the earth, the various races of mankind; **■ ■ ■ ■ ■** peoples in plural, I think the nations, viewed in connection with Israel restored and taken into relationship with Jehovah.

Psa. 9-To turn now to the psalms before us. The ninth psalm presents to us Jehovah, the Most High (the names of God which connect themselves with the Jews, and the millennial accomplishment of the promises made to Abraham), delivering the people by judgment from oppression of the heathen, and destroying the wicked. The delivered Jew celebrates this goodness which has maintained the right and cause of the righteous. The Spirit of Christ speaks fully in this, as having taken up their interests. It is really His right. If the Jew has any, it is through Him: If they say it, He has put the words in their mouth. Indeed, if Christ had not entered into their sorrow, and given them these words, they could not have said, My right. Let us consider this, as to circumstances, first leading Psalm with somewhat more detail. The humble and oppressed one praises God with His whole heart, under the double name of Jehovah and Most High. The turning back of His enemies is not merely a human victory. They fall and perish before the presence of Jehovah Elohim. But this was to maintain the right and cause of the godly one-really the right and cause of Christ, who had thus thrown Himself into their portion in gracious sympathy. In the sixth verse a very important principle is brought out for faith at all times, then to be verified in fact. The efforts of the enemy here are for time. He can destroy, if God allow, present prosperity. The Lord endures forever. We have only to do His will by the way. He has always His way at the end. That will which we do by the way, perhaps in sorrow and suffering then, will surely reign at the end of the way. Destructions were now come to a perpetual end-the cities and their memory had been destroyed. Jehovah endures forever. We have heard of the patience of Job-that was by the way. We have seen the end of the Lord-that the ground for faith. It walks with Him who certainly has the end at His command. He shall endure forever-has. prepared His throne for judgment. He will judge the world universal in righteousness, and minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness. This was the public character of Jehovah. But there was a private part of His character, so to speak, the making of which, however, also public, is the great subject of the psalm; and indeed, with that first public one, the great subject of all the Psalms. Both are known only to faith, but are celebrated beforehand. The second part is this-Jehovah is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. The result is, confidence in. Jehovah on the part of those who know His name. The intervention of Jehovah in favor of those that seek Him in that day will make good this name everywhere. Another point is brought out also. Jehovah dwells in Zion as thus revealing Himself. His doings, what He does for the display of His name through judgment in favor of the remnant,

are to be declared among the peoples-another word than that often used, and signifying, I apprehend, the peoples that He owns-that they may be able thus to trust in Him. He is returned thus to Zion at the close. Verses 13, 14, are the cry of the remnant, and on the ground of mercy, that their hearts may praise Jehovah in Zion, as well as His judgments; v. 15 celebrates the judgment; and the moral, so to speak, is told in v. 16. Jehovah is known by the judgment which He executeth. The way in which this Psalm serves as a preface for the understanding the scope of the book and its application to the last days is evident. Once seized, it largely helps in the intelligence of the whole book. In the last verse the wicked, be they who they may, Jew as well as Gentile, and indeed particularly the Jew, and all the nations who forget God, are shown to be rejected and judged, and to have their place in Hades by judgment. And in this God remembers the needy, for the destruction of the wicked is their deliverance. Hence, for this, for Jehovah to arise, is the cry of the remnant. This feature explains certain expressions in the Psalms to which I have before alluded-the demand for judgment. Compare the characters of the judged ones in Rom. 1, 2. Only there the wrath is from heaven, not governmental, on earth, from Zion; and a greater moral development will be found, as was to be expected, and not the external judgment of nations.

Psa. 10-The body of the tenth Psalm depicts the state of things in the last days, until Jehovah arises to judgment, and more especially the character of the wicked, for he is known by his character, and is especially to be found in the Jew. (Compare Isa. And In the one passage, the question being particularly idolatry and Babylon; in the second, the rejection of Messiah, the two capital sins which bring the Jews to judgment-Jehovah and His anointed.) The wicked in his pride acts upon that which is seen; as the righteous by faith on the character of Jehovah, faith in Him. The wicked boasts himself in His heart's desire, and blesses him (i.e. counts him happy) whom Jehovah abhors. He pursues his plans without conscience, seeking to destroy the humble by craft, and reckons that God has forgotten him. How well Christ could help them here! The humble cry under the oppression. Why does Jehovah stand afar off, and hide Himself in the time of trouble.

They were far, indeed, from being where Christ was, yet the shadow, so to speak, of that sorrow, was passing over them, but they could hope in God. So in verse 12. They call upon God to lift up His hand-not to forget the humble-why should the wicked contemn God? Jehovah has seen it and will requite,-the poor committed himself to Him. Verse 16 to the end celebrates Jehovah's coming-in in reply, and its results. Jehovah is King forever-the heathen are perished out of His land. Then is the public judgment-now, the secret of the Lord. Jehovah has heard the desire of the humble. He prepared their heart, and then hearkened; and that hearing will be in judging, in being Judge for the fatherless and the oppressed, so that the man of the earth, he who had his strength and hope there, should no more oppress.

One or two remarks are required on both these psalms. There are two parties, and, in a certain sense, three, besides the poor humbled remnant who wait upon God: the heathen (goyim) strangers to Israel, who oppress them, enemies of God; and the wicked, these more especially among the Jews, as we have seen. I have said three, because the wicked are spoken of in a double way. In general, indeed exclusively, in the tenth Psalm, and each time it is used in the ninth Psalm, except verse 17, it is in the singular. In 17 it is plural, to show that all of them will be cast down into Scheol. In the singular, it is, I judge, characteristic; yet I doubt not, there will be one special wicked one, ha-rashang ■ ανομος, the antichrist, but known here certainly by his character, not by a distinct prophecy of his person. The ανομια is manifested, but not the ■

ανομος, and it is not confined to one. The analogy of this with Christ is very plain, as is the case with all the forms of wickedness. The very Trinity is imitated in mischief in the Apocalypse. There is, too, the city of corruption, as the bride of Christ; and so on. Up to this, save as the Messiah of God's counsels was brought out in the second psalm, the righteous man was given characteristically, and here it was necessary to characterize the whole party opposed to Jehovah and His Christ, though one may be the concentrated expression of this character. The remnant were to judge by this character morally. Next, remark, they are judged with the heathen: they all come together under the same judgment. The wicked shall be turned into Scieol and all the heathen who forget God. So verse 5. Thou hast rebuked the heathen. Thou hast destroyed the wicked. This ninth Psalm is, as we have seen, the general view of Jehovah's intervention in judgment. In the tenth we have particularly the position of the sorrow and trial of the remnant within. Hence we find the wicked (man) not the heathen, until, on the execution of judgment, they are found, too, to have perished out of Jehovah's land, so as to identify the judgment with the general statements of the ninth. How completely this all answers to the history we have of the latter days, I need not say.

(Psa. 11-15) What are the righteous remnant to do when the power of evil is thus dominant in Emanuel's land, this the eleventh Psalm treats of.

Psa. 11 to 15., as I have already remarked, give the thoughts and feelings of the remnant at that time; that is, consequent on the state of things spoken of in 9. And 10. I will now trace the outline of these five psalms.

The eleventh presents to us the righteous repelling the idea of quailing as void of resource before the godless wickedness of those who fear not God. He trusts in Jehovah. Still the wicked, with all will, seeks the destruction of those who are true of heart. And, if all human resource fails, all that was a ground on which hope could be built for the earth, what was the righteous to do? Jehovah is as stable as ever. He is in His holy temple, has His place on earth, which faith owns, let it be ever so desolate, and His throne is in heaven. No evil can enter there, and it rules over all. But there is more than this. If He abide in sure repose, because

Almighty, and far above all evil in heaven, He looks on the earth-He governs it; for this, not the Church's heavenly portion, is our subject here, and indeed in all the Old Testament. His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men. This is a most solemn and consoling truth for those in trial. But the ways of God in government are still further revealed. The Lord tries the righteous-so the history of Job, a picture of what happens to Israel, teaches us. The present state of things is not in any way a revelation of the government of God. Faith knows God has the upper hand, and that all things work together for good to those that love Him; but immediate government, so that the present state of things should show the result of God's estimate of good and evil here below, is not in exercise. If it were so, no evil could be allowed. The righteous would flourish, and all he did prosper. But it is not so. The Church, meanwhile, has her portion out of the world, has her place of abode where Christ has gone to prepare her one. She suffers with Him, and will reign with Him. But as to all His saints, He tries them; as to the wicked, whom He abhors, upon them He will rain judgment, snares, and fire and brimstone; for the righteous Jehovah loves righteousness, His countenance beholds the upright. Here is the clear ground for faith then, when the remnant are in trial. God beholds-He tries the righteous and will in due time execute judgment. It involves this: the

righteous Lord loves righteousness. Such is the general basis of the godly man's confidence and walk; but they are not insensible to the evil, but can present it to the Lord.

Psa. 12-This is the subject of the twelfth psalm. " Help., Jehovah, the godly man ceaseth." Jehovah will cut off the proud and deceitful lips. It is the character of the wicked. He knows no check, no bridle to his will-says, Who is Lord over us? But it is just for his oppression of the poor, that Jehovah arises. God's word on which these had relied, and which promised help as the necessary witness of Jehovah's character, to which they looked, is a sure and well-tried word. It will bear infallibly its promised fruit. There is nothing deceitful in it. -Jehovah will keep His poor from the generation of the wicked. But the wicked have full scope when the worthless are exalted on high.

Psa. 13-In the thirteenth Psalm the righteous is reduced to the lowest point of distress as far as evil from men goes. It is as if God had entirely and definitely forgotten him. His enemy was exalted over him, and he taking counsel in his heart; but then he cries, looks to Jehovah to hear lest he should perish on the one hand, and his enemy, on the other, have to say he had prevailed. But he is heard, and sings to Jehovah, in whose mercy he had trusted, and who deals bountifully with him at last.

Psa. 14-In the fourteenth Psalm the evil has reached its climax in God's sight. What is ever true of flesh is now brought up under God's eye; at the same time when He is going to judge,-man rises up in pride before Him-yea, He judges because it is so. He looks down to see if any understand or seek Him amongst men; but there are none: A remnant indeed wrought in by grace, whom He already owns as His people (verse 4.), are there, and these the wicked eat up as they would bread; they do not call on Jehovah. It is man's full-blown pride and wickedness-but all is soon changed, God is in the congregation of the righteous. Fear falls upon the proud, who but a while ago was scorning the poor for trusting Jehovah. The seventh verse shows us that all this is anticipative and prophetic, and where and how it will be accomplished. It is the desire of the godly one, according to the intelligence of faith. He looks for it, note, out of Zion, not content till the Lord establishes praise there. The people, too, remark, are seen as in captivity. Then comes the inquiry-Who is the person that will have a share in the blessings of that holy hill, when the Lord shall have established the seat of His righteous power in Zion?

Psa. 15-The fifteenth Psalm gives the answer-He in whom is uprightness of heart in the path of the law. Remark here, that while the godly, when all is utterly dark, and wickedness has entirely the upper hand, and the foundations of human earthly hope, even in the things that belong to God on the earth, are destroyed, and wickedness is in the place of righteousness, look above, and see God's throne immutable in heaven, and thus all in heaven and earth brought into connection; yet, as to the point they look to, it is Jehovah in His holy temple, and deliverance coming out of Zion; and so it will (see Isa. 66:6.) The immutable throne in heaven will establish in sure power the long desolate throne upon the earth. Jehovah will be in His temple, but will reign in the Person of Christ, in Zion. This is Jewish deliverance, and according to just Jewish hopes. There is one important general remark to make here, the sense of full relationship with Jehovah is enjoyed. Whatever the trial-whatever the condition of the remnant-the wickedness of the people-the oppression of the Gentiles in the land, the faith of the remnant contemplates its relationship with Jehovah. And hence Jehovah is viewed as in His holy temple, though there is, as yet, no manifestation of His

power. We have not, therefore, the remnant as yet, entirely cast out, nor is the power of antichrist here contemplated as manifested. When he sets up his power there will be open apostasy, and the faithful will be driven out. But the wicked and the Gentile, as such, in the land, are contemplated. We learn clearly, from this psalm, that, the wicked, is characteristic. It is plural except verse 5, where it is in contrast with the righteous.

These psalms, passing over the driving out from Jerusalem, go on in hope to another scene -the deliverance wrought by Jehovah when he is indeed returned to Jerusalem; not the destruction of antichrist by the Lord coming from heaven, but the driving out of the Gentile oppressors by Jehovah established in Zion. Hence all Israel is brought in. (14. 7.) And their salvation comes out of Zion. Hence these psalms, as far as they refer to Christ, look at the time in which He walked on earth before His final rejection. They do not, save the second and the eighth, directly refer to Him, but to the remnant. But in His public path on earth, He did, from His baptism by -John Baptist, associate Himself graciously. With them-as at the close He tasted in grace their final sorrows in the close of their history.

These psalms present to us the state of. the remnant while still having their place among the nation who have not yet openly broken, in apostasy, with Jehovah; but whose wickedness is in fact showing itself, and ripening to its highest pitch. And they pass over, in faith, to the time when Jehovah, seated in Zion, delivers His people, casting all the Gentiles out of His land, all Israel being restored from their captivity. The whole latter-day scene, except the last half week of antichrist's power, is before us. Jehovah is still in His place as publicly owned. It was just thus in the Lord's days (14. 5). Elohim is spoken of because it is not relationship which is there in question, but God Himself in His nature and character. Not man, or anything human, or even Satan's power was there; but God was. in the generation of the, righteous.

Psa. 16-With the sixteenth we begin a very important series of psalms-those in which the connection of Christ Himself' with the remnant is brought before us by the divine Spirit. In the sixteenth itself; Christ takes, formally, His place among the remnant. It is quoted by the Apostle Peter; and perhaps alluded to by Paul, to prove His resurrection as proof of His participation in human nature in Heb. 2; though the quotation there seems from the 70 of Isa. 8 After- examining many critical authorities, I adhere to the English translation of the second verse. The third leaves the sense obscure; from not changing 'the preposition. " But to the saints," answers to " said unto the Lord," not to " extendeth not. to thee." He says, To the Lord ".my goodness," etc. To the saints,... " In them is all my delight:" ** Thus

this psalm has a most important and deeply-interesting place. It is Christ taking His place in grace amongst the poor remnant of Israel,,--of the servant to tread the path of life, a path which none as in flesh had found in this world, and that leading through death to beyond it where there was fullness of joy. He takes the place of dependence, of trust, not of divine equality. And he who says he does not must have had title to do so, or need not have said it. He was taking another. He takes the place of servant, and calls Jehovah His Lord. Nor was this all.. He takes a place, however alone He might be in perfection and perfect in doing it, with the saints on earth. And this He does not merely as a fact, but with the fullest affection. His delight is in them. He joys to call them the excellent of the earth.

Note further, it is not with the heavenly saints He associates Himself,- nor are those of whom He speaks here united to Him in heaven, but He associated with them. Some may go to heaven by that path of life of which he has Himself left the track; but His association with them and their's with Him, is under the title of the excellent of the earth.

We may further remark, that the whole psalm breathes this spirit, and takes this place of dependence so precious for the poor remnant. It is not, Destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days, that was taking a divine place. His body was a temple,-He raised it up Himself,-here he leans as man on Jehovah, in both perfect. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Let us now consider the contents of this psalm in more detailed order. We have already noticed the first verses; but the principles are of the last importance, as presenting Christ taking this place, so that I repeat them.

Messiah looks as man to God to preserve Him. He takes the place of man. It is not merely a Jew already there calling on Jehovah, but a man with God. He puts His trust in Him. This principle of trust Paul alleges in Heb. 2 'as a witness that Messiah was the true man. Next He takes the place of a servant. He says to Jehovah-for now he takes His place before Him " Thou art my Adon, my Lord.", This is a definite and distinct place. He moreover takes His place, not in divine goodness towards others, but before God in man's place. My goodness, he says, extendeth not to thee. Thus He said to the young man who came to Him, " Why callest thou me good: there is none good but one, that is God." But-though in truth alone, looked at in His relationship to man, for all' were sinners-He takes His place with the remnant, the excellent of the earth. This He did historically, when He went to the baptism of John Baptist, with those whom the Spirit led to God in the holy path of repentance. They went first here. He associates Himself with them in grace. Still, we look on to the full result in the last days even here. He will not hear of any God but Jehovah. The sorrows of those who did should be multiplied. Jehovah Himself was His portion and He maintained Him in the sure enjoyment of that which He was to enjoy in the purpose of. God, and pleasant was the place where the lines had fallen to Him. It was Jehovah's inheritance on the earth that was His portion, and this is specially in Israel. Such was His portion-but then there was His path first. Here he blesses, too, Jehovah. His counsel was always his guide. He walked by it. The secret of Jehovah was with Him to guide Him.; and,-away from men when all was brought into the silence of his heart and its inmost feelings-His own inmost thoughts were light and guidance. It is ever so when we are in communion with God; for, though in the heart, such thoughts are always His light in it-the. fruit, and the moral fruit of the working of His Spirit. There was the positive direction and guidance of Jehovah, and these inward apprehensions of His soul, the result of divine work in it.

In Christ, of course, this was perfect. It is well, while judging of all by the word, not to neglect this working of the soul, as moved and taught of God. The mind of the Spirit, in moral discernment, is found in it. Besides this guidance there was, positive purpose of heart. He had set Jehovah always before Him. This only direction did He follow, and because of His being near, and at His right hand, He would not be moved. It was not self-dependence but trust in Jehovah: This was indeed the path of life, though as yet unmanifested in visible power (compare Rom. 1:4).

Hence he would rejoice though all, and pass through death with unclouded hope, His flesh should rest in it-as a man He did not fear it. Jehovah, whom He trusted, would not leave His soul in

Hades, no suffer His holy One to see corruption. Soul and body, though going respectively to the place of departed spirits and the place of corruption, would not be left in the one or see the other. Jehovah would show Him the path of life through, but 'beyond, death. How blessedly He did so. It led up to brighter joys than Israel's blessing, among whom He had come to sojourn. There, indeed, the excellent of the earth could not follow Him (John 13:33,36; and 21. 19). He must first dry up the waters of Jordan for them, and make it the path for them also, when He was gone. For that path, since it led through death, must lead, if it was indeed the path of life, to what was beyond it—the presence of Him, in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore. Such is the blessed issue and result of the Lord's path across this world, where He took His place among the saints, and trod, in confidence on Jehovah (into whose hands He committed His Spirit), the path, which, if He took us up, must lead through death, and then found the path again in resurrection, and so as man up to Him, with whom is fullness of joy. The Spirit of holiness marked the life of the Son of God all through. He was declared to be such, with power, by resurrection; but, being man, He passed up into the presence of God. The holy, confiding life found its perfect joy there. He is-blessed be God and the name of that blessed One who has trod this path—our forerunner. Let us dwell for a moment on the connection of this with other scriptures, partially referred to. It is of importance, as showing Christ's position in the midst of Israel, and the difference of their associations with Him from those of the Church. And, besides that, we get the divinely perfect feelings of Christ Himself in this position. He is in association with the saints in Israel, only He voluntarily takes it, that is, that position into which they are called out in witness of their return to God, We see (Heb, 2. 13), that this association is those that are sanctified. ire' makes one company with that pious remnant manifested thus for God. He is not ashamed to call them brethren, having taken up their cause, and, consequently, become man, become flesh and blood, because the children whom God had given Him partook of it. We see that He really became man, but to identify Himself with the interests and to secure the blessing of the saints', of the remnant, of the children whom God was bringing to glory, and who are distinguished from the mass of Israel, to whom they were to be a sign (see Isa. 8:18). In. this pas- sage, the condition of this remnant- and the expectation of better days are considered. Leaving aside the Church which. is not the subject of prophecy, the passage passes, as we often see from Christ's personal connection with the saints in Israel, to the position and portion of these saints in the last days. This is sufficiently distinctly given us in this passage of Isaiah, to help us much in understanding the way in which the Spirit of God does pass from the previous history of the saints in Israel over to the last days, leaving out the Church altogether. Christ, in spirit, contemplates these only, His connection, than is, with the remnant of Israel, and, so far, with the nation; and thus passes over the whole history of the Church, to find Himself again in the same connection—with the nation in the last days,

" Bind up the testimony," He says(Isa. 8:16,17), " seal the law among my disciples; and I will wait upon the Lord, who hideth His face from the house of Israel, and will look for Him." This was when He had become the rejected sanctuary and the stumbling stone.

It continues to the final glory, when Israel shall possess Him as the Son born to them (Isa. 9:6,7). If we do not abstract the Church, it is impossible to understand the prophecies of the Old Testament. The Church has

I Thus becoming man, and through glorifying God in His work as man, He has also title under God's gift over all flesh,

her heavenly portion, but Christ can consider His relationship with His earthly people separately.

To return to the sixteenth psalm. The reader will remark the reference to idolatry-one of God's great controversies with Israel-in the fourth verse. From Matt. 12:43,45, and Isa. 65, we learn that the Jews will fall into idolatry in the latter days. Jehovah alone. is acknowledged by the prophetic Spirit of Christ. It is after this is all done away, that He will rejoice in the days that are to come in the portion which the Lord has given Him with the excellent of the earth. The certainty of this hope is connected with the resurrection, which is a necessary condition to its fulfillment, and which the favor of Jehovah secures to His anointed in all the virtue of that power which will not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. Hence the apostle refers to the sure mercies of David. That is the accomplishment of all God's promises to Israel as a proof that Christ was to rise from the dead, now no more to return to corruption. Nothing can be more beautiful (if it be not His death) than the expression of the Lord's feelings given us in this psalm-the expression by Himself of the place He has taken, and that with the saints. Jehovah is His own portion. How truly was it so! What other had he? Yet His delight was in the saints. Do we not see it in His disciples? With the first step of spiritual life in the remnant, shown in their going to John's baptism of repentance; He identifies Himself, who surely had no need of repentance. So, as a faithful man, an Israelite, He sets Jehovah always before Him. So, even in death, He rests in confidence on Him for resurrection, that path of life through and in spite of death, (and which He has opened for us)--and -there Jehovah, God, His Father's presence is, He knows, the fullness of joy-at his right hand pleasures for evermore... This is the highest, proper joy of the mind and Spirit of Christ; not glory, but the presence of God.

Psa. 17-The key to the sixteenth psalm was in the words, " In thee do I put my trust;" that of the seventeenth is, " Hear the right." In the sixteenth we have seen the blessed path and working of that spirit of confidence. It is, though the same spirit works in the remnant, essentially applicable to Christ Himself in person. The seventeenth doubtless applies to Him also, but not so entirely so. It is on somewhat lower ground, though one on which the Spirit of God speaks. We see distinctly that it contemplates others, though not without Christ, in the eleventh verse. " They now have compassed us in our steps." Still, Christ is found here: without Him none really could say to purpose, " Hear the right." It is an appeal to the judgment of Jehovah, God coming forth to vindicate the righteousness of him that cries to Him. The godly remnant will be in the main delivered from their deadly enemies. Jehovah will arise and disappoint them. Still some will fall, even of the wise (Dan. 11). Christ Himself, the perfect One, though for more glorious reasons, still in sympathy with His people, did [v. 1]. Hence, the righteousness goes higher up than the present deliverance by God's government of the godly remnant on earth-a result true of Christ, and a comfort for the faith of all those who may fall under the oppression of the enemy. " I will behold Thy presence in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake up after thy likeness." This is fully true of Christ, who is before His Father in righteousness, and is the very image of the invisible God, He in whom He is displayed in glory. But He traces the path He trod as the righteous One on earth, in the midst of evil, and where He underwent the temptations of the enemy, First, there was perfect integrity of heart, and that in the most secret thoughts of it. There was purpose not to transgress in obedience. The words of God's lips guided Him; and thus the paths of the destroyer were never an

instant entered on. The words of God's lips never lead there. This the Lord showed in His temptation in the wilderness. In the paths of Jehovah, He looked to Him to hold up His goings. This is a part of righteousness in man, dependence. He called on God, sure that He would hear Him. This is the confidence we have. Such was His path. He applies it then as the ground of looking for the intervention of God's power to protect Him-as he does those that trust in Him' from the wicked that oppressed Him. Prosperous and lifted up as they were, Jehovah was His refuge when He did not yet interfere. But He looked to His openly doing so. Remark, that the perfectness of moral character gives nearness of confidence and sense of being precious to Jehovah. Even in us, God would have this. We are of more value than many sparrows-the very hairs of our head counted. Here it is perfect, and He looks to be kept as the apple of the eye; that which is most precious guarded by him whose it is.

After all, these prosperous oppressors were but the hand of Jehovah-men of this world, who got all heart could desire from the outward providence of God. But what a lesson among Jews, whose legal portion was blessing, in basket and store and children. (Compare the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and the unjust steward.) Here, then, the breach with this world, and a place in glory in the next, are fully contemplated. Jehovah's face in righteousness, and likeness to him when thus woke up into another world, were well worth the portion of the men of this world. But here mark, death and another world are fully contemplated - though deliverance is also, the remnant being more, distinctly brought in. It is the same as we have seen in Matt 5., where also both are contemplated. We have thus, in this first book, the Jews at the end of days, but in circumstances analogous to what Christ's life was, that is, moving as godly ones in the midst of the wicked people.

Psa. 18-The eighteenth Psalm presents to us the connection of Christ, and particularly of His (not atoning sufferings-that is found in the twenty-second Psalm, but His) entering into the sorrows of death, with the whole history of Israel. It is the connection of the deliverance of Israel and the final judgment executed in their behalf on the earth, with the title Christ had to that intervention. No doubt the atonement was absolutely necessary to this, but it is not on that side that His sufferings are looked at here, God delights in Him and answers Him according to his uprightness and delivers the afflicted remnant, into whose sorrows He has entered with Him. Christ is the center, in -a word, of the deliverances of Israel, the cause of their deliverance from Egypt and of their Complete and final redemption by power in the latter day, and then their personal Deliverer too. He is dependent on Jehovah, is heard, and His sorrows are before us; but at the close He works, in the power of Jehovah, the deliverance of His people, and then is the full witness of God's mercy (Mesa) to his anointed David and his seed for evermore. Mercy here is not simply such as we would speak of to sinners, but favor and grace shown and enjoyed, so as even to be used for piety in man. It is particularly celebrated in the eighty-second Psalm, where from these mercies centreing all in Him the term is applied to Christ in person. He is the Chesed. Hence the blessings conferred on Israel at the close (and indeed on all who enjoy them) are called by the same word the "sure mercies of David," confirmed by an everlasting covenant, and, indeed, as the apostle shows us, secured by the resurrection of Christ, making their connection with His sorrows of death in this psalm very plain. This psalm presents us also with a direct scriptural proof and illustration of a most essentially important principle as to the nature of all the psalms, giving a key to their general character and form. We know, from the Book of Samuel, that the occasion of this psalm

was the celebration of David's deliverances from the hand of Saul and of all his enemies. But it is evident that the language of the psalm in no way stops short at any events in the life of David, nor, in its main purport, does, the Spirit of God contemplate even what happened to that already anointed sufferer, who was the occasion of the psalm. The Spirit of God takes up the circumstance which has present personal interest for him whom He uses as prophet merely, as the occasion to bring out the larger and wider scene of which Christ alone can be the center, can alone give a meaning to as a whole, and in respect of which the more immediate circumstance only forms a, partial, though perhaps a most interesting, link in the chain which leads up to the full display of God and His ways in the great result. So it was with all the prophets. Sennacherib's invasion, for example, is the Occasion of bringing on the scene the Assyrian of the latter days. Thus prophecies had an application of the deepest interest at the time, and became the instrument of the present government of God, but were also the revelation of those ultimate events on the earth in the same peoples and nations, in which-the government of God would be fully and finally displayed. They are of no private interpretation, ἰδίας ἐπιλυσεως. They formed part of the great scheme of divine government. In the Psalms, the writer and immediate occasion sometimes almost wholly disappear, are never the main object, but are not to be lost sight of in the expressions used as the utterance of personal feeling, and which are not the revelation of objective facts. In the latter' case, the circumstances of the writer have little application. The Psalms necessarily bring in the speaker more, though believers find that the Holy Ghost used the speaker's feelings to provide for the hearts of others, yet commanded and wrought in them, and led the writer by his own power far beyond anything that the occasion would have suggested to his own mind. The feeling in its nature suited to the event, which might give rise to the psalm, was only the occasion of the Holy Ghost taking the writer up to provide a divine record to guide feelings in future days, or to reveal those of Christ, as taking the cause of His people up. They may be those of the speaker too, as in simple piety was often the case, but in all cases it was the Spirit's provision for future days, or a prophecy relating to Christ Himself and the part He takes in those dealings of God with Israel, and going on, looking at the book as a whole, to the full and undisguised celebration of the results.

The eighteenth psalm, as we have said, takes in the whole history of Israel, and speaks as in the time when deliverance from the pressure of hostile power is already accomplished. But it celebrates especially Jehovah Himself, the Deliverer, and still declares the speaker's dependence on Him. This is the thesis of the psalm. It then, as is the usual form of the Psalms, goes through all the circumstances which lead the soul up to what is celebrated in the first verse or verses. Christ is seen, the sorrows of death compassing Him and floods of ungodly men besetting Him-the sorrows of Hades upon Him and the cords of death about His soul. I have no doubt the letter of this was the expression of what David had felt, as indeed the 50th verse shows. Still, as I have said, this was merely the occasion. The substance of it applies to Christ. He passes in His mind, as in Gethsemane, through the sorrows of death. This is the groundwork laid for all the rest. The next point is dependence and entreaty. In His distress He calls upon Jehovah, and cries to His God. He hears Him, as in the midst of Israel, His cry comes before Him. Now come the results. Christ but represented Israel here-for we have nothing to do with the Church here. From v. 7 to v. 16 we have the deliverance of: Israel from Egypt by the mighty acts of Jehovah. But these were not all Israel's difficulties. The power of His enemies was to be annulled, who were stronger than He as regards flesh. This was also accomplished, and He was brought into a wealthy place.

But this introduces another principle the righteousness in which God delighted; and which, while found absolutely and perfectly only in Christ as a living man, yet characterizes the remnant of Israel, in whose hearts the delight in God's law is written. This principle is brought out from the latter part of v. 19 to v. 26. Christ is the foundation of this, but it is as entering into the condition and sorrows of His people. He is the Israel in spirit; and hence, while all the value of His perfectness is before God for them, the perfectness of that One whose whole life, as identified with the remnant, was well-pleasing to Him, yet we must keep before us here the place and state of the remnant, as of David himself. For, though Christ entered into this place of the remnant in His own perfectness, to give the value of that perfectness to them before God, as agreeable in His sight, yet the state of those to whom it was to be applied is that which is substantially before us in the psalm. Hence, we find, " I kept myself from mine iniquity." This is most important in judging of the literal use of the Psalms. Christ could have said, from iniquity; but,

personally, from mine iniquity, He could NOT: unless it be taken in the sense of that particular form of iniquity into which, in His place, He would have to fall, supposing, for a moment, He had not been perfect, or had been liable to sin. A husband's iniquity is to be unfaithful to or bitter against his wife. It was impossible that Christ could ever fall into it. Still, we may say He kept Himself from it. But the Spirit of godliness (of Christ) in the remnant thus working guards them from following the flesh. They own, that, if Israel goes astray,-and so they did all,-but universally in principle this wickedness was theirs, in themselves; but they were kept from it. Now, this is truth in the inward parts-just what God wants. It is the government of God which we have here distinctly brought out in its unchangeable principle. (55: 25, 26.) Now, Christ, having taken up their cause, as associated with them, with " these excellent of the earth," all the value of what awakened God's delight in Him, and which, by grace, animated them, was their place of acceptance before God-though the atonement was the final ground of it. But in their case, this integrity and divine inward nature was shown in keeping themselves from their natural course. But there was another part of this government, tender care of the afflicted ones, saving them and bringing down all man's pride. (v.27.) In darkness there would be light. To the righteous there ariseth up light in the darkness.

Now, another scene dawns on us-the coining in of power in their behalf. And as Christ had taken the sorrow at the beginning, and then we had the remnant in their own condition, yet Christ 'not separated from them in the way of interest and association-for it is not union here, that is the Church's portion. So here He must take the power in person too-just as in Mark. He was engaged in the sowing and engaged in the harvest-all the intermediate time going on without His personal intervention or seeming care, though: the crop was always His. God's word had stood good all through, and Jehovah Himself was a buckler to those that trusted Him. But now He gives strength and victory to His anointed for Israel from verse 29 to the end. Doubtless, the language is that of David; but-it is substantially the introduction of the kingdom of Christ. A very few remarks will suffice to give the details, this general character of the latter part of the psalm being seized. The general strain is resistless 'victory. But in. verse 43 there are particulars to be noted. Three classes of persons are here introduced: the people-He is delivered from their strivings; the heathen-He is made their Head; then a people, not before known, with which He had not been in relation, as in Israel, shall serve Him. That is, Messiah is delivered from the strivings and revoltings of ungodly Jews-made the Head of the heathen. And then a people, hitherto strangers, should serve -Him -become now a people to Him. Submission will be immediate, so evident is His glory and power

now. And even when there is no sincerity, or, at least, proof of it, they will at once serve, bowing down to Him. This is millennial. Here Jehovah is again recognized.

We return, so to speak, to the original thesis of the psalm, having arrived with Israel, or the Jews at least, across all the difficulties of the way. I do not see the antichrist here. The only word which might seem to speak of him is in verse 48,-the man of violence; but I apprehend it is an enemy from without. Hence, He praises among the heathen. The destruction of -antichrist would make Him praise among the Jews. Here, it is to be remarked, though clothed with - strength by God, Christ is seen as the dependent man, and on earth whether suffering or victorious. We find Him, as we may have seen from the study of the details in verses 4-6, at the beginning of the psalm, in His sorrow and trial; and, though David be partly in scene, yet, substantially, Messiah again from verse 32. Between the two,, it is. Israel, first delivered as a nation, then in sorrow and calamity. Then the principles of God's government are stated, and the deliverance comes in. It is very interesting to see (after the person of Messiah has been introduced, and His association with the godly remnant shown), the whole public history of Israel dependent; from first to last, on His interest in them, His having entered into. their sorrows,-afflicted in all their afflictions.

We now come (it is just the same order of thought in the seventeenth chapter of John) to the testimonies given in the world or to Israel.

Psa. 19-The nineteenth Psalm gives us two; the creation, particularly that in the heavens which is above man and has not been corrupted by him. This is a testimony to God as such. Then the law. (v. 7.) This is the law of Jehovah. Here in lowliness, the godly Jew takes two views of sin. First, he cannot tell his, so much lies hidden from him. But here he desires to be cleansed. Secondly, presumptuous sins; from these he desires to be kept. Thus he would be kept from any falling away from Jehovah.

Psa. 20-In the twentieth Psalm we have, in the midst of sorrows and evil come-in in respect of the two preceding ones, the faithful witness---the living witness Himself. He is seen in the day of His distress, for He is come down into the midst of an ungodly Jehovah will hear His Anointed. Conscience then characterizes the remnant; truth people. The remnant is prophetically designated by the fact that they in heart enter into his distress, assured that in the inward parts in presence of the law, and taking that law spiritually: interest of heart in Messiah, when He is the despised and rejected of men: still we are in Israel, and the help is sought from the God of Israel, and still as dwelling amongst them, having His sanctuary there. In the sixteenth Psalm the Lord identified Himself with the remnant. Here they associate themselves in heart with Him thus suffering, and in His conflict here, though they may see but the outside of it, yet be assured of His acceptance with Jehovah. They look for His offerings being accepted, the desire of His heart and His counsels to be fulfilled, all His petitions accomplished; their joy is in the full deliverance of this blessed but dependent One. In the sixth verse we have the assurance of faith as to it, that from heaven itself Jehovah has heard, the mighty are fallen, the poor of the flock are raised up and maintained before Him. In the ninth verse, Messiah takes another place. While Jehovah -.had delivered Him as the dependent One in the day of His distress, the remnant now look to His hearing them when they call. Jehovah is still looked to as the Savior, but Messiah the King is invoked. They now know that the Anointed is exalted. No part of Scripture opens out the Person of Christ as the Psalms do, unless the two first chapters of Hebrews, which quote and serve as a key to them. Here Messiah

connected with the remnant is the dependent One, but exalted too as the King to be invoked of Israel. A little further on we shall find that He is Jehovah Himself. I see no reason to alter the text according to the Septuagint, followed by others such as the Latin. The Targum, and Syriac, and all Jewish interpretations read as it is read in English. The other reading is, Jehovah save the king-hear us, &c. Already in 21. Jehovah and the king are associated in judgment, as indeed we have seen they were already in Psa. 2 It is the very main point of instruction in the Psalms-the mystery of' the manifestation of Christ in flesh.

Psa. 21-In the twenty-first Psalm we get the full answer to the twentieth, and its desires, in the exaltation of Christ, throwing its light back on the true character of that Psalm. The king rejoices in Jehovah's strength and exults in deliverance through it. What this is is then unfolded. The faithful longing of the remnant was that Jehovah would grant the Suffering Messiah, according to his own heart, that He would fulfill his petitions. Now in the exaltation of Christ they can say,-the Spirit says for them,-Thou Jehovah hast given him His heart's desire, and not withholden the request of His lips. Nay, He was met by Jehovah's free and willing love towards Him, with the blessing of goodness, and was gloriously crowned by Him. But what had really passed and been ' done is more minutely revealed. He had asked life of Jehovah. (Comp. Heb. 5) He gave it Him, but it was length of days forever and ever, the abiding eternal life of the risen, glorified man. That was the answer to the cry of the suffering Messiah when death was before Him. And this is clearly seen in what follows. His glory is great in this deliverance by Jehovah's delight. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.

Jehovah has laid honor and majesty upon Him. He has made Him most blessed forever and glad with Jehovah's countenance. Such was the suffering Messiah's deliverance, the divine answer to His cry, His being glorified as the suffering man. It is not the wrath of God Which He is here viewed as undergoing; on the contrary, help is looked for from Jehovah when He is brought low. We have already seen the result of this. Judgment on his enemies. Man's enmity and devices are seen. Man's judgment follows. The king's right hand finds out all His enemies. Jehovah shall swallow them up. It is not his atoning sufferings which are seen here, but the mischievous devices of men.

Hence His sufferings do not bring peace; but judgment. We have here, then, Christ suffering and crying to Jehovah; Christ exalted as man crowned with glory and honor; Christ executing judgment on his enemies. In the three Psalms we have the witness of creation, the witness of law, and the Messiah's (the true and faithful witness) sufferings and exaltation-the true final witness of the righteous ways of God. This must be a revelation of all importance to the remnant in the latter day, for suffering or for assured deliverance. Christ has suffered as man from men and for faithfulness and judgment on men will be the consequence, meanwhile He is exalted on high. But He has suffered for sin from God.

Psa. 22-The facts connected with this last suffering are unfolded to us in the twenty-second Psalm, with its results also. The sufferings of Christ have another and deeper character here. We have before us that great work which is the foundation of all the blessing developed in the other psalms, and makes the interest He takes in the saints possible, because it makes it righteous, and the very way of glorifying God. This psalm, as it has been already observed to be a common principle of their structure, gives us the theme in the first verse. Christ had suffered from man-from men alike heartless and violent; dogs had compassed him, fat bulls of Bashan closed him in. But if the

measure of this was extreme, and felt more and otherwise than ordinary sufferings from men, because it was wholly unrighteous and for Jehovah's

Sake, for whose name He suffered reproach;-yet others had in some measure borne the suffering of heartless men, too, and for the Lord's sake. If He in grace was the leader and finisher of faith, others through grace had trodden-it was their granted privilege,- but His willing grace,-some steps of that divinely marked out path. But they trusted in Jehovah and they were delivered. Jehovah never left or forsook them. He had promised He would not. They knew in their consciences that He had never failed But one good or gracious thing which He had promised. But here was a suffering out of the reach of promise. Yea, which was to lay the ground of its righteous. accomplishment. It was a new scene, which none had ever been, ever will be, like, in the everlasting history of heaven and earth; which stands alone: The righteous One forsaken of God. It cannot be repeated a second time; it would have lost its character and destroy or deny the witness of the first-God perfectly glorified, morally glorified, about evil. - He has not, been if it has to be repeated. It is, once for all, complete, and perfect. The nature of God has been made good in, testimony, morally, in the universe. How should that be repeated? I say again, if it had to be-neither had done it; but it is done. The divine glory is perfectly, eternally made good. But in order to this in respect of good and evil,-that righteousness, and grace, or love in respect of evil, should be made good, - all that God was against evil must be verified and made good. Against whom? Who should endure it? Against the sinner it were everlasting misery; nor were love then displayed, nor what God is, manifested. But the Lord gives Himself for this, and He who was able to bear it, and, in the lowest humiliation of those he took up, to accomplish it in their nature-He bears in His soul all that God is against evil.. Tremendous moment! It is this alone which makes us in any way apprehend what righteousness and judgment are. This is what is shown to us-here. It is shown in the utterance of Christ, showing the fact and his sense of it. What it was in its depths no human heart can fathom. It is the fact which is given here but, as felt by Him. Yet we see the consciously righteous One, but the perfectly submissive One; the sense of His own nothingness as to His, position, and of the certain and immutable perfectness of Jehovah. He is righteous: He can say: why? Submissive: yet " thou continuest holy." No working of will, calling God's ways into question. The clear and perfect state thus which sees God's perfectness, come what will. For it was the one righteous One who had glorified God in all His ways, excepted from all God's ways in righteous grace with such. He is forsaken; cries, and is not heard'. He is a worm and no man. But this could not last forever, any more than He could be holden of death, having perfectly glorified God in going to the close of trial and awaiting His time. He who was the very delight of Jehovah all through, could not be heard; though more gloriously-and deservedly more gloriously-Jehovah's delight than any living righteousness, though ever so perfect, could claim to be. In that He had glorified God about good, perfect in His obedience as man, and perfect in manifesting His Father's name of grace, declaring what God was, cost what it might. The reproaches of those that reproached God fell on Him. But now He glorified God about evil. This, as we have seen, stands alone. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again.

And when the work is complete, the moral work of glorifying God, He is heard from the horns of the unicorn. Man was hidden by a darkened heaven from view, shut up into his own nothingness in that one hour, when all of God, and of the power, and powerlessness, of evil was brought to this divine issue, and God glorified about it. And all is between the soul of Him who is an offering for sin

and the righteous Jehovah. And it was closed. He was perfect; had secured the glory of God; had glorified Him when He could not be heard; and was heard and it Was finished. He goes down, indeed, into the grave, that trusty and irrefutable witness that all was closed of this great question of which death was the appointed witness, but only to rise without one element wanting to the proof that the work of propitiation and of glorifying God in respect of sin was completed, and the victory over every and the last enemy fully won. He was heard. Who could call it in question who knew that He was risen? And, now, what remained? Not sin; it was wholly and forever put away for those who had a part with him. Wrath-the cup had been drunk. Judgment against the sin, or of the sinner for it,-He had undergone it. The power of death upon the soul-it was overcome. Of Satan who wielded it-it was destroyed. But there was. the full light of the Father's countenance and love, the delight of God in divine righteousness, and for us. Into this relationship Jesus now entered as established there in righteousness on what He had accomplished to glorify His Father; not merely in the everlasting delight which God had in His person; hence it was immutable for those who had a part with Him in this place. For the place was won for sinners in the putting away of their sin, and founded on the righteousness of God Himself. Into the full blessedness of this name, that is, true relationship with God revealed according to it, He now entered as man.

But He had His brethren-those, at least, with whom He associated Himself and had at heart, first of all, after. His Father's glory. He was entered into this cloudless place of delight. What remained for His heart was to declare the name which expressed it, and which to know was being brought into it, to His brethren. " I will declare thy name unto my brethren." And this most precious witness of His love was exactly what He did after His resurrection. " Go tell my brethren, I go to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." Remark, He was heard from the horns of the unicorn. It was on the completing the work, or His subjection of soul to death as divine judgment, that He was heard. When the obedience unto death was complete, 'hearing became righteous and necessary. The resurrection was the proof to man. But He could say, " Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and deliver it up to Him, and assure the thief he should be that day with Him in paradise.

I have already remarked an infinitely important characteristic of this psalm, so opposed to those which speak of Christ suffering from man: I mean that all is grace. No word of judgment. Who was to be judged? When God had been the one to inflict the suffering and wrath, the hiding of whose face rather was the suffering, and the men who had a part in it had their sins put away by it. It was as to them the judgment, and the judgment was passed. Hence it was the wide out-spreading of wave beyond wave of blessing and naught else. We may remark here, however, that this blessing here is all on earth; so much does the Lord confine Himself to Israel and the Jews in the Psalms. And though we have seen His own resurrection, and we shall His ascension brought in, and the path of life thus opened up to faith into the presence of God Himself; yet the heavenly place for the saints is not unfolded.. We know well that the truths on which the blessing is based carry us farther; but the psalm does not speak of them. " In the midst of the congregation will I sing to thee." The remnant then gathered is the first circle gathered into the place of praise; then millennial blessing-all Israel. Those that fear the Lord are to praise Him. Men fear the Lord, and only fear; but this work makes those that fear praise. Those that feared Jehovah in that day and suffered might take Courage, for Christ was their warrant for deliverance and confidence (and could be, having made atonement), but for positive deliverance also; for Jehovah had not turned a deaf ear to the affliction of the afflicted, nor hid His face from him. When he cried, Jehovah heard. He had been

for a time there: that had only wrought atonement.. And now, heard when that was accomplished, he could assure others of deliverance also. The meek of the earth should now eat and be satisfied, and be at peace. But the blessing would not limit itself to Israel. All the ends of the world would remember themselves, and turn to Jehovah, and worship before Him; for the kingdom will then be the Lord's. All should bow before Him. Nor was it confined to that generation; to the people that should be born those -should declare that the Lord had done this.

I cannot, in explaining the Psalms, meditate on the wonderful work on which this psalm is founded. I say founded-, because the psalm speaks -directly of the feelings of Christ under it, rather than of the work itself. I can only desire that this constant and exhaustless theme of the saint may have all the power on my reader's soul, as upon my own, that poor human beings, even by the power of the Holy Ghost, can be capable of. Our comfort as to peace is, that God (as, indeed, His love gave it) estimates it fully; and, while He has glorified Jesus, has Himself accepted that work for our peace. My part here is to unfold, as well as I can, the structure of the psalm itself. As to the outward sufferings, the reader will remark how deep they were. But Christ alone of all the righteous must undergo forsaking of God; and, having often declared His confidence in, and intimacy with, Jehovah; and taught His disciples to trust in Him, as ever hearing prayer, has publicly now to proclaim that He is not heard but forsaken. What a tale. t tells of what that hour was! But what is important is, as has been already remarked, that His sufferings from man bring judgment on His enemies. His forsaking of God, being expiatory, is a bearing of the judgment, and all that flows from it is unmingled grace. This work being expiatory-once heard from the horns of the unicorn, all is grace. A stream of grace flows out for the remnant, then for Israel, for the world, for the generation to come; all from the sure and divinely perfect work of atonement in the death of Christ. In the work, in the suffering, He was alone. Once that was finished, He takes His place in the congregation with which he surrounds Himself. Remark how perfect must. Christ's knowledge of, and consequent joy be in, the name of God and Father, into the enjoyment of which He entered as man, consequent upon having put away sin, and the delight of God in Him and His work. All that God was against Him then, for Him, according to the virtue of this work now. How well He must know what the deliverance out of His sufferings on the cross into this light is. Now this is the source of His praise. Such must be the character of ours, founded in the blessed certainty of being come out of the place of sin, death, and judgment, into the perfectness of divine power. All that is not thus in the spirit of it, is out of tune with Him who leads Our praises.

(Psa. 23;24)-The twenty-third and the twenty-fourth Psalms, go in a certain sense by themselves, giving the perfect confidence in the Shepherd, Jehovah, founded on the experience of what He is in all circumstances; and, secondly, the character of those who would have a part with Jacob; the two principles we have seen brought out as to Christ in the sixteenth and seventeenth psalms (and shown in many others); confidence in the faithfulness of Jehovah, and the practical righteousness which characterizes those who will stand in Jehovah's holy place in the time of His millennial glory. But Jehovah Himself takes His place there as King of glory. This gives us the divine side in all its perfectness of the principle of the path and the result in glory-glory on earth both as to the remnant, Christ, and Jehovah, with the blessed witness that on one side He took a place and part with the remnant in their divinely given path, and on the other with Jehovah, for He was really a man, but really Jehovah. But we must see them a little closer.

Psa. 23-The comfort of the twenty-third Psalm is not in what Jehovah gives, but in Himself. He does-it is the natural fruit of His grace at all times and will be the result, make us to lie down in green pastures and leads us beside the waters of peace. Pleasant food where there, can be no drought, security in enjoying it, and guidance in divine refreshings in peace. Such is the portion given by His shepherd care; but still Himself is that which gives confidence and takes away care. Evil is come we have to feel it-we in ourselves, Christ in all that was around Him so that He could be full of sorrow and troubled-we, alas! more than that. The Good Shepherd (and Christ is such for us) restores the soul, and leads us in paths of righteousness, for His name's sake. The blessing depends on what He is, not on what 'we have got.. I have blessing indeed, and learn it in green pastures; but if troubled or gone astray, He restores. But not only sorrow and evil had. come in with sin, but death too. Then He comes and leads me through it, and comforts me. But there are enemies to meet. I have a table spread, on which I feast in their very presence. And how comforting this is to the Christian also. Hence, as it is Jehovah Himself, and not our circumstances, we have to depend on, I can say, Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over." When I have contemplated all the pains and difficulties of this way, I have Jehovah more distinctly for me than even in the green pastures. He is more distinctly Himself the blessing: Hence I can count on it forever, for He changes not. Experienced in the past, in Himself, I can reckon on it in the future and at all times. The end of the Lord's leadings will be to dwell with Him forever. The blessing is less apparent, but much deeper and more personal, at the close; and, as we have said, resting in Jehovah, known in all circumstances, not in the blessing it was natural to Him to give. An exercised soul thus has, in result, a far deeper blessing than a blessed one. So the result for Israel-still more for us-is more than the green pastures, in which, originally, Jehovah set him. It is the deep knowledge of a tried heart in the -faithfulness of Jehovah; and thus, according to the blessing of His own nature, the rest will be His rest (Heb. 4:1). The green pastures were suited to sheep; but the anointed head, and the cup, running. over, and the house of the Lord forever, were what suited Him who dwelt there.

Psa. 24-Such is the result for the remnant of trusting Jehovah, when the, green pastures are for the time, at any rate, lost. Such will follow the Lamb. For us, Christ is 'the Shepherd. We suffer with Him, and we have yet better blessing. The Shepherd's care is there, meanwhile, under another form. The twenty-fourth gives, as we have seen, the other part of the condition of the remnant as to the good that is working in them-What grace produced in them. Jehovah was the Shepherd by the way. At the end, the earth. and the fullness of it are His-the world and those who dwell therein. Heaven does not directly enter into the scene on the road, nor at the end of it; but Jehovah has a special place, a hill more especially His ' own, in the earth. Who shall ascend into it? We then get their character -clean hands, a pure heart. No idol-following heart-no false oath with his neighbor. Such shall be blessed. That is the generation, the real character of those who seek Jacob; for in Jacob is God's seat. They seek Jacob as the blessed people of the Lord; but, if such ascend into the holy hill, and enter into the holy place, the crowning blessing is, that Jehovah Himself. enters in at the unfolded gates to dwell there. The victorious Lord, the Lord of hosts, enters in. It is Christ Himself who took the place of His sheep to go before them, and has the place of Jehovah, as that which is His by right, and in which He is owned when the fullness of blessing comes in and is revealed. This closes the development of Christ's place in connection with the remnant, first formally entered upon in the sixteenth Psalm. We have now to go through the position of the remnant on a new ground and a different footing.

Psa. 25-Christ has been introduced not, indeed, yet in glory, but associating Himself with the remnant and suffering even unto death for them. Hence their whole case can be prophetically gone into. And here, for the first time, we meet the confession of sins. It is not merely position. That we had from Psa. 3, to 7,, nor the sense of circumstances which 11. To 15. gave, founded on ix. And 10., but the whole case of the remnant, as they will feel, entered into. The first word characterizes them: Unto Thee, O Jehovah, will I lift up my soul. The godly man. expresses his trust in his God, and prays that he may not be ashamed. The remnant are distinguished in ver. 3. There is the desire to be shown Jehovah's ways, to be taught in His truth, for He was the God of their salvation; they always waited on Him. Next, ver. 6, he casts himself on what God is in mercy, as He had shown Himself; and pleads that He may not remember Israel's past sins, but Himself, according to His mercy. He knows Jehovah, that He is good and upright, and will, therefore, teach sinners in the Way. This is an all-important point. Next, we get the present character of the remnant: they are the meek of the earth; these Jehovah would guide in judgment. All Jehovah's ways were mercy towards such; and faithful-ness to promises and righteousness. infallibly marked them. In it we have the fullest confession by the godly man of his own sin, not merely the former sins of Israel,

He looks only for mercy, his sin is so great, and finds his hope on Jehovah's name.. This is exceedingly beautiful. Jehovah's name, as revealed in Israel, had, in the previous verses of this psalm, been fully entered into; His ways of mercy and truth in Israel. The answer to this cry, in the effectual work of Christ, though testified of in the prophets, and forming in God's sight the groundwork of all, is not, I apprehend, at this time, known by the godly remnant, nor till they look on Him whom they have pierced; but they have the ways of God, His promises, and the abundant declarations and invitations, yea, pleadings of Jehovah in the prophets; that if their sins had been as scarlet they should be as white as snow. All this revelation was Jehovah's name to them; and to this they look, something in the state, though not exactly, of the poor woman in the city that was a sinner before she received the Lord's answer of peace. In 12-14 we get the prophetic answer of the spirit in hope; 15-21 the meek one. He lays his whole case before the Lord. The great result and true application is seen in the last verse. This psalm lays the whole case of the remnant before Jehovah in the expression to Him of a heart attracted and taught by grace. It is a very full and distinct expression of their place and pleadings before Him. Some very definite points are brought out. The confession of Israel's final sins, the confession of his own by him who speaks. Mercy is looked to as the only resource. Yet from so gracious a God they can count on His teaching sinners. But these sinners are the meek of the earth who are to inherit it. Integrity of heart characterizes them, and they trust in and wait for Jehovah. Compare with this the incomparable picture of the remnant in the beginning of Luke. The psalm is both beautiful and very fully characteristic.

Psa. 26- The twenty-sixth Psalm is especially the pleading of integrity and trust in Jehovah. Having trusted Him, the godly would surely not slide. He invites Jehovah to search his inmost. heart, as Peter did, even though fallen.

Here, still, the goodness of Jehovah was his first motive. Then the separation of the godly from the-ungodly body. of the nation is fully brought out and taken as a plea that they might not have their souls gathered with the ungodly. Still, though integrity was pleaded, redemption is sought, and mercy. The end would be blessing. Their foot stood in an even place. They would, in the full

assembly, bless Jehovah. This is substantially the entire separation of the ungodly from the nation, and the former becoming the congregation of God.

Thus, in these last two Psalms, we have the confession of sins and the pleading of integrity, both marking the real renewal of mind. Though the possibility of government, in forgiveness and mercy, is founded on the atonement which has been presented in Psa. 22, and is owned fully in Isa. 53 by Israel, subsequent to the period of these Psalms; yet the aspect in which all is viewed by the remnant in these two psalms' is the known character and government of Jehovah in Israel; and the feelings of a renewed heart are expressed in reference to that government-to Jehovah's ways. His name is the key to their thoughts, and awakens their best and truest affections. It is the faith of a godly Israelite in the last days. The moral state of the remnant is especially brought out in all this part, and more. especially their own with Jehovah, and circumstances comparatively little, though the enemies without and the transgressors

around, form necessarily the occasion of those transgressors in respect of deliverance and redemption. The heart of the godly one has the key to all Israel's history and Jehovah's dealings with them, because grace is looked to and sin confessed. This it is that ever gives understanding. And so it is here. Jehovah's ways have been, are, perfect. He is called upon to remember his own mercies, and not the early sins of His people. The enemies of His people are presented to Him. The hope of forgiveness is founded on Jehovah's name; (it is, as we have seen, connected with His government; they have not yet looked on Christ, and understood atonement;) the faithful looks to be guided in the way, and Jehovah's faithfulness to him reckoned on. His sins, sorrows, and enemies are all presented to Him, with an open heart. Covenant mercies can be seen, because Jehovah is looked to, in truth, by an upright confessing sinner.

Psa. 27-In the twenty-seventh Psalm, we have two distinct parts, and, I apprehend, then, in the last two verses, the result for the mind of the saint as taught of God. The first part (verses 1-6), is the confidence of the believer, and that absolutely, whatever enemies there were. In the second part (5. 7-12), we find the cry of distress. In the former, singleness of eye lays the ground of confidence; in the second, the call of Jehovah to seek His face. Enemies without or oppressors within,(for the remnant of the Jews will find both against them), a host and war arising awake no fear. Jehovah is the light and salvation of the soul; its only desire, dwelling in the house of the Lord, to see His beauty and inquire in His temple. The godly man had known Him casting confusion on the enemies of the faithful. He sought him as the desire of his heart. In the time of trouble He would hide him, and the assault of foes would only be the occasion of lifting up his head above them, and then he would offer sacrifices of joy. From the seventh verse things are otherwise. It is not his state, as thinking of the Lord in faith; the distress is there, and he cries. Here he appeals, not to his integrity, but that Jehovah had said, " Seek my face! Was He going after that to turn it away? He looks to be guided in a straight path. There is integrity, but he looks to the call of God. Finally, he looks for, and trusts Jehovah for temporal deliverance in the land of the living; meanwhile he must wait on Him. He would interfere in the right time; He would strengthen the heart meanwhile. It is an additional and instructive picture of the state of the faithful remnant.. Their abstract confidence and their ground of hope in distress when Jehovah must be waited for.

Psa. 28-In the twenty-eighth Psalm, the godly Jew pleads, in the time of trouble come on the nation, that he may not-be confounded with the Wicked.- If the Lord did not appear in his behalf,

so much was he in the same distress with them, death would drag him into its jaws. He looks for judgment on the wicked. They slight Jehovah. Jehovah should reward their doings. The Psalm furnishes to the remnant not only the cry but the prophetic witness that the Lord has heard it. The heart trusts in Jehovah, had found help, and thus joy and praise. Then Messiah is fully joined with the righteous. Jehovah is their strength. He is Messiah's. This once settled, the prophetic desire of the godly, according to the spirit of Christ, expresses itself that Jehovah should save His people and bless His inheritance; for the faith of covenant blessing and relationship runs all through this part of the psalms, that He should also feed them and lift them up forever. Deliverance, blessing, feeding, and unaltered exaltation, such are the fruits looked for of Jehovah's coming-in in power.

(Psa. 25-28)-In the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth Psalms, we have seen the great moral principles of trust in Jehovah (even when confessing sins). and integrity. In the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth, we have more the personal sense of condition, and way or ground of relationship with God, beautifully shown in the first part of the twenty-seventh, in the one desire of the heart; and in the second part, in the touching plea, Thou taughtest me to seek Thy face; my heart, in those times of divine instruction, said, I will seek it: Lord.-wilt Thou turn it away now that I, am in trouble, when Thou taughtest me to seek and trust it? The truth is the same, but in the first part it is the one moral desire of the heart; in the last, the exhortation of God to do it becomes a resource to the soul: Jehovah Himself is their refuge, and has taught them to look for it. In the twenty-eighth psalm the pressure of evil is more felt, and coming judgment and the separation of the remnant looked for. This separation characterizes the whole testimony of God connected with the coming of Messiah, a circumstance which will aid us in seeing the unity of the remnant in the mind of God. Not only was it prophetically announced, as in Isa. 65, but John the Baptist characterizes the coming of Messiah by it, their being children of Abraham being of no avail. (Matt. 3:9); as, indeed, this separation of the remnant spiritually took place; only that, He being rejected and not yet coming in - power, they were then added as the $\sigma\omega, \zeta\omicron\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ to the assembly. For that, however, Peter takes it up (Acts 2:40.) The Lord Himself receives them as His sheep. (John 10) Paul rests his argument in Rom. 11 upon it, too.

. Psa. 29-The twenty-ninth Psalm. summons the mighty to hear the mightier voice of Jehovah, to own Him and worship before Him, according to the holy order of His house, celebrating the power of His voice in universal creation; but there is a place of intelligent Worship where His glory is understood-His temple where men are to come. But this Jehovah is above the haughty raging of the surges of created strength: He sits king forever above and in spite of all. And He, this mighty Jehovah, will give strength to His people and bless them with peace. It is a positive encouragement for the faithful; not their complaint or appeal, but a testimony for them to encourage their hearts in presence of the mighty. He that cares for them is mightier than they.

Psa. 30-In the thirtieth Psalm we have the contrast between trust in prosperity-even in that given of God, and in God Himself: He has come in and lifted up the poor, and not left him to his foes. His favor is life. If angry, it is but for a little moment, and for the good of His saints: the favor is forever. In the morning it is light, if heaviness endure for a night. He may let them down as to the grave's mouth, hut only to show His power in infallible deliverance. He, the godly man Israel themselves, as a people,-had trusted in given prosperity. Now, in the depth of adversity, he has found Jehovah in deliverance.. The power of evil overcome is better than good we may lose. It is security and in the blessing and arms of Jehovah for us; for He is the Deliverer. °We see plainly here that it is a

living people to be blessed on earth. (Vers. 3-9.) And though there may be analogous mercies in all times, to apply it to the saints now would be a dangerous mistake. It speaks of temporal deliverance for peace in this world. (Compare Isa. 64:7,8.) No mountain, even if we own it to be made strong by Jehovah, is like Jehovah

Himself even "if I am at the pit's mouth. It is my mountain for my heart when I think of it.

Psa. 31-The thirty-first Psalm is a proof how Jesus could use devout and holy expressions of a psalm and, indeed, pass through all in spirit, without its having a literal application to Him. Here is found the expression He used: "Into thy hand I commend my spirit"-which was in the fullest sense true. But the psalm continues, " For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth"-He added, " Father." Yet I doubt not that His Spirit had got into the comfort of divine light again. Still, the words, " Thou hast redeemed me," cannot apply to Him. So the whole complaint of the psalm is, besides David, the complaint and confidence of the remnant-connecting the two principles, trust and righteousness, and looking for guidance for Jehovah's name's sake, and deliverance when surrounded by enemies. The godly had called on Jehovah. His name was in question. On His goodness laid up for them that trusted in Him, he counted-and this in the midst of a life spent in sighing. Distress pressed upon him, and drank up his strength. Yet, tried for faithfulness, friends and acquaintance fled from him. Such will be the condition of the remnant. now truly Christ entered into it, I need not say. But the time of deliverance, and of all that in any time the saint should be under and pass through, weir in God's hand-not the enemy's, though he might rage. And in the adversities, Jehovah knew his soul, for He walks in the knowledge of covenant-relationship. The presence of Lord was a tabernacle and a hiding-place. In the pressure of his spirit, the godly thought himself cast off; but when he cried, Jehovah heard. In all the rage around (verses 14, 15), he cried to Jehovah as his God. The result he now celebrates, and encourages the saints in the two last verses, and all that hope in Jehovah.. 'Whatever sorrows they are in, Jehovah helps the faithful and judges the proud.

This, in a certain sense, closes and sums up the experimental expression of the Spirit of the state of the remnant, and fully unfolds it.

Psa. 32-39-In the psalm that follows, (viz., thee thirty second) forgiveness in grace is spoken of. Then there is a clearer apprehension and more objective confidence and judgment of all around, till we come to the thirty-eighth and the thirty-ninth; which have a peculiar character of their own. Of course deliverance is not yet come; but the sentiment expressed is become more that of favor in light than confidence out of the depths. How fully the thirty-first Psalm is the expression of the Spirit of Christ must be obvious to every divinely taught reader. Yet his own relationship was different. He was Son, and commends His Spirit to His Father in death, not to Jehovah, to save Him from it; and, as we have seen in the, preface, prays for His enemies who crucified Him, instead of demanding vengeance upon them. This demand of His Spirit in the, remnant is according to His mind in that day. In Him personally it must have been otherwise; for He came in grace, and was giving His life a ransom for Israel and for many. Hence He passed through all in perfection with His Father. in Gethsemane, and gives Himself up then, as being His will, to death. Yet, as to the sorrow and trial, He went through all. And the prophetic Spirit in the Psalms expresses in these denunciatory words what will certainly be accomplished as the consequence of the wicked enmity of the Jews and heathens, too, at the close; and will become living demands in

the mouth of the remnant, whose only and necessary deliverance these judgments will be. Christ did ask life, and it was given in resurrection and glory, as Psa. 21 shows; but not, as we know, in His being spared here. The path of life led for Him through death in the accomplishment of redemption, though He could not be holden of it. Thus, in spirit, He entered into all their affliction. The literal application in the writer's mind was to his own feelings; the prophetic is to the godly remnant in the latter day. The word translated " iniquity," in Psa. 31 verse 10, should, I doubt not, be " distress." But the fullness of the various motives and feelings brought together in this psalm require a further brief notice. I have already remarked how the two grounds, so frequently found, of the appeal of the saint's trust in God, and righteousness as

the motive and ground of it are both brought together here. The name's sake of Jehovah is also added here (ver. 3). In verse 6 we have His utter rejection of the followers of idolatrous vanities. In verse 7, Jehovah's goodness is recognized as mercy. He has known the soul of the believer in adversities (ver. 8)-a sweet thought, how dark so ever all may have been. And deliverance was granted. He pleads His extreme present distress (ver. 9). The first eight verses are a kind of preface of general principles; now it is the pressure of His present state. He was a reproach to enemies, specially to neighbors-a fear to His acquaintance; so mean, despised, and yet hated and rejected, was He. It is the portion of a divine character, of God himself, to be both. Man neglects a despised person; but he never does God, or what is of Him. They will bring Him low if He puts Himself low, or those that are His; but will fear and hate Him too. He is forgotten, yet slandered, and the active enemy plotting against His life. Thus 9-13 give the condition which the Spirit of Christ, or Christ himself, holds in the world. It is a most striking picture in ver. 14. He trusts in Jehovah. All that is to befall Him is, after all, in His hand. Another motive now is pleaded. He has called on Jehovah. It is the lying lips which should be put to silence (ver. 18). Confidence in goodness laid up for them is there, and the hiding in God's presence for the time of evil. (Ver. 19-21). Verse 22 celebrates the faithfulness of Jehovah. Verses 23, 24, encourage the saints by it. Thus, with the extremest distress, all the pleas of the faithful are beautifully brought together here. All these past psalms have been the feelings of Israel under the pressure of distress, and sought deliverance from it. And this Israel will do.

Psa. 32-Now we have what He wants still more-the forgiveness of sins. The pressure of affliction turns him to God's law, but to the consciousness of having broken it. Righteousness in that sense he could not plead: forgiveness was his need, and that Jehovah should not impute the iniquity he had and was brought to acknowledge. Long he had striven against this; but Jehovah gave him no rest. But he confesses sin, and

guile is gone from his heart. Impossible till then. We are hiding iniquity in it. Forgiveness in grace draws the godly man to God. In the water-floods they do not come nigh him. Jehovah is the hiding place of the soul-preserves, blesses, guide's. Only they are warned to be intelligent through obedience, and not to be without understanding, so that God must guide by providential power.

Remark here that while forgiveness is celebrated, and the remnant will deeply need it, yet the great distinctive truth which separates them from the mass of the people is kept up distinctly-trust, righteousness, and integrity of heart. To the wicked there are sorrows. In principle, such a psalm, blessed be God! has the widest application. For the remnant it is prophetic to induce truth in the inward parts, and encourage them by goodness to that confession in which alone God can

bless-as is ever the case. For forgiveness and no guile go together. They will only know full acceptance when they look upon Him whom they have pierced, who comes as Jehovah to deliver. But let us lay to heart the great principle of this psalm. Full, absolute forgiveness, the not imputing sin at all, is what takes guile from the heart. Else we flee from God, excuse, palliate, if we dare not justify. Where full pardon is before us, we have courage to be true in heart. Who will not declare all his debts when their discharge by another is the only thing in question? Who not tell his malady for a certain cure? Grace brings truth into the heart brought to confess his transgressions. He finds all the burden of his sin gone. The humble and godly are encouraged to draw near to a God thus known. " There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mightest be feared." The psalm will encourage the remnant thus to true confession. When possessed, they will enter into full blessing. We thus see how it is a prophetic preparation and school for them, drawing out before them what will not all be accomplished when they are thus brought to look to Jehovah. Hence these psalms speak of Jehovah's character as it has been proved with the inspired composers in principle, often in letter with Christ, in order to draw out their confidence in the day of distress, and-to comfort every uneasy soul. Thus the celebration of complete deliverance is mixed with the cry for it, because it is prophetic and has had fulfillments. The thirty-third has its just place after the forgiveness of the people. Before we pass on to these psalms, remark how the guilelessness of heart produced by complete forgiveness leads to that intimacy with God which gives to us to be guided by His eye. We have His mind with Himself, and that in the perfectness of His own nature, in which He reveals it.

Forgiveness leads to full blessing.

Psa. 33-In the thirty-third Psalm the full result of deliverance is celebrated. The upright are called on to rejoice. Jehovah's character, His word, and works, are made manifest, and the earth now full of His goodness. He is the glorious Creator-the earth is to fear Him-all man's devices and counsels come to nothing before Him-His counsel stands. Blessed the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people He has chosen for His inheritance. It is Jehovah who has looked down on men and disposed of all; but His eye is on them that fear Him and hope in His mercy. Thus the great result of the intervention of Jehovah is brought before the faith of the remnant, chaunted as if all was come. The last three verses show the confidence this produces in them.

Psa. 34-The sure government of God enables faith to bless at all times.. He has proved his faithfulness to them that were in distress. The psalmist, Christ in Spirit, calls on the remnant to praise, for Jehovah has manifested His deliverance in his case. The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous and His ear open to their prayers. His face set against them that do evil and to cut them off from the earth. (17-19). The broken heart, the afflicted and the contrite, to such Jehovah is nigh. The righteous must look for suffering while man has his day, but Jehovah delivers him; while evil slays the wicked, Jehovah redeems the soul of His servant, and none that trust Him shall be desolate. It is the full assurance of the government of Jehovah, in favor of the humble in heart. This enables to bless not only when they are blessed, that is not faith, but at all times, for they are heard, preserved, redeemed, when they are in trouble. Christ is the great example of this. I doubt He speaks personally, though He does in Spirit, in the beginning. The faith of the remnant takes his case up as an encouragement in verse 6. The 20th was accomplished also literally in Him. It is the secret of faith alone, the test of it, to bless at all times. Peter applies this psalm to the constant principles of the government of God. This is the first psalm in which we have found the

interlocutory character, which sometimes occurs (as in 91. And 145.), though doubtless the psalmist's experience, who again speaks in ver. 11. Yet, I apprehend, it is Christ in Spirit who opens out God's ways in this psalm. O magnify with me. I sought the Lord. It is the fullest encouragement to the humble righteous.

Psa. 35-The thirty-fifth is an urgent appeal for the judgment of Jehovah against relentless and insidious persecutors who seek after the soul of the righteous. Insult, craft, violence, all were used against him. They pretended to have found him out. Deliverance is sought, that Jehovah may be praised in the great congregation; that is, the full assembly of restored Israel. Verses 13 and 14, we see the grace in which the godly (Christ Himself) dealt with these enemies. Though generally true of the godly, Christ specially comes in here in spirit.

Psa. 36-In this Psalm, we have a needed warning as to the wicked, particularly the enemies of righteousness, the instruments of Satan's power. There is no conscience to be expected. Nothing that will stop them in their evil plans. The power and goodness of Jehovah is the sure refuge of those that trust in Him. In result the wicked are cast down.

Psa. 37-In this interesting Psalm, the great point pressed on the remnant, a lesson for every soul, is waiting on the Lord, and not having the spirit disturbed by evil; they will soon be cut down like grass. They are not to fret themselves, but trust in Jehovah and do good; to delight in Him, they will have their desires; to commit their way to Him, He will justify them; to rest in Him and wait patiently for Him, the Lord will soon interfere, the wicked doers will be cut off; and the meek inherit the land. The other character of the remnant is also largely unfolded:-the righteous man, from ver. 12 onward; Jehovah does not forsake His saints, they are preserved; the righteous shall inherit the land. The final word is, Wait on the Lord and keep His way. The righteous suffer but are not forsaken; the ungodly are in great prosperity, and soon their place knows them no more. How this, as to the righteous, points to the deep character of the suffering of One who was forsaken, though the perfection of righteousness. This Psalm also helps to show the connection between the disciples and this remnant. (See Matt. 5:5.) Yet, to show the difference, the Son was there. They could suffer for His name; this brought in heaven. (Matt. 5:12.) He could reveal the Father, which He does in that discourse. The light goes out to the world, as well as being the salt of the earth. Details of grace also, of which the latter day remnant know nothing, are brought in, because of this revelation of the Father, who acts in grace. Still, de facto, it is the same remnant.

(Psa. 38 and 39.)-These two Psalms have, as I have said, a distinct and peculiar character. The deliverance has been sought and looked for by the upright, and forgiveness of sins granted for blessing. But in these Psalms the governmental rebuking for sins lies on the remnant; there is the sense of why they suffer from the divine hand. In Psa. 6 the chastening in anger was deprecated as a part of the sorrow that might belong to their position, but here (Psa. 38) they are under full chastening for sin; the rod has reached the flock outwardly, their soul inwardly. When I say they-it is individual, but still the remnant. Friends shrank from such a case; enemies, without compassion, plot against his life. Still he is before Jehovah, and all his desire and groaning. He is true in heart with God, and owns Him; is silent with man. The arrows are, for his soul -Jehovah's; and to Jehovah he turns. This is all right. (See vers. 13-16.) He will bow under it. His enemies are busy and strong. But though Jehovah smite, he trusts Him; because the smiting is owned by the humble soul be righteous. But he can look to deliverance from his enemies. They were glad he slipped,

and rejoiced over him. But he declares and owns his sin. No excuse-no hiding in his soul from God. His cry is to Him for speedy help. It is a beautiful Psalm as to the state of soul; for the Spirit provides for every case-the failure of the upright, which, may call down severe chastening, and cause joy to the wicked. But he accepts the punishment of his iniquity, and places himself openly before God, owning his sin, but looking to him against the wicked. However sad such a case may be, nothing more shows truth before God and confidence in Him. How confess one's sin, and look for help from God, when we have been unfaithful-He dishonored, and the enemy triumphing in it? No excuse, no attempt to hide. None. He owns all, and casts himself on God. The picture of the remnant would not have been complete without this, nor the gracious instruction for every soul at every time.

The question then arises, how far does the Spirit of Christ enter into it? Fully, I believe, though, of course, He never could have been personally there. No doubt it arose from some deep chastening of the writer-a chastening which was openly manifested. Such cases may, in 'the full extent, arise among the remnant. The principle is of universal application. Christ, of course, could have nothing to be chastened for; but having the full bearing of sin before Him, and meeting, in His path, all the sorrow which will beset the people, He can enter, though the green tree, into the judgment which will come upon the dry. He could not say what is said here; but He can perfectly sympathize with those who have to say it. He has provided the words which will express it by His Spirit in their hearts. Had He not suffered the full anger for these very iniquities which press on their consciences, and from which, in its full extent as wrath, they escape, it would not have been merely needed chastening in which they plead with Jehovah. Hence He can more than feel it when it has that character. And in all the sorrow of the circumstances, He has borne the largest part.

Psa. 39-In this Psalm, the godly man is still under the stroke of God; but there is more the sense of the emptiness of all flesh under the hand of God than disgrace and shame and fear. He bows before God rather than let his spirit rise and speaking foolishly with his ' tongue. He might have retorted, been fretted to do evil; but restraint, when under the hand of God, was his fitting place. It is ever so. He refrains even from good; and sorrow is stirred up in him. In beautiful language he shows this. At last his heart bursts forth; but it is to present to God the nothingness of which the sense was thus matured. He desires to know his days. How little he is! He sees all vanity; but he sees his own transgression and sin in the presence of One whose rebuke consumes the beauty of a man as a moth. To Jehovah he looks for deliverance. His stroke is what he cares for. He trusts Him not to make him the reproach of the foolish. There is great beauty in vanity finding its level in self-annihilation, and then God trusted in to deliver from the pride of men. He has to say to our transgressions. Here the moral history of the remnant closes, as in connection, on covenant ground, with Jehovah; that is, as employing His name, as connected with Him. Hence we have much of Christ personally in the Psalms of this first book. His taking the place in which He should be associated with them, according to 1 the counsels of God, is stated in the next Psalm. The understanding of this place is then showed to be the really blessed one.

Psa. 40-In the fortieth Psalm, then, Christ is seen, not only in His passage through the sorrows which beset His way, if He took up the cause of the disobedient and guilty people of His love-sorrows which gave. Him the tongue of the learned, and enabled Him to enter into those of the tried and spared ones in the latter days, and give a voice to their cry suited to their condition

before God; but there is seen primarily the deliverance in which, having waited on Jehovah in them, Jehovah's faithfulness was proved, so that He came out from them for the encouragement of many, and then the blessed key to His whole history in His having undertaken to do the will of Jehovah, the whole Jewish system under the law being thus closed and set aside. He has been perfectly faithful to Jehovah in the face of the whole congregation of Israel, yet is in the deepest sorrow and trial. So the Psalm closes, and it is important it should, because the thesis of it is complete deliverance. Hence, the application of this very deliverance to the sorrows of Christ, which were analogous to that of the remnant, is most precious for the remnant when they are in them. But this principle is brought out in a very distinct way in the Psalm, and makes it one of the most remarkable in this wonderful book. It brings out the connection of Christ with Israel in the remnant in the most striking way possible; lays it down as a foundation for the whole teaching of the Psalms, though the circumstances are altered after the forty-first. That Christ is personally spoken of in it I need hardly say, as the apostle quotes it as His words, undertaking that blessed work by which figures and symbols were set aside and which has perfected, as he tells us, the believer forever. Lo, I come, is the word of the Son's free offering of Himself to accomplish the whole will of God in His work here below, according to the everlasting counsels of the Godhead. It is the blessed Lord's undertaking the work. His work was to obey; but He in perfect free voluntariness offers Himself for it, in the delight of willingly undertaken obedience. In the great congregation of Israel, in pursuing his service to Jehovah, he had not shrunk, whatever reception he met with, from preaching righteousness; had not refrained his lips; he had been faithful to his service at all cost, and it was Jehovah he thus proclaimed. His righteousness, His faithfulness, His salvation, His lovingkindness, and His truth, He had not refrained from declaring before the whole body of Israel. Such had been his service. Then, all changes with this faithful One; for innumerable evils have compassed him about. He looks for Jehovah's lovingkindness and truth, to whom he had been faithful. Nor is it all that evils had compassed him, that men sought after his soul to destroy it-" Mine iniquities have taken hold on me," he says, " so that I am not able to look up." Of course, with Christ they were those of others-of all the redeemed, and also particularly of Israel viewed as a nation. In this state, he desires that those that seek Jehovah may be able to praise, to say continually, Let Jehovah be magnified; and that the others may be ashamed and confounded. He separates the godly remnant who seek Jehovah from those who, when He is faithfully and lovingly presented, are enemies to him who manifests His name. Thus Christ closes His experience in this world, poor and needy, yet assured that the Lord thinks upon him.

He is not forsaken in what is presented here, but comes into that place through a life of faithfulness, in which He was to undergo that dreadful moment. It is the cry when, so to speak, he confesses the sins before the victim is consumed or slain. He is in the deep sorrow of the position crying to Jehovah, not in the wrath shown in the time of his not being heard. The psalm depicts not that wrath, but the faithfulness of Christ in waiting for Jehovah when in the sorrow, rather than seek ease, or have twelve legions of angels, or drink the stupefying myrrh, or shrink back from suffering the will of God, any more than he did from facing man when he preached it. He waited patiently for Jehovah, and He inclined unto him and heard his cry. This was his perfection. No outlet sought from obedience, no shrinking, no turning back or aside. He waited for Jehovah's time in the, path of perfect obedience, and it came. The time, as said of Joseph, came that his cause was known. It is not said here how or when. The object of the Spirit here was to show to the tried ones that one had gone before them in the path of sorrow and had been heard. We can say that it

was fully in resurrection, but even on the cross the dark hour was passed, and with a loud voice He could commend his own Spirit to His Father; and His mother to His beloved disciple. But these are details history has given us, not prophecy; they would not have been available for the remnant. They want to know that they will be heard when waiting patiently for Jehovah. If killed, the answer will be for them in resurrection; if not, to have Israel's place in blessing, I doubt not, with the Lamb on Mount Zion, as having gone through, however feebly or infirmly, like trials and sorrows, in faithfulness to Jehovah in the great congregation. Do their iniquities alarm them, they are not left out. They do not yet know atonement, but they know that One who could say, Mine iniquities have taken hold of me, waited patiently, was heard and delivered. They wait, trusting the mercy of Jehovah, though peace be not yet known. Their iniquities have taken hold of them, so that they feel, how can they hope in Jehovah to deliver them. There is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared. And the psalm assures them that one in like depths has been set free. When they look upon him they will have peace, but the foundation of peace is laid in hope for them here. A heart failing under iniquities, laying hold of it, can look for deliverance. It has been found, and however obscure their light, and it will be so, the ground of hope is laid. Compare Isa. 1., 10, 11, which describes this very state, consequent, as to the remnant, on Christ's being justified and helped. But this is not all. Messiah puts Himself in this association with them. He hath put a new song in my mouth, praise unto our God. Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man that makes Jehovah his trust, and does not trust outward prosperity nor apostates to lying vanities. So in verse 5, to us ward. That is, in the first verse, we have Christ who has waited on Jehovah-, and been heard, and brought up out of a horrible pit and miry clay. I doubt not that David's heart sung it, still it is surely Christ in prophetic purpose. But, then, Christ identifies himself, though, as we have seen, distinguishing the remnant, with Israel. Praise, he says, unto our God. The effect of this is, that many see it, fear, and trust in Jehovah. It acts on the remnant in the latter day, and leads them to trust in Jehovah. They can trust for deliverance, too. Many will. His preaching righteousness to the great congregation gathered a little flock. His deliverance as the suffering One will be blessed to many. Who bath begotten me all these, says Zion; in that day. This may take in the ten tribes, too; still, as a principle, a multitude will be there. it was not so at Christ's first coming. He was to be a despised and rejected one in His own history and trial.

Ver. 5. These are the thoughts of Jehovah in blessing. This leads to the great thought, the center and groundwork of all-Christ's coming to do Jehovah's will. Now, we can comment, or, still better, the Spirit of God has commented for us, on the value of the doing of Jehovah's will. Here we have much more the faithfulness of Christ in doing it, His being overwhelmed with iniquities taking hold of Him in His own spirit, as we see in Gethsemane-but deliverance. We must remember, that the confession of sins over the head of the sacrifice was not the slaying, or casting into the fire, of the victim. So Christ's acknowledging thus, or confessing the iniquities with which He was charging, Himself as His, was not His enduring the wrath, nor His being cut off out of the land of the living. Dreadful, indeed, it must have been to Him, as we see in the Gospels, and He saw all that was coming upon Him by reason of it; still it was essentially different-confessing the sins and bearing the wrath due to them. His confession of sins His people must, I will not say imitate, but, take up in the knowledge that those He confessed were their own; and may, till grace is fully known, do it with dreadful anguish and apprehension of the wrath to come. It is this which particularly, besides outward trials, constitutes the analogy between the Jewish remnant and the Lord. The wrath endured in atonement, we know, He endured that we never might. In this psalm, then, we see

Christ, according to the eternal counsels of God, come to do God's will in human nature, taking His place in the midst of the great congregation of Israel, suffering most deeply in consequence, getting into the horrible pit, but His trust is firm in Jehovah. He waited patiently for Him, and He is brought up, and a new song put into His mouth. The first three, verses state the great fact. Jehovah heard and delivered out of the horrible pit. It is a lesson for all the remnant. How blessed is the man who trusts Jehovah, and does not look at the appearance of persons to turn aside after vanity. Then we get the course of events. Wonderful have been Jehovah's counsels. Christ comes to do His will as a man; delights to do it; declares Jehovah's righteousness before all. This brings Him into the greatest distress. Evils come upon Him unnumbered, and, besides that, His iniquities (those of His people) come upon Him; but patience has its perfect work, and He is perfect and complete in all the will of God; and, as the psalm shows at the beginning, He is delivered, as we well know. But, as already said, the psalm recites his faithfulness especially. Hence we see Him up to the close of the trial still under it. What He asks for is that the ungodly, being found His enemies, may be set aside; but that the poor of the flock may be able to praise, rejoice, and be glad in Jehovah. It is beautiful to see His perfect patience in the trial, that the whole will of God may be accomplished, and seeking the joy and full blessing of the poor remnant; yet Himself taking the place of complete dependence on Jehovah, and praying for His coming in as God. Obedience and dependence are the two characteristics of the acting of the divine life in man towards God. It may be remarked here, that the testimony in the congregation is closed when the innumerable evils come upon Him. The preface of the psalm speaks of the horrible pit when He is out of it, and we know whereunto he was obedient, but His death is not spoken of here. In the body of the psalm, we have, as come to do God's will, His faithfulness in life as witness, and the evils that came upon Him at the close, when He had to meet the burden of the iniquity of His people. A few words on the expression, "opened my ears." The word is not the same as in Ex. 21 There it is attaching the ear with an awl to a door post, the man thus became a servant forever. Nor is it the same as in Isa. 1., where it has the signification of being so completely a servant of His Father's will that He received His commands morning by morning. Here it is: digged ears, that is, took the place of a servant. But this He did, as may be seen in Phil. 2, by becoming a man, hence the Spirit accepts the interpretation of the seventy. -a body hast thou prepared me. The fourth verse applies to the remnant, the result of Christ's faithfulness, for instruction and encouragement. Compare John 13 (which answers in point of time to Ex. 21), Luke 12:37, and 1 Cor. 15:28.

Psa. 41-This psalm shows the blessedness of the man who understands this position of the, poor of the flock and enters into it. (Compare Matt. 5:3; Luke 6:20.) It is spoken in the person of one of the suffering remnant-doubtless with the psalmist's own experience. It is one of the psalms in which Christ takes up an expression to show how, in the close of His life, when He entered into their sorrows, He tasted fully their bitterness. Still the poor man is upheld in his integrity, and set before Jehovah's face. The apparent triumph of the wicked is short. This closes the book. It is the experience, as a whole, of the remnant before they are driven out-or, at the least, of those who are not so. And the covenant name of Jehovah is used. Hence, the place of Christ is entered into, so far as He came and set Himself amongst the poor of the flock upon earth, and led the life of sorrow and integrity in the midst of evil. Of this last psalm He is not the subject, as the fourth verse shows.

(Psa. 1-41)--We have seen an introduction in the first eight psalms in which the whole scene is brought before us in its principles and result in the purpose of God; then in 9. And 10. the actual

historical circumstances of the Jews in the latter day. Thus, as to historical facts, their state forms the groundwork and subject of the whole book; while the way in which Christ could enter into their sorrows, and they be encouraged by His example, is fully introduced. His whole life amidst the nation is passed in review; but particularly the close, when, after declaring God's righteousness in the great congregation, He passed into the deep sufferings of the last hours of His passage on the earth, going on to His being forsaken of God. Yet it was for Him-surely for us, blessed be God -- the path of life. Psa. 40 has this peculiar interest, that it gives us, not merely the history of Christ, His faithfulness, but His freely offering Himself to accomplish all that the Father's counsels required of Him; and then shows Him waiting in obedience till Jehovah was pleased to come in. And then He has the new song to sing. Of this intervention of God, the resurrection was the grand witness; through which, as we have seen in 22., He has awakened, or rather created, it in so many other hearts. As is common, the first three verses give the thesis,-the rest all that led up to this-only here it is traced from His first offering Himself to do it. The reader will remark in 41. what we have noticed as characterizing the remnant-the acknowledgment of sin, (v. 4), and the declaration of integrity. (v. 12.)

Book II.-In the second book, the remnant is viewed as outside Jerusalem, and the city as given up to wickedness. This is seen throughout it. The covenant connection of the Jews with Jehovah is lost, but God is trusted. When Messiah comes in, all is changed.. We have further, more distinctly, the exaltation of Christ on high as the means of their deliverance, and His rejection and sorrow when down here. It closes with the millennial reign of Messiah in peace under the figure of Solomon. The spirit of the godly man is tested by these circumstances. And, as all hope of finding good in the people is given up, the soul of the believing remnant is more entirely looking to God Himself and attached to Him. It is with this that the book opens.

Psa. 42-The godly man had been going with the multitude to the house of God, but that is all over. He is driven away, and his cry is from Jordan-the land of the Hermonites and the hill Mizar. All God's waves are gone over him. It was terrible to see an enemy in possession of the sanctuary, and the true one of Jehovah cast out and His name blasphemed. The heathen, as stated in Joel, had come-in in power, and taunted those who had trusted in Jehovah's faithfulness with the cry, " Where is thy God?" (Joel 2:17.) It was of course, a dreadful trial; (so with Christ upon the cross; and with Him yet more, for He declared He was forsaken;) so that what God was to them by faith was put to the test. This faith is what this psalm now expresses. The heart of the godly pants after GOD. It was not merely for His blessings; they were gone: the preciousness of what He Himself was was only so much the more vividly brought out. The main distress was the cry, " Where is thy God?" But if the saint is not in Jerusalem, God is the confidence of the saint. Faith says, " I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance." The heart, too, can appeal to Him, (ver. 9,) and under the pressure of the repeated taunt, hope in God Himself, and He will be the health of the countenance of him that trusts in Him. The reader will remark, that in verse 5 it is the help of God's countenance: in verse 11 He becomes the health of the countenance of him that trusts in Him. This making God Himself to become everything, by the deprivation of all blessings and the exercise of faith in it; casting the soul entirely on God himself, is very precious.

In the forty-second psalm, the enemy is the outward enemy and oppressor, the Gentile.

Psa. 43-This psalm is a supplementary psalm to the former, only that here the ungodly nation, the Jews, are before us, and the deceitful and unjust man, the wicked one; though the Gentile oppressor be yet there. (v. '2.) We know they will be both there in that day. From the Jewish nation being now in scene, the return to the holy hill and tabernacle and altar of God are more before the mind of the remnant. Verses 3, 4, form the groundwork of the book.

Psa. 44-This psalm gives a full and vivid picture of the state of the nation, as in the conscience of the remnant. They had heard with their ears. Faith rested in the memorial of all the old mighty deliverances wrought by God, and how he had put them in possession of the land by His power, not theirs. (v. 1-8.) In ver. 9-16 their present state is recounted. They are cast off and scattered. The enemy and avenger is among them; they scattered among the heathen-sold of God for no price. In ver. 17-22. Yet they have, in no wise, swerved from their integrity. On the contrary, it is for His sake they are killed all the day long, and counted as sheep for the slaughter, (note, the moment Messiah was rejected, this began in principle. Comp. Rom. 8:36.) Verses 23-26 contain the appeal to God to wake up to redeem them for His mercies' sake. Why should He forget -them forever? We have still God, not Jehovah, in this psalm; for they are outside.

Psa. 45-This Psalm introduces Messiah, and, as we shall see, changes everything. I know not, interesting and full of bright energy as the psalm is, that I have much to note upon it, by reason of its force being so very plain. It will be remarked, that it is Messiah in judgment and taking the throne. He had already proved that He loved righteousness and hated iniquity-was fit to govern. He is saluted as God. Yet His disciples (the remnant) are called His fellows. (Compare Zech. 13:7, where He is seen in His humiliation and smitten, but owned to be Jehovah's fellow.) I apprehend the queen is Jerusalem. Tire and others own her with presents. She is gloriously received into the chambers of the king himself. This I apprehend is the force of " within." She is in the closest relationship with the king. The virgins her companions are, I suppose, the cities of Judah. The glory of Israel is no longer now their fathers'. The presence of Messiah (the fulfiller of promise) has eclipsed the depositaries of promise of old. Instead of fathers, they had children to be made princes in all lands. The coming-in of Messiah in glory and judgment brings in the full triumph and J glory amongst the nations of Jerusalem and the Jewish people.

Psa. 46-The remnant, now that Messiah has appeared in glory, can celebrate what God is in favor of His people, and with the special knowledge acquired through what He has been for them in trouble. There may be yet an assault. Indeed, according to prophecy I believe there will be. But as the whole effect of Messiah's coming in blessing was celebrated in the forty-fifth psalm, so here the great result in divine government. The spared remnant have Jehovah with them as the God of Israel. (ver. 7.) Here it is specially (and suitably, after what we have been studying needs not to be said), as refuge and deliverance. Earth, mountains, and waters may tremble, or swell and roar: His people need not fear. God is with them. Nor is this all. He has his city on the earth, where He who is the Most High dwells, and has his tabernacles gladdened by that river which is everywhere in these descriptions the sign of blessing, as in the heavenly Jerusalem, and in the earthly in Ezekiel-nay, in paradise, and in figures, in the believer, and in the Church, who calls to the water of life him who thirsts. But even then the river is there. God is there-. the sure and best of answers to the taunting demand, " Where is thy God?" She shall not be moved, but helped right early.

The 6th verse gives in magnificent abruptness the great result. All is decided. Then they say, "Jehovah Sabaoth is with us." The God of the whole people is the refuge of this feeble remnant. (ver. 8, 9.) They summon the earth to see what the works of Jehovah are, what is come of the impotent rage and violence of men; for He will be exalted among the heathen and exalted in the earth. The place of faith is to be still and wait on Him, and know that He is God; as the remnant of Jacob will with joy that Jehovah of hosts, the God of Jacob, is with them.

Psa. 47-This psalm only pursues this deliverance to its bright results for Israel, according to God's glory in the earth. Jehovah is now a great King over all the earth. (Compare Zech. 14) He subdues the nations under Israel, and Himself chooses their inheritance. This is triumphantly celebrated from ver. 5 to 9, and the association of the princes of the peoples now owning God with the people of the God of Abraham. He is specially Israel's (the remnant's) king, but if He is, He is king of all the earth. In these verses God Himself is celebrated, but He is the God of Israel. It is the celebration of the earthly part of the millennial glory of God, Israel owned in the delivered remnant being the center. I apprehend the ninth verse should be, " have joined themselves to the people."

Psa. 48 This psalm completes this series. Jehovah is fully established as Israel's God in Zion, now the praise of the whole earth, the city of the Great King, and in whose palaces God is well known as a refuge. The kings were assembled; they found another sort of power there than they thought of; marveled, were troubled, and basted away. The power of the sea was broken by the east wind, and Jehovah's hand manifested there, too. The psalm beautifully refers to the beginning of the forty-fourth, where they had said in their distress, We have heard with our ears the mighty works of the fathers' days. Now they say, As we have heard so have we seen in the city of Jehovah Sabaoth, the city of our God. They do not now say, as in the forty-second psalm, I went with the multitude, but now cry to thee from Jordan; but in sweet and unendangered peace, we have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. God's name they had trusted, but now His praise was according to it. He had come-in in power. It was so to the ends of the earth, ver. 11-14. He calls on Mount Zion to rejoice because of these judgments, with the joyful assurance that this God is their. God forever and ever; their life-long will He guide and bless them. It is an earthly blessing, and death, the last enemy, is not destroyed.

Psa. 49 This psalm is a moral conclusion for all, founded on these judgments of God. Wealth, elevation, all that is exalted in man, is nothing. They expect to endure, give their own names to their lands, bless themselves, are praised by posterity, and spoken well of as prudent and wise men, seeing they have done well to themselves. They are laid in Sheol; like sheep. It does not last for man; he leaves the world he was great in; his reputation, which lives, is naught for him, deception for others. Satan's power is for this life, there is no deceiving after it. Man in honor without understanding is like the beasts that perish, but the righteous remnant trusts in God; his soul is redeemed from the power of the grave. God shall accept him. The preservation on earth or heavenly blessing is left somewhat vague here. The immediate hope would be of preserving life, but it would meet those that might be slain with the fullest and securest hope. It is even so in Luke 21:19, κτησασθε τας ψυχας ■μων, and in Matt. 24:13. The ambiguity is preserved there too designedly.

Psa. 1. - In the fiftieth Psalm we enter on new ground. God's judgment of the people as in the fifty-first psalm their confession of killing Christ. The introduction of this psalm is magnificent, but

requires little comment; only remark, that the two first verses are the thesis; from verse 3 is the bringing it about; in verses 5, 6, he takes up and accepts and gathers the remnant, His casidim, who have now entered into covenant with Him by sacrifice. It is in view, I apprehend, of their seeing Christ, whom they had pierced, these are uttered. The heavens, though in result God be seated in Zion, bring in their display of the righteousness of God; distinct in itself, note, from His judgment. This is general. It is not in itself the judgment of God. I doubt not He shines forth in glory therein, but in a particular manner. We can say it is the glorified saints who display this; of course, with Christ Himself; yea, so fully that they shall judge the earth. It is not temporal judgment through secondary causes; God is now judge Himself. Hence He gathers His saints too. In verse 7 the people are judged. God does not want sacrifice, He wants righteousness. He will not have wickedness; nor now, the wicked among His people. So we read in the very same way in Isa. 48 and 57. Man fancies God is as he is, but all shalt be set in order before Him. This is God's judgment.

Psa. 51-This Psalm is the true remnant's confession. They have fully entered into the mind of God (See ver. 16). There is true and complete humiliation for sin before God, yet confidence in Him. He is looked-to to cleanse and deliver, with the true faith of God's people. The whole sin of the heart and nature is acknowledged, and the dreadful crime of Christ's death owned (ver. 14). The humiliation accepted, but with the sense of God's cleansing being perfect. He creates, too, a clean heart. He prays that that spirit which Haggai declares abode with them after all their faults, and in spite of the Babylonish captivity, might not be taken from him, nor he lose the sense of the presence of his God (ver. 11). Persons have found difficulty in this verse. I see not any. No good could have been wrought by the Old Testament saints without the Holy Ghost; withdrawn from them all their joy and comfort ceased, and gave place to darkness. This He prays might not be. There cannot for a moment be a doubt that the Spirit was with the Old Testament saints. The question is, whether He was present in the same manner, and dwelling in them, uniting them to a risen Head in heaven. The New Testament is clear on this point: He was not; but He must have been with the saints. He is with everything good; all action in the creature, as in the creation He moved on the face of the waters, but specially in the hearts of men for any good that is there, and to be the source of joy and strength to the saints. An intelligent saint now could not say what is said in this verse 11, He knows God will not take His Spirit from Him. He might indeed, perhaps in anguish say it, and with a true heart, and be heard. This repentance of Israel, as so constantly taught in Scripture (see Acts 3), is the path to Zion's blessing there. Will God accept their offerings?

In these two psalms (the fiftieth and fifty-first) we have the separative judgment in Israel connected with wickedness, sin against Jehovah, a judgment which is real deliverance for the remnant; and now (when He has appeared) the full' confession, and that even of the blood of the Savior. Together, they complete the setting, as to circumstances, of the whole scene before us, which forms the groundwork of this book.

The series of psalms now commences, as we have seen in other instances, to supply and unfold the expressions of feeling for the remnant under these circumstances. It will be found, accordingly, that it is not so much trial by being in the midst of evil as from seeing it dominant and prevailing in the place even that belonged to Jehovah. Hence, in general, they are addressed to God and the Most High,-the God of promise,-not to Jehovah, the God of present covenant blessings, for they

are out of the place of these blessings. When otherwise, I purpose noticing it in its place. After all this is gone through up to the full in-shining of hope-the position of Christ exalted on high, and once suffering, in Israel as that in virtue of which He could help and deliver them, is brought out. This, with the application of it to the remnant and the employment of David's last appeal in his sorrow, as now fatigued with years, as applicable to Israel's own state at the end, ushers in the millennial reign of Christ under the figure of Solomon.

Psa. 3-In the fifty-second Psalm we find faith as regards the power of the wicked: man, who was before the godly. The goodness of God endured. God would destroy the proud and deceitful man, while the righteous would abide. It reminds of Shebna-not enemies from without, nor even the beast, but within, among themselves-the Antichrist of power.

Psa. 53-In the next Psalm, the fifty-third, we have the wicked in general, the whole mass of the people, all, save where grace had come in. It is the same as psalm 14., but does not speak of Jehovah but of God, for the remnant are no longer in the place of covenant relation. Hence it is not here God is in the generation of the righteous, but the utter ruin of those, encamped against them-the public judgment of the external enemies. Those who are in great fear are the ungodly Jews (see Isa. 33:14;8. 12; and 10. 24). In Psa. 14 they despised the poor who trusted in Jehovah. There they were outwardly together. This is not so now. God has put his enemies to shame; not the proud ungodly the poor of the flock. The desire of the full salvation of Israel out of Zion as a center, not merely God's deliverance by judgment, from enemies without is there expressed. The power which comes from heaven, and destroys the faithless oppressor, is a distinct thing from the establishment of covenant power in Zion, according to promise.

Psa. 54-The fifty-fourth Psalm is the cry to God to deliver according to the value of His name, the subject of trust. The double character of the enemies is spoken of-strangers, enemies from without; and oppressors, the proud within, who hunt for the life of the poor. When deliverance comes, then the name of Jehovah is introduced (ver. 6, 7). The name of God is the revelation of what He is. This is what is trusted. Jehovah's name, that of their covenant God, will be praised when they get back into the place of association with Him.

Psa. 55-Psalm fifty-five is a distressing picture of wickedness in Jerusalem. The speaker is outside, but has experienced this wickedness in the treachery of his dearest friends. His resource is in God. Jehovah will save. He is looking back, I judge, at all that he had experienced in Jerusalem. Wickedness went about her walls. Wickedness, deceit, and guile were in her midst, nor departed from her streets. He would fain have fled from it all. The enemy was without, the wicked within; but they charged the godly with wickedness, and utterly hated them; but worst of all was the heartless treachery of those within, those with whom the godly had gone in company to the house of God. Still his trust was in God, for where else should he seek help.

Psa. 56-This psalm expresses the sense of the bitter and relentless enmity of the wicked, but the tears of the godly are put into God's bottle. God is owned as the Most High, the title of promise but not of covenant; that of covenant is Jehovah; and here the remnant are cast out. But the word of God is a sure trusting-place. It carries the truth of God, as its basis, to the soul, and contains all the expression of His goodness, and ways, and faithfulness, and interest also in His people. Hence no fear of man. The soul of the godly was delivered from death; he had escaped and fled, and now he looks to God that his feet may be kept, that he may walk before God in the light of the living. As the

expression of the tried heart driven out, but so escaped, it has a most clear and distinct place. This psalm looks more at the evil and power of the enemy, and the feet being kept; and trust in God leads to dependency on His word.

Psa. 57-This psalm, while crying to God in the same spirit and circumstances, and under the same title, is more the expression of confidence in God as a refuge; His wings are a covert till the evil be overpast, and full deliverance is looked for by His gloriously putting an end to the trial. God will send from heaven and deliver. Hence the end of the psalm is more triumphant than that of the preceding psalm. He will praise among the peoples and various tribes of the earth, for God's mercy and truth are great. God's publicly exalting Himself above heaven and over all the earth is looked for. No help was on earth, none to be looked for; but this cast him more entirely on God, and thus brought out a fuller confidence in His safeguard, and in the final display of power in deliverance. So it ever is. The Lord would send from heaven. How this directs the remnant upwards, and links them with a heavenly deliverance.

Psa. 58-All righteousness was silent in Israel. The wicked were such and naught else but wicked. The godly man looks for judgment on them, for let favor be chewed to them, they will not learn uprightness. In the land of uprightness will they deal unjustly. (Isa. 26:9,10). They cannot, says David, of the same, be taken with hand, one must be fenced with iron to touch them. (2 Sam. 23) Hence the godly looked for judgment, the only possible means, by God's own testimony, of removing the evil, for patience had been fully exercised towards them, but when even God's hand was lifted up they would not see. And the vengeance of deliverance would come, and men would say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth. (See Isa. 26:9.) This is the meaning of these terrible judgments: they establish the government and righteous judgment of God in the earth. Grace has taken us out of the world; we are not of it, as Christ was not of it. Christ will, as to our deliverance, even from suffering, come and take us out of the evil, so that we have in no way need to 'seek the destruction of our enemies; but for the persecuted remnant, it is the only and promised deliverance; and, not only that, it establishes God's government of the earth.

Psa. 59-Psalm fifty-nine gives more the external enemies. The same wickedness is found there, but the might of human power with it. But they also must be judged, that wickedness may be set aside. Nor was it the sin of Israel against them that brought the heathen on them, (however God might chasten them for sin against Him, so that He was justified.) The suffering remnant look, therefore, for the intervention of Jehovah to judge them. And Jehovah shall judge all the heathen. They are not destroyed, but scattered, yet practically, as power; consumed; and many, as we know, slain. This psalm speaks of no restoration of blessing. It is judgment, and judgment going on and not yet finished. And this judgment of the proud and wicked enemies will go on. Though rising up in rage to a head of wickedness, they will be sore smitten and consumed. All the heathen are concerned in it; but I apprehend that especially the apostate power animated of Satan-partially the kin!! of the eighth of Daniel perhaps. It will be remarked here, that the moment it is in contrast with the heathen, the name of Jehovah is introduced. The personal address is still under the name of God, for the people are still outside. (See. verses 3, 5, 8, for Jehovah, and 1, 9, 10, 17, for the personal address.) Note, the result is, that God rules in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Verses 14 and 15 are, I apprehend; a challenge. Let the heathen be as hungry dogs about the city, the believer will sing of Jehovah's power. It is at the close of the tribulation. This psalm presents

another phase. of the connection of Israel and Messiah, and shows how David became the fitted instrument whom God had attuned to tell Messiah's and the remnant's sufferings." Slay them not, lest my people forget." Now, this is not the language: of the king, as such, but of Jehovah. The only case where " my people" is used, where Christ is the speaker, is 2 Sam. 22:44, or Psalm 18. 43. But when Christ is born, He is called Jesus, for He shall save His people. from their sins. s Now Jesus was the personal verifying of that which was said of Jehovah. In all their afflictions He was afflicted, as in Isa. 43 It is Jehovah who gets the tongue of the learned. (Isa. 1.) So that "my people," where not directly of Jehovah, which is frequent, is Christ entering into the sorrows of Israel, but in the love of Jehovah to them. No doubt as man, or how could He have actually suffered; but still in the sympathies of Jehovah. Yet, and because, He is Jehovah, perfectly entering into them. It is thus He wept over Jerusalem, saying, " How often would I have gathered thy children together! " But that was Jehovah. Hence, though He can say, " we," because He graciously takes a place among the children, yet, in saying, " we," it brings in all His own value and excellency into the cry. "I" and "me ". may often take up the case of an individual of the remnant; but in case of such: an expression as my people," we clearly get one who stands in another position. Not merely David. He says ever (like Moses) to Jehovah, " Thy people." And that is all right; but it is one, who., in whatever sorrow, could say, as Jehovah, when spoken of by the Spirit, " my people," and enter into their griefs with divine sympathy, and a righteous call for divine judgment. I apprehend that though the enemies are the heathen, yet their complete intimacy and affinity with the wicked among the Jewish people is clearly intimated here. The same thing is found in Isa. 66 They are all melted into one system and state of wickedness.

Psa. 60--In the sixtieth psalm the remnant acknowledge the casting off of God. Their only hope is, that He will turn to them again. This is exactly the point of Israel's righteousness as a nation. No going for help elsewhere--no spirit of rebellion. They accept the punishment of their iniquity. Still, God has put his ensign in Israel. He was their Jehovah-nissi. They now look to Him. The end of the psalm is God asserting His title to the land of promise. Victory will be to Israel through Him..

Psa. 61--The main point of all these psalms is, trust in God when all is against the godly One. The more all circumstances are adverse, the more God is trusted in; but Christ shines through all as taking the dependent godly one's place. Many of the psalms of this book were, it is very likely, composed when David was driven out through Absalom. This confidence in God, which calls on Him to hear, is expressed in the sixty-first psalm. It is not an appeal of the godly man against enemies, but the sinking of his heart as cast out; but, when at the end of the earth and his spirit overwhelmed, he cries to God and looks for a rock higher than himself from this flood. Thus his confidence was restored. It was a known God whom he thus trusted, whatever his then sorrows. In verse 5 he applies it to present certainty of having been heard. The vows he had sent up Godward had reached his ear above-full blessings would rest upon him and in blessing he would perform them. Ver. 6, doubtless, as to the occasion of it, was David, but it looks, I apprehend, clearly to a greater than he and the abiding life into which he entered as man, and though the godly remnant be thus driven out and their spirit overwhelmed within them, yet the fact that the king had been so would be a cheer and a sweet security to their hearts: his song would become theirs, his having sung it a relief to them when they might have sunk in despondency. Though the being driven out is the occasion and is felt, the psalm does not refer to wickedness, but to nature, the human heart being overwhelmed.

Psa. 62-More confidence is expressed in the sixty-second psalm. 'It is not looking from an overwhelmed heart, but a free looking-up, so that one is not. overwhelmed. His soul waits on God, has none else indeed, but does not desire any other. There is a " how long" as well as a waiting. God will certainly come in at the right time and then it will be known to whom power belongs. The psalm is spoken individually and may be in the mouth of any of the godly remnant. How long would they imagine mischief against a man? What was their object? Why have him thus in hatred, and by falsehood seek to root him out, of his place, the place of God's blessing in which He had placed the godly in Israel? But this, I doubt not, has special application to Christ as the One who was indeed in this place, and against whom all their malice was directed to cast Him down from His excellency. He invites also the people (Jewish) to trust in God, pour out their hearts before Him, and putting himself with them in this place says, Not only my refuge is in God, but He is a refuge for us. In saying " mine" he shows that he had it; but these, maskilim, shall instruct the many and turn to righteousness many of them. Above all did that truly understanding One do so. They were not to trust in the great and violent ones of the earth. Power belongs to God, and with Him is mercy. They may trust in Him as a God of righteousness and walk uprightly, and not be turned aside by the prosperity of the wicked, for Adonai will reward every man according to his works. It is the desire to cast down the poor of the flock because the wicked after all have the consciousness that the excellency of God is with them-and specially Christ, which draws out this psalm which expresses the faith of the saint and the warning to the people to trust God and not the mighty. They are exalted in the earth, but true elevation from God is with. Christ, and those who thus walk fear God and obey the voice of His servant.

Psa. 63-If the sixty-first psalm was the cry of depression, and the sixty-second the confidence and encouragement of trust in God, this psalm, the sixty-third, is the longing of the soul, still as cast out and far from the sanctuary-(so we can speak of heaven, for we have seen the power and glory there by faith), but having, by faith in the loving-kindness itself, praise, and, even in the wilderness, marrow and fatness to feed upon. It is a beautiful psalm in this respect, for praise is thus begotten in the soul and for all times. There are two points:-First, a most sweet word; because God's lovingkindness is better than life,

0 Comp. Daniel; 2. 3 and Isaiah EH. 11. Not justify but turn to righteousness many, and bear, &c, his lips praise God, though life in the wilderness be sorrow; secondly, because He has been his help, therefore he will rejoice in His protection. Verse 8 describes the practical result-his soul followed hard after God, and God's right hand upheld him. There was the longing to see the power and the glory as he had seen it. The present. satisfying of the soul as with marrow and fatness, and that in the silent watches of the night, when all outward excitement was hushed and the soul left to itself. Those that sought the soul of the righteous to destroy it should go down into Hades; but the king shall rejoice in God. Those that own His name should glory, but the false ones who departed from Him should be put to shame. It is again the king, and applies to Christ in a higher sense than to the remnant. For him, it was the desire to see the glory from which He was descended; for the Jew it was in the temple; for us, as Christ who has been revealed to us, by faith, who have seen the glory and sanctuary into which He is entered. There is a difference between this psalm and the eighty-fourth:- That is the desire to revisit the sanctuary of God; this, desire after God Himself. There, the tabernacles of Jehovah, a covenant. God, are amiable; here God Himself is a delight when there are no tabernacles to go to.

Psa. 64-.This psalm chiefly speaks of the unceasing crafty hatred of the enemy, and cries to God: God will shoot at them suddenly. The result of this judgment will be that all shall fear and declare the work of God, for they shall wisely consider of His doing.. Then, for judgment is -now come, the righteous shall be glad in Jehovah, fir His covenant name is now taken, the judgment having removed the power of evil. The upright in heart glory. Thus judgment introduces the millennium.. (Psa. 65-67) In these psalms we have the bright side, the bright and joyful confidence of the saint who is conscious of being heard, and who, though. not yet in the blessing, counts upon it; whereas up to this it has been the sense of the power of evil, or the cry to God and waiting upon Him.

Ps. in the sixty-fifth psalm, the door of praise is not yet opened. Praise is silent in Zion; still it surely would not be silent, the vow now made would be performed. Their God was the hearer of prayer if praise was yet silent. and all flesh would come to Him. But confidence is very bright here. As to the actual state of the people and the remnant-indeed, the remnant alone enter into their case-iniquities prevailed against them. Still, confidence is unshaken, God would purge them away. Blessed the man that Elohim chose, for all was grace, and made to dwell in His courts. They would be satisfied with the goodness, of His house. The thing was sure, and gave satisfying joy. In verse 5 we have the judgment in favor of the remnant by which the blessing would be introduced -terrible things in righteousness. God is the blesser of the earth in every place. The end of the psalm is the celebration of the earth's blessing, when God comes-in in judgment in favor of His people. At the door of Zion, as yet eating the fruit of their sins outside, the plea of the remnant is-that as yet praise was silent in Zion, but God had only to bring in the judgment and deliverance, and it would wake up; and Elohim would do this. He who was the one blesser and orderer of the whole earth.

Psa. 66-This psalm celebrates this intervention in righteousness. Men are called to see God's works, but, in verse 6, it is the very same God who once delivered Israel before out of Egypt; verse 8 calls upon the nations brought into connection with God, to bless the God of the remnant, that is, of Israel; they had been brought through every kind of sorrow and oppression, to prove and try them as silver, but now they would go before Him and praise Him. They had cried, been righteous, were heard, and found mercy. their prayer was not turned away, nor God's mercy, from them. Thus, after the sorrows, seen clearly now as the way and hand of 'God with them-to the righteous there is arisen up light in the darkness. They can pay the vows uttered in their distress, and tell to others the blessed and sure deliverance of the Lord who cares for the righteous, and has, indeed, heard their cry.

Psa. 67-The sixty-seventh psalm closes this short series by looking for the blessing of the remnant, not only as the righteous and merciful answer to their cry, but as the way of spreading the knowledge of God's ways to all nations. God be merciful to us, that Thy way may be known upon earth. Thus all the peoples will praise God, and the earth be judged and governed righteously. The earth will yield her increase, God's blessing will be upon it, and He will., as the own God of the godly remnant that have trusted in Him, bless them. The result is summed up in the last verse-God shall bless us, and the ends of the earth shall fear Him. For the repentant Jew is the way of blessing, life from the dead for the world.

Psa. 68-Here follows, on these psalms, the celebration of the introduction of Israel into the position spoken of in them. Still this sixty-eighth psalm has a complete and individual character of its own. It begins with the formula employed when the camp broke up in the wilderness under the guidance

of God, the pillar rising up and going before them. So it is now. God takes this place at the head of His people. It is thus introduced suddenly with great majesty. Let God arise so His enemies are scattered before Him: as wax before the fire, the wicked perish at His presence. The righteous may be glad and rejoice before God, yea, exceedingly rejoice. He shall appear to the shame of the mighty wicked, and the righteous poor will be glorified. Thus the purport of this psalm is most clear. But the character of Him who thus interferes is further most beautifully, unfolded. He is a father of the fatherless, a judge of widows. He makes the solitary to dwell in families, the rebellious in a dry land. Judgment is the true and gracious deliverance of the blessed God.- And now His people can celebrate His goodness. History is then recapitulated (ver. 7.) Such was He when He brought forth Israel from Egypt. At Sinai the earth shook at His presence. But He refreshed the heritage of His weary people, when He had prepared of His goodness for the poor. But now, present facts told that tale still more to their hearts. Adonai's word went forth. The glad tidings were chaunted by Israel's daughters, in a great company. Kings fled apace What a sudden and complete deliverance it was! The quietest homestayer divided the spoil, for it was the Lord's doing. Then Israel came out in all her beauty, though they had been lying in poverty and wretchedness (ver. 13).P In all the pretensions and strivings of the nations, this is God's will. But whence all this deliverance? The Lord had ascended on high, received gifts as man and for men; yea, even for rebellious Israel, who was now in question, that Jehovah might dwell among them. This brings out praise to the God of their salvation-for their God was the God of salvation. Oh! how could Christ witness that! But they were still mortal men down here. The deliverance was earthly and temporal, though of saints. But lie would be their guide always, even unto death. But He would destroy the wicked. What was really the occasion of all this burst of joy (of which the heart was too full to tell quietly the occasion) is now, however, drawn out; yet the exultation still casts its light and joy over it. Israel was set up again in power: her enemies destroyed: the beauty of her temple-order restored. The tribes would come up: the kings bring presents. God had commanded strength, and they look to His strengthening what is wrought. The subjection of every enemy or mighty one follows. Princes would, come out of Egypt, and Ethiopia stretch out her hands to God. The kingdoms of the earth are all called upon then to sing praises to Adonai. Strength is to be ascribed to God; but His excellency, that in which He is exalted, is over Israel, and in the clouds of His dwelling-place in power His strength watches over His people. It is the full restoration of Israel's blessing and glory, and indeed much more than restoration: and this consequent upon the exaltation of the Lord to receive gifts as man. In the following psalm we find the humiliation of this blessed one. What a contrast! Yet how far, indeed, from being less glorious or of feebleness in the eyes of us who have learned and know who He is.

Psa. 69-The state of soul of which this most important psalm (the sixty-ninth) is the expression, demands the utmost attention and patient inquiry. We have all along seen the remnant of Israel before us, or Christ associated with that remnant. It is the case here. He who speaks is, doubtless, first of all, David; but evidently a greater than he is here. The state described is this:-he is in the deepest distress, sinking in deep mire, has to weigh before God the foolishness and sins which have been the occasion of it. He is in the midst of numerous and mighty enemies, who are such without a cause. Whatever sins may be dealt with, personally he has been faithful. The zeal even of God's house has eaten him up, and he is suffering reproach for the God of Israel's sake. Hence he prays that this may not be a stumbling-block to others, seeing that one so faithful to God should find such distress and trouble. Yet he is not forsaken of God., On the contrary, his prayer is to

Jehovah in an acceptable time. He looks to be heard in the multitude of God's mercies and the truth of His salvation. His complaint is of His enemies; yet he sees himself smitten of God, and among those whom He has wounded. His desire is for vengeance against men: it is not the testimony of grace. If we look at the godly man in the remnant of Israel, all this answers perfectly. He acknowledges his sins-all the sins of his nation. Yet he suffers reproach and causeless enmity for the name of the God of Israel: and the more faithful he is, the more he suffers it. Faith yet makes him know that he prays in an acceptable time (we have seen this to be the character of the last psalms) to the God of Israel. Yet he is in the deepest distress. His eyes fail while waiting. for. God. His care for the good of Israel, his submission to injury, only makes him their scorn. He looks for the destruction of his adversaries and persecutors (for whom no mercy is of avail, they will it not), assured that the Lord hears the poor and despises not his prisoners. All creation is to praise Him, for God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah, that they may dwell therein and have it in possession. The seed also of His servants shall inherit it; and they that love His name shall dwell therein. All this is exactly and precisely the position and feeling of the godly remnant-the maskilim. But in verse 21, and, indeed, though of more general application in verse 9, we have what has been literally fulfilled in Christ. The use of verse 22 in the Epistle to the Romans leads us to the same conclusion; and many other verses, though applicable to others, have their fullest application to Christ. Yet he is not speaking as forsaken of God at all. Yet, though His life is referred to, his sufferings on the cross, as we have seen, are reached in the, description given of them; yet there is no trace of grace and mercy flowing from them; it is man's part in them, not God's forsaking: and judgment on man sought, not righteous grace announced. Yet, withal, trespasses are confessed before God, and the persecutions are of one whom God has smitten. Hence, I cannot but see in this psalm, after his righteous life, in consequence of which he suffered reproach (and which he rehearses as regards the great principles which had governed it), Christ entering in heart and spirit into the sorrow and distress of Israel, into which, as to God's government they had brought themselves; yet not forsaking or rejecting, that was Christ's alone as bearing and expiating sin. Still, they are smitten of God, and wounded by Him, and into this Christ could enter, because He, in the highest and fullest sense, though it be not the general subject of this psalm in general, was smitten of God. The subject is the persecution by the Jews; but the persecuted One was smitten of God, and felt how terrible was the wickedness that taunted and reproached Him who had taken that bitter cup which we had filled by our sins with wrath from God for Him. Christ was smitten of God upon the cross, and felt the reproach and dishonor then cast upon Him. As regards the trespasses (recalled to mind in verse 5), I apprehend they are in connection with the government of God as to Israel, and that though the fact of smiting is referred to, its expiatory power is not at all treated of in this psalm. Only judgment is sought for; that is not the fruit of expiation (compare Psa. 22). But it gives to us, for that very reason, a fuller apprehension of all the personal sufferings. of Christ at that time, not that which stands wholly and entirely alone-His atoning and expiatory work. Were this only revealed, it is so immensely great, it would have eclipsed His personal sufferings as a man, as such, gone through at that time, and this it is, blessed be God, which we have in this psalm -what accompanied the great act of the smiting of God.

Psa. 70 is a psalm which embodies the desire of the Spirit of Christ in connection with His sufferings from man, but expressing itself, as in the remnant in that day; that His enemies may be confounded,, that those that say, Aha, aha! as they did when He was on the cross; that those that

seek Jehovah may rejoice, and be glad and rejoice, and those who look for His deliverance say, Let God be magnified, is e., enjoy that deliverance. For this He, as -on earth, is content to be poor and needy, and nothing else, to the end.. Still he trusts in Jehovah; he is his help and deliverer. He is assured He will come. He asks that He may. not tarry. Any saint of the remnant could say it, doubtless; but it is a summing up of the principle on which the Spirit of Christ speaks in them, and of His personal association with their sorrows, and thus in principles furnishes a key. It will be remarked, that from Psa. 69:13, the covenant name of Jehovah is introduced.

Psa. 71-The seventy-first Psalm founded, as I suppose, as much of this book is, upon the flight-of David on the rebellion of Absalom, presents, I apprehend, the sum of all God's ways with Israel from the commencement of their history, and the display of his faithful care, with the appeal not now to leave them at the last. Christ, I doubt not, in spirit enters into it (see ver. 11), as in every case, but it cannot personally apply to Him, The close of his life witnessed exactly similar trials, only faultless and deeper ones; but its application is to the old age of Israel, who will be brought up as from the depths of the earth, through the faithful grace of the holy One of Israel.

Psa. 72-This psalm introduces us not to David in suffering and conflict, but to the full reign of peace and royal blessing. It is the Son of David we have here, the source and securer of millennial blessings. I know not that it requires much explanation, by reason of its clearness. It is the King to whom God gives His judgments, and who is at the same time the king's son, the son of David, in his reign of righteousness and peace, as Solomon or Melchisedek. His kingdom has the full extent of promise, but all kings fall down before Him: Blessings of every kind accompany this reign of righteousness. The expression " prayer shall be made continually for Him", shows simply that the blessings enjoyed through Him raise the desire and request for His glory and continuance in power. While literally spoken of Solomon, I think it would point out Christ reigning as a true man upon earth. The 17th verse shows, I think, it is no uncertainty of duration, but the effects of his rule on the hearts of all that are under it. There will be a prince of the house of David in Jerusalem, I suppose; still this, I think,. looks beyond him.

This closes the Book. We have seen in it the godly ones cast out; their distress and confidence in this position, this ending in the certainty and confidence of restoration; and then Messiah's deliverance and previous humiliation-the glorious and yet humbled person being thus brought out-and then the human royal rule established in Israel. This ends the dealings with the remnant in the land looked at as apart from the rest.

Book III.-In the Third Book we get out into a larger sphere than the state of the residue of the Jews in the last days, whether in Jerusalem or driven out, and hence we find much less of the personal circumstances and feelings and associations of the Lord, who, in His day, walked among them. The general interests of Israel are in view, and thus Israel's history is entered into. The whole national position is before us, still distinguishing a true-hearted residue. Remark here, that, save one, we have no psalms of David in this book. Asaph, Sons of Korah, Ethan, are the professed authors; I know of no

reason to reject the alleged authorship. It is still the state of Israel in the last days, only that the general facts are spoken of in reference to the whole nation, not the particular details of the Jewish remnant, and of Christ as taking a place among them; it is much more Israel and general principles. This the first psalm of the book shows.

Psa. 73-" Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are of a true heart:" but the saint was perplexed at the prosperity of the wicked, and his feet almost gone. The prosperous ungodly are then described, the body of the people join them, and the Most High is scorned; whereas the godly is continually chastened; he had cleansed his hands then in vain. But in speaking thus he would offend against the generation of God's children. To man pondering on it, it was too painful: in the sanctuary of God, where His mind was revealed, all became plain. As a dream when one awakes, so all their pretensions would disappear when once God awoke. The godly man complains of his want of divine sense in these thoughts and

feelings. Still, after all, he was ever before God, and God's right hand upheld him; guided by His counsel in that time of darkness, when the glory should have been revealed, he would be received. (Read " after the glory, Thou wilt receive me." Compare Zech. 2:8) The result is blessed. He has none in heaven but the Lord, none on earth whom he desires beside Him: such is the effect of trial; but his flesh and heart fail; that is nature. It must be so, but God is the strength of his heart and his portion forever. The last two verses declare the result-those far from Jehovah, and apostates, perish; but it is good for the godly to draw near to God. He has put his trust in Him when He did not show Himself, that he might declare all His works when deliverance came, for those blessed without trial afterward will not learn this knowledge of God.

Psa. 74-The seventy-fourth psalm complains of the hostile desolation of the sanctuary, When rebuilt in the land. God's enemies, as faith here calls them, roar in the congregations. Man's ensigns, not God's, are the signs of power. All public Jewish worship was laid low. Not only this-what might have been a comfort in such a time fails. There are no signs from God to meet it, no prophets, none that know how long-know, that is, by the leading of God, when He will come-in in power. Still there is here faith that God will not forsake His people, and that word-how long-if there be no answer as to it, turns into a cry. It cannot be forever. God's faithfulness is trusted in. Heretofore he had smitten Egypt and delivered His people through a divided sea. All power in creation was His. The enemy had reproached the name of Jehovah. Israel is still held to be, in the remnant, as God's turtledove. He is entreated to have respect to the covenant, for the dark places of the earth (or land) are full of the habitations of cruelty. The oppressed, the poor, the needy, are as ever presented to the eye and heart of God. We have them ever come before us as those on whom God thinks, in whom Christ delighted in the land. And so it is even as to the spirit we have to be of. He calls on God to arise and plead His own cause. The tumult of those who rose up against Him daily increased. While looked at as the poor and oppressed, it is remarkable how faith identifies the interests of the godly remnant and of God and pleads their _cause with Him. It is spoken of as from without. God is addressed, only God is reminded that His name in Israel has been blasphemed. This name recalls (5. 19, 20) the covenant relationship with and tender love of Jehovah towards His people.

Psa. 75-In this psalm Messiah is introduced speaking, though it commences with the remnant giving thanks to God for wondrous works already wrought. Then judgments of God introduce Messiah to the kingdom. He receives the congregation of Israel-then upright judgment will be executed. The earth is dissolved in guilt and confusion. Messiah upholds its pillars. In the following verses he warns the wicked and despisers of God not to exalt themselves, for God is the Judge: He sets up and puts down. The wicked should drink the cup of judgment to the dregs; but the despised Messiah would exalt the. God of Jacob and cut off the horns of the wicked: the horn of

the righteous would be exalted.

Psa. 76-The seventy-sixth psalm is extremely simple in its application to the judgment of the kings, who come up against Jerusalem in their pride and find, unlooked for, the Lord Himself there. (Comp. Mic. 4:11-13, and Zech. 14:3,4;12. 2.) The judgment of God is rehearsed and God is now celebrated as having His dwelling-place in Zion, He is the God of Jacob and known in Judah: His judgment was heard from heaven. The long-despised Zion is More glorious than the mountains of prey, the high places of human violence. The earth feared and was still when God arose to judgment, and to help all the meek upon the earth.

Psa. 77-In this psalm we have spiritual deliverance and restored confidence. He cried with his voice to God, and God gave ear to him. To cry with the voice is more than to have a wish. A cry is the expression of weakness, dependence, recourse had to God, the reference of the soul to God, even of uprightness of heart. In the day of trouble, it was not merely complaint, irritation, anger; but " I sought the Lord", Adonai, not Jehovah. His first thought was whether the Lord would cast off forever (ver. 7-9); for here be, as often remarked in the Psalms, is going through the process which led to the statements of the first verses In verse 10 he judges himself in the thought, and remembered those years in which the power of Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, the Most High of the fathers, was displayed. (Comp. the remark ver. 5.) The way of God is always and necessarily according to, 5.) own most blessed and holy nature, and understood in the secret place in which He makes known His thoughts to those in communion with Him. His way is according to that place in which He judges His people according to His present relationship with them. (Hence the place of the interpreter, one among a thousand.) The ways of God are the application of the divine principles of His holy nature owned as placing Himself in relationship with His people, according to which principles that relationship must be maintained. That is His sanctuary. There it is where He is approached. Thence He deals with His people, not merely in outward guidance, but as making good in His Majesty the principles of His nature (so far as revealed) in the hidden man of the heart. He deals in the holy place of His nature and majesty with us in the, truth of our state-our real, moral, inward state. He does not deviate from these ways, nor compromise the majesty they make good. But they (though according to His nature) are exercised in a revealed relationship. They make good His nature and majesty in it, but never break it. Man in relationship with Him must suit himself to it, must walk in his inward state with Him in it; but God, if He deals according to it, purifies him for it-shows the evil-hides pride from man in order to bless him, but makes good His majesty. Hence the heart in the evil turns back to that which formed the relationship in redemption (ver. 14-18.) Israel or the godly remnant is not in the enjoyment here of covenant blessings, but when distressed, looks back by faith to a time which recalls the power. of Him who cannot change. The comfort of the soul is that God's way is in the sanctuary, according to the nature and ways of God Himself, so far as He is revealed. If I look out to judge as man, His way is in the sea-I cannot trace it. His footsteps are not known, for who can follow out Him who disposes of all things with a thought? We do know God's own nature and character in relation to us by faith, and can reckon on it, as to all He does as faithful and unchangeable, but we cannot know' and judge His ways in themselves. Hence the unbeliever is discontented and will blame God; the believer is happy, because he has the key to all in what the God is whom he knows, and on whose ordering of all things he can count. It must be according to what God. is. He does not order all things contrary to what He is; but He is for us and therefore orders all things for us-makes all

things work together for good. He leads His people like sheep. In the seventy-third psalm, the upright man learned the end of his outward enemies, who prospered while he was chastened. Here he learns the ways of God with himself.

Psa. 78-In this psalm the conduct of Israel is discussed by wisdom, historically as regards the whole people, but with very important principles brought out. There was not only a redemption of old, to which faith recurred, but a testimony given, and a law to guide Israel's ways, that they should make them known to their children. But the fathers had been a stubborn and rebellious generation. Now, the law and the testimony were given that the children might not be like their fathers; but they were, and this history is here brought out. God, therefore, chastened them; there was direct open government in respect of their ways. For all this they sinned still. At the moment of chastisement they turned to Him. Nevertheless, they did but flatter Him with their mouth, their heart was not right with Him, nor they steadfast in His covenant. But He skewed compassion also; forgave; remembered they were but flesh. Yet after Egyptian signs, they forgot Him; brought into the land, they turned to idolatry. When God heard this He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel. On the ground of this government, under law and testimony, and compassionate mercy, Israel was wholly given up, the tabernacle forsaken, the ark delivered into captivity and the enemies' hand. The people, also, were delivered over to judgment. But the Lord's love to His people, in grace, was not weakened, and the sorrow they were brought into called out that love. He awoke, as one out of sleep, and smote His enemies, and put them to a perpetual shame. But now He had interfered in grace, in His own proper love to His people. It was not government blessing on condition of obedience, but the interference of grace when disobedience had, on the principle of government, brought in complete judgment, in spite of compassion and mercy. Sovereign mercy now had its place. Old blessings had put Joseph as natural heir, he had the rich and double portion. God chose Judah. He chose Zion. This gives it its importance. It is the place of love in grace, when all had failed under law, even with the fullest compassionate patience. He built His, sanctuary. That is not directly 'presented as the subject of electing goodness, but He chose David when in the humblest condition, who then fed His people.

In this most beautiful psalm, we have the most important principles possible. Viewing Israel as established on the ground of government in Sinai, on law mixed with compassion, Israel had entirely failed, was abhorred, cast off: A total breach had been made; the ark of the covenant, the link between Israel and God, the place of propitiation, and His throne, given up to the enemy. But God, whose sovereign love to His people had come in in power to deliver, had chosen Judah, Zion, David, and set up a link in grace, and by deliverance after failure. Faith can go back to God's works in redemption, but not man's conduct under law. Psa. 78 is the converse of Psa. 77 Yet in Israel all this is declared to produce that which grace will effect in the last day; that value for the law in the heart which will make them teach it to their children (compare Gen. 18:17-19; see Ex. 34) Mercy put Israel again under the condition of obedience. Here power delivers, after they have failed even under this and judgment is come,. God acting according to His mind of love. Pure law they never were under, the tables never came into the camp' (compare 2 Cor. 3). Moses' face shone only when he had seen God, when he went up the second time accepted in grace; but for Israel it was putting them back under law. It is grace and law brought in after it, which is death and condemnation. This is impossible with substitution; but this place, of course, Moses could not take. Peradventure I shall. male an atonement for your souls. " Blot me-out I pray Thee;" " No," was the

answer; "the soul that sins it will I blot out." This was the law, and as we see here, and definitely stated in 2 Con air. ruin.

Psa. 79-The seventy-ninth psalm refers, in the plainest terms, to the inroad of the heathen, especially the northern army (Joel 2 refers to a second attack, in which the cry of the psalm is answered. Isaiah speaks of both); who had laid waste Jerusalem and the temple, and shed the blood of the servants of Jehovah. There is the owning of former sins, and mercy looked to, tender mercies. The plea is the plea called for in Joel 2, and referred to in previous psalms (42. And 43.): " Why should the heathen say, Where is their God?" and it demands that He may be known by the avenging the blood of His servants. Thus His people and the sheep -of His pasture would give Him thanks forever. Jehovah's anger is seen, and so far there is faith to say, How long? That is, though covenant mercies are not enjoyed by the remnant, yea, quite the contrary, yet faith looks to them, and sees Jehovah angry with His people; hence if such, and He thus in relationship with them, He cannot give them up. It is only " How long?" Yet the direct cry is to God, even here, not Jehovah. Israel is not restored to his covenant place. When there he will be in known covenant relationship, and then in grace, nor will this ever be lost sight of. Here they were not, but cast out on their failure under a conditional covenant, and though faith in promises sustained them, the new covenant was not entered into; they stood outside blessing, looking backward and forward, having nothing 'now. This is never the Christian's state: in applying it to himself he makes himself a Jew.

Psa. 80-It is remarkable in this psalm, how-we are upon the ground of Israel here, their past or future historical associations, not of -Christ (though all depends on Him, of course), nor of the godly Jew in the midst of the apostate assembly. We may have Jerusalem taken, confederacies, ancient deliverances of Israel, in a word, national history or prophecy concerning national circumstances, but all is external, not trials within so that Christ should come personally on the scene, save when 'He receives the congregation; though the godly in Israel are distinguished. Jehovah is also not referred to, save prospectively, when they enter into the new covenant, until the judgment of the last confederacy, which makes Jehovah known as Most High over all the earth.. These psalms do not, I apprehend, exclude the Jews, they are part of Israel; and then in Judah Jehovah will be revealed, only all Israel, including Joseph, is historically brought in-the nation.. In. this psalm God is addressed as the Shepherd of Israel, who leads Joseph like a flock, and dwells between the cherubim. This is, again, historic Israel. It is not God calling from heaven, nor coming. He is seen by faith only when He is there -has taken His place in Israel.

The psalm is a remarkable one. It sees God in Israel, His throne of right there, and looks to His shining forth, stirring up His strength to help them; but still, as in Israel of old in the desert, Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh were immediately next the ark behind the tabernacle, and the sanctuary went immediately before them on the march of the camp. This was Jehovah, God of hosts. The touching inquiry is, "How long?" the urgency of faith; Wilt thou be angry against the prayers of thy people? this is also viewed in faith. The vine brought out of Egypt was laid waste; its hedge, as, indeed, Isaiah had threatened them, was broken down. Tears were the drink of Jehovah's people. They beseech God to look down from heaven and visit the vine: the vineyard and the branch made strong for God Himself-. David's family, I suppose. Still, it was God's rebuke; but, farther, it looks that the divine hand of power should be upon the Man of that power. The Son of man whom God had made strong for Himself. We can understand from this, and not merely from Dan. 7, which merely gives a peculiar place to the Son of Man, why the Lord gives Himself

habitually the title of Son of Man.. He is the One, then, indeed, rejected, but upon whom God's right hand is to be in power. Thus the people of Jehovah would be kept; such is the cry of this psalm. The coming in of power from Jehovah, the God of Israel; power laid upon the Son of man. The cry is occasioned by the great distress of Israel; still Jehovah is looked for, and faith sets him in Israel. When He thus visited them they would not go back from Him; when He quickens them out of the dust they will call on His name.

The 3rd and 19th verses give the theme of desire, still outward deliverance is looked for. The 17th verse demands special attention in the point of view already noticed, as showing what was in the Lord's mind when presenting the immense anomaly that this Son of man should suffer. The eighth psalm, of course, gives the key in the purposes of God as to both humiliation and exaltation, and man's place. It was this humiliation the Lord pressed upon His disciples. Now they look for the display of divine power in Him. The Church and its union with Christ is the only thing I am aware of not -revealed in the Old Testament. All as to Christ was. Perhaps we may add His present position as priest. Neither of these are mentioned in the titles given to Christ in the first chapter. of John's Gospel.

Psa. 81-This Psalm, while celebrating in figure the restoration of Israel, again returns to historical ground, specially introducing Joseph, who represents the ten tribes (see Ezek. 37:16). Otherwise, Judah, the Jews, might have claimed everything. But in the restoration, although there are special events connected with the Jews, and it was amongst them that Jesus- was conversant, entering especially into their circumstances in the latter day, producing the association, so profoundly interesting, which we have been studying in the two first books, yet it is evident that in the full purposes of God the stick of Joseph must have its place and become one in the Son of man's hand, and as all Israel. Now the new moon was the symbol of the reappearance of. Israel in the sun's. light, hailed with joy by the people arid connected with redemption in the 'thought of faith (see ver. 3 of the psalm).. Then Israel called in trouble, and God delivered him; but then another important principle comes in. God answered them when in trouble, but He proved them also. They tempted God then, doubting His care and power. He was putting them to. the test by difficulties, which seemed to say there was want of care or power; and they said, Is Jehovah among us? But the Lord answered in grace (Ex. 17). This, I apprehend, is the case referred to. But even in the second Meribah, called so -because Israel strove again with Jehovah, when Moses (Numb. - 20.). spake unadvisedly with his lips and was shut out from Canaan-(for from Sinai on they were under legal though gracious government), Jehovah was sanctified in giving them water in a grace Which was above Moses' failure. Still, while grace and faithfulness to His promises to His people were found in the government of God (Ex. 34:6,7), they were put to the test legally on the very terms of that mercy. It was a testing government though a merciful one, and so indeed in some sense, is the divine government. God puts this test to them-if faithful, to God, no strange god among them. He was Jehovah their God, which brought them out of the land of Egypt. Blessing was prepared. They had only to open their mouth wide and He would fill it. But Israel would not hearken, and they were given.. up to their own hearts lusts. Still we see God's yearning love over them and the delight he would have had in blessing them and. putting aside all their enemies. His righteous government would, have been manifested in them (compare Matt. 23:37; Luke 20:42). O that they had hearkened. Thus we get the ground of Israel's ruin. They were placed as redeemed from Egypt under the test of obedience and fidelity to God. They had failed. Still they would appear

again to reflect the light of Jehovah's countenance. This love of Jehovah for the people breaks out even in their failure. A very important principle for every soul is brought before us here. Redemption with conditional blessing after it only ends in the loss of the blessing, just as creation did. It is the same thing or worse. It depends on us to secure the blessing, and on us now as fallen beings instead of innocent and free ones. Grace alone can keep us; and so it will be with Israel. The gracious and tender character and thoughts of God towards His people come out most beautifully in this psalm. The passages I have referred to in the Gospels show the same tenderness, but further, that Jesus is this very Jehovah.

Psa. 82-We find God assuming the government into His own hands. He had set up authority in the earth and especially- in Israel. Directed by His Word in judgment, and armed with His authority, the judges in Israel had borne the name of God (Elohim). But none would understand or deal righteously. All the foundations of the earth. were out of course. All magistrates had. received power and authority of God. The Jewish had His word also; but even these would not know or understand. They were men and would die like men, and fall like one of the uncircumcised. princes of this world. God who had given the authority judged among the gods.. He must have righteousness. This judgment the spirit of prophecy then calls for in the understanding One. Arise, O God, judge the earth, for thou shalt inherit all nations.

Psa. 83-requires only to call attention to its subject. It is the last confederacy of the nations surrounding Canaan, with Assur helping them. At. the close of the psalm, though the cry be to God as such, for Israel is not 'yet established in covenant blessing, Jehovah's name is brought in. Judgment is to be executed that the rebellious nations may seek Jehovah's name. It is not, Know the Father, nor Know there is a God; but, Know Jehovah. When His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Men will know that He whose name alone is Jehovah, He who was, and is, and is to come, is the Most High over all the earth. That is, Jehovah, (the one 'true God,) the God of Israel, is the One above all, the One supreme over the earth.. It is in this name, He takes possession of the earth, as Melchisedek pronounces- the-blessing in the name of the Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth. And 'Nebuchadnezzar, the humbled head of the Gentiles, praises and blesses the Most High. It is His millennial name, in which He takes to Him His great power and reigns, and the true Melchisedek is priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace between both. This establishes prophetically Jehovah, the God of Israel, supreme in the earth. His people, now restored to relationship, look for a full. blessing and the name of Jehovah is again used. Up to this, save as looking back or looking forward, the cry of the people is addressed to God, the people not being in possession of covenant blessings.

Psa. 84-Then the eighty-fourth psalm contemplates the blessedness of now going up to the courts of Jehovah: yet, in a figurative allusion to road thither, refers to the path of tears which his people have had to tread towards their blessings. Thus it has a full moral force, and is instructive for Christians as for Jews. In the sixty-third psalm the people cast out were longing for God Himself, and found, in spite of all, marrow and fatness in Him. In this psalm it is the joys of His house that occupy their soul, as entering into the enjoyment of covenant blessings. Not but that the living God is longed for; but it is in His courts. -" Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee." Brought in there, such is the blessing. They will have naught to do but praise.. This is the first great theme of blessing. It is blessing, perfect and complete in its nature. It is at the end. But there is the way. Blessed is he whose strength is in Jehovah-in whose heart are the known

ways that lead to the house. This characterizes the state of soul-their strength in Jehovah-their heart in the ways that lead to Him. This path of blessing is through trial; for hence the need of strength. And the way is loved and taken, whatever it may be, that leads to Him, They pass through the vale of tears-it becomes a well to them; for by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of the Spirit. Besides, from on high the rain fills the pools in that thirsty land. They use their strength, no doubt: It is put to the test; but they renew it-go from strength to strength, till all appear before God in Zion. They are a praying people. Dependence is exercised in confidence in grace. The covenant name is here again introduced-Lord of hosts-God of Jacob. He is His people's shield: they seek that He should look upon his anointed.. This was now the link between Jehovah and His people, not the law they had broken. They appear before God in Zion. But that is the place of royal deliverance in grace. Nor can the interests of the people and the anointed be now separated. The blessing rested on Him, and on them because of Him. The heart's interest in the kind of blessing is then sweetly and strongly expressed; and the sum of what Jehovah is, which makes it such, is declared from the heart. He is light-protection-gives grace and glory, and withholds no good thing from them who walk uprightly. The thought of what Jehovah is makes -him resume all in one conscious word. " O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." It is a most beautiful returning celebration of Jehovah their covenant God with their heart, when the way, though through sorrow, is now opened to them into his known presence. The sixty-third psalm was joy in God in the desert, when they had nothing else-the real character of one enhancing the depth and sweetness of the blessing of the other. This is joy in Him when brought to, or going up to, the enjoyment of Him in the midst of what surrounds His presence. The following psalm takes up the blessing of the land and delivered people. In those that follow after we shall find Christ Himself as far as connected with the people, still with a view to the covenant relation subsisting between Jehovah and His people.

Psa. 85-1 have long hesitated in reading this Psalm, whether the first part referred to external deliverance and the grace shown in it, and the following to the causing the people to enter into the enjoyment of it by the restoration of their own souls-or, as we have seen is often the case, the statement of the great result as the theme of the psalm, and then going through the sorrows of the remnant and divine workings which led to this result. There will be a restoring work in the souls of the people after their outward deliverance. Nor do I now speak of this psalm with very great certainty on this point. On the whole, I am disposed to think that they look for their enjoyment of divine favor in it, as between themselves and God, when delivered from all their enemies, and shown to be forgiven by that deliverance. Thus the first three verses lay this ground, that God has been favorable to His land, and brought back the captivity of Jacob. This was the great public truth. But in verse 4 the restored people have need of other blessing, in the reality of their own relationship with God. " Turn us, O God of our salvation." Jehovah was the God of their salvation; but they needed His blessing in the midst of the land. They would that His people should rejoice in Him. How true this is often of

the soul which knows forgiveness!" It looks for Jehovah's mercy and salvation, being thus restored to Him, and listens to know what Elohim Jehovah will speak; for they reckon on mercy. He will speak peace to His people-their public character-and to His saints-the remnant who are to enjoy it. Faith has, then, the certainty in every way that His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that the glory of Jehovah may dwell in the land. The last verses celebrate, in remarkable terms, the divine

principles on which their blessings are then established. God's mercy and truth had now met. His promises, always true, had now been fulfilled by mercy. It is to be remarked that in the psalms mercy always precedes righteousness and truth. For Israel had forfeited all title to promise in rejecting the Lord - had come under full guilt-had no righteousness on which to lean-had been concluded in unbelief, that they also might be objects of mere mercy. But then through Christ's work these promises would now be fulfilled, and mercy and truth met. But more than this. The Lord was their righteousness, through grace; and hence that righteousness was peace for them; and that which in judgment would have been their ruin, was in grace their peace-righteousness and peace kissed each other. I need hardly say how true these great principles are for any sinner, for yet better and heavenly blessings-here they are applied to earthly. Truth shall spring out of the earth: that is, the full fruit and effect of God's truth and faithfulness shall be manifest in blessings, full blessings, on the earth. But it was not by righteousness that man wrought legally below. Righteousness looked down from heaven. It was God's righteousness-the Lord their righteousness. But this made it stable. Jehovah gives that which is good, and the land is blessed. Righteousness traces the path of blessing for Jehovah Himself in the land - His own, no doubt. Still His rule shall be so characterized. A king shall reign in righteousness. No more oppression. Justice is no longer fallen in the streets, as Isa. 59:14 speaks. Judgment is returned to it, and the government has this character-" And the fruit of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." This last, indeed, is practical; but it is. the result of righteousness having looked. down from heaven, yea, of its being established on the earth. (Compare Psa. 72:1-7, where this state is described.)

Psa. 86-This psalm is the meek yet confiding and confident appeal of a soul conscious of its godly feelings towards Jehovah, and looking to the results of relationship with Him. We have had Jehovah since Psa. 84, which is founded on these covenant relationships in which the remnant feel themselves to be, though awaiting full blessings in the land. Still they are yet in distress, for the people are not revived, nor set in their covenant blessing in the land. Holy (ver. 2) is pious-gracious (chesed not kodesh). The three requests of the psalm are, (ver. 1), Bow down thine ear and hear me. Ver. 6. The gracious attention of Jehovah is called for, to give ear to his prayer and attend to the voice of his supplication; i.e., he looks for his request being granted (ver. 11), to be taught in the way of truth. Jehovah's mercies in the terrible conflict of the remnant are then owned, but the godly man still looked for His interference in his behalf, that they that hate him may be ashamed, because Jehovah has helped and comforted him. How the state of the remnant, like Job, brings out the great conflict between the power of Satan and divine deliverance, but in which, however low he may be brought, the godly soul owns the source of all to be Jehovah, though his feet may well nigh slip in seeing the prosperity of the ungodly. It is not a psalm of complaint nor bitterness of soul, but of one who is yet poor and needy, but has tasted the comfort of Jehovah's goodness. It is to be remarked, that, save the cases noticed, Lord is Adonai, not Jehovah. This is not the same as Jehovah; that is the covenant name of God with Israel in eternal faithfulness-Adonai, one who has taken power and is in the relationship of Lordship to us. Hence, in fact, we own Christ to be in this place-our Lord Jesus Christ-and so it will be for Jews, though till they see Him they will not own this. This Adonai is Elohim. Death and human power were before the thoughts of the godly; but the comfort of a known Jehovah as a support. He had found deliverance; but it was not complete in blessing. The psalm is essen-

tially the pious appeal to Jehovah of, the returned of Israel in the land, but, in the main, its spirit is that into which Christ fully entered, but it is not directly applicable to Him.

Psa. 87-The eighty-seventh Psalm views Zion as founded of God, a city which has foundations. Men had cities, and boasted of them; but God had a city which He founded in the holy mountains; even here it was not Joseph or the richness of nature, God was its riches, its place the holy mountains, what was consecrated to Himself. In the power of the Spirit the godly is not ashamed of it, glorious things are spoken of it, nay, not in presence of all the earth's seats of boasting; Egypt and Babylon in vain vaunted themselves, Philistia, Tere, and Ethiopia who had all had their day. The godly could talk of them without fear of comparison. It was accounted the birthplace of the man of God; the birthplace of the beloved ones of Jehovah. The Highest established her. When Jehovah made the registry of the people He reckoned this man as born there. Joy and the celebration of His praise was found there, and all the fresh springs of Jehovah. I have little doubt that " this man " refers to Christ. Zion boasts of her heroes; the word translated " man" refers to great men, not the poor and miserable. They are the children of the once desolate. Compare Isa. 49:21,22.

Psa. 88-The Psalm, puts the remnant under the deep and dreadful sense of a broken law and God's fierce wrath, which, in justice, comes upon those who have done so. It is not now outward sorrows or oppression of enemies, but that which is far, far deeper, between the soul and God. And, though the judgments of God have brought him into lowliness, (and so it ever is morally with the soul when thus visited of God, for what can man then do, if he would help), yet this was only a part of the trouble, as a full expression of God's wrath, but death and wrath are the true burden of the psalm-God's terrors on the soul. Nor is there, as a present thing, any comfort nor a prospect of deliverance as from human oppression, however dark for faith. The Psalm closes in distress; its dealings are wholly with God; and so God must be known till grace is known. Israel under law must come under the sense of divine wrath for a broken law; it is right it should. But remark further,-It is still a God with whom they are in relationship. They have been delivered, brought back, into the land nearer to God, and hence into the sense of what their deserved position is in respect of this relationship. This is much to be observed, and observed for ourselves, too; for a God of salvation may be really known in a general way, and truly without the conscience being searched out, and divine wrath known in and removed from the conscience. O Jehovah I God of my salvation! is the address of this psalm. This gives it its weight and true character, and makes it much more terrible. The full blessing of liberty in grace may not be known, but the relationship with the God of salvation-He Himself--the consciousness of having to say to Him is sufficiently known to make the privation of His favor and the sense of His wrath dreadful beyond all-the one dreadful thing. With the Jews, under the law, circumstances and government may more enter into this case, because their relationship with Jehovah is connected with them. Still, Jehovah's fierce wrath is the great and terrible burden; and this terror of the Almighty, or, more accurately, of Jehovah, drinking up the spirit, is the subject of this psalm-the sense the remnant will have of wrath, under a broken law, in that day. Sorrow had visited them before; they had been afflicted and ready to die from youth, for such indeed had been their portion as cast off; but now restored, and so far brought into connection with Jehovah, the God of their salvation, they must feel the depths of their moral position between Himself and them alone, the wrath of Jehovah that was due to them. The real recovery, the righteous bringing into blessing could not be without this; not that, indeed, the wrath

would abide on them, hence there is faith, hope, though no comfort, in the psalm; for it is when mercy has been shown and known, that this distress comes on them; when they have entered on the relationship by that mercy, that its value, as has been said, may be felt: just like Job; already blest, and then made to know himself, what man was, as between him and Jehovah when the question of acceptance of righteousness was raised. The wrath will not abide upon them because the true cup of it has been drunk by Christ; but they must enter into the understanding of it, as under law, for they had been under law and pretended to righteousness under it; at least, that question was not solved for them. How truly Christ entered into this in the closing epoch of His life, I need not say, It is the great fact of His history.

It is to be remarked, that, even as to the direct subject of the psalm, the terrors have not been always on the sufferer; afflicted and ready to die he had been, such had been his life; but now he felt his soul cast off, and lover and friend, whom he previously had had, even put far from him by the hand of God. So, indeed, it was with Christ; His disciples could not then continue with Him in His temptations. He bore witness to them, that till then they had; but now, sifted as wheat, desertion or denial was the part of the best of them. Such was our Savior's portion, only that unspared and then un-delivered, He indeed drank the cup which shall make the remnant escape the death they are fearing. It may press upon them as a lesson to "know righteousness and deliverance, but the cup of wrath they will not drink. They are heard and set free on the earth. This psalm then is wrath under law, the next, mercy and favor in Christ, but as yet resting in promise. Actual deliverance is in the next book, by the full bringing in of Jehovah-Messiah for the world and Israel's sabbath.

This eighty-eighth psalm puts Israel in the presence of Jehovah (when guilty of having been unfaithful to Him, under the judgment of Jehovah, with the sense of wrath, yet in faith in Jehovah Himself; a place which Christ most especially took, though, of course, for others, in particular for Israel, but not for that nation only.

Psa. 89-The eighty-ninth Psalm takes the other side of Jehovah's relationship with Israel; not the nation's, Israel's, which was under law, but Jehovah's promises to David. It is not, remark here, guilt which is brought forward, surely in both cases it was the ground of the state spoken of, but wrath instead of salvation; for Jehovah had been Israel's Savior, and so faith viewed Him still, yet instead of the fulfillment of promise, as made to David, there was desertion of him. There is no trace of confession of sin. The eighty-eighth Psalm is complaint of death and wrath; and this, when mercy was to be built up forever, shows the covenant made void and the crown profaned. Isa. 40;58. pleads against Israel to convict them of guilt; first against Jehovah, by having idols; secondly, by rejecting Christ, 40.- 43., 49.- 53. But here the plaint is Israel's against Jehovah Himself, not unholy, I apprehend, as blame, but as an appeal to Himself on the ground of what He had been for Israel. Jehovah is establishing these relationships here, as indeed we have seen. Israel is Israel, and in the land (Psa. 85). The heathen are there, all is not restored; the last confederacy is in view, but it is against Israel, God is standing in the congregation of the mighty, judging among the gods. Jehovah has Himself been recalling His former mercies (Psa. 81:10-16). The ark is remembered, and God as the dweller between the cherubim, as once in the wilderness (Psa. 80) In a word, the whole book is the condition of a restored people in the land but attacked, destroyed, the temple which exists again ruined and broken down (Psa. 87;74-76) Not a mere Jewish remnant complaining of anti-christian wickedness within, with which they were associated

externally or which had cast them out, but Israel the nation (represented by the remnant) with enemies who destroy what is dear to them,-with encouraging prophecies of the result, having instruction as to sovereign grace in. David when they had failed in their own faithfulness as a nation (Psa. 88;89) which looks to God (Elohim) as such in contrast with man-to the Most High, but returns to Jehovah (as His own out of Egypt) with prayer, and demands that His hand might be on the Son of Man, the branch made so strong for Himself (Psa. 73) The whole book, in a word, is Israel taking 'the ground of being a people, and actually in the land, and with a temple, entering into the relationship by faith, but subject to the destructive inroads of hostile powers-the Assyrian and allies, to Whom, indeed, because of success, the people return (Psa. 73:10); for Isaiah 10. 5-23, is not yet fulfilled.

Now the last two psalms of the book present the whole pressure of this state of things on the spirit of the faithful. Instead of a blessed people it is loneliness under wrath. Yet Jehovah is the God of their salvation. The throne cast down and profaned, though immutable promises in mercy, not to be set 'aside by faults, had been given to David. The result is in the next book in the manifestation of the Lord, the bringing in the only-begotten into the world. In all this book we are on prophetic ground with Israel; not the special condition in which the Jewish remnant will be with antichrist, because they rejected Christ-their sorrows, therefore, coming much more fully out when that condition is treated of This we have seen is in the first and second books. Hence; in the following books we get to the recognition of Jehovah having been their dwelling-place in all generations. It is their history which ends by the appearing of Jehovah-Messiah in glory.

Psa. 89-A few words now on the eighty-ninth Psalm in detail. Its subject is the mercies of Jehovah (His graciousness towards Israel; Chasdee), and their unchangeableness-the sure mercies. There was faith to say " forever," for it was grace. This gave the appeal, elsewhere noticed: how long should it be otherwise, and even apparently forever. Jehovah was faithful. For he had said in faith, mercy, manifested goodness, shall be built up forever, and faithfulness was established where nothing could reach it. And so it will be, Satan being cast down. It is the very description of the millennium. He then recites the covenant originally made with David, which is the expression of mercy, and that to which Jehovah was to be faithful, the sure mercies of David. He turns then, and continues his praises of Jehovah (5-18), recalling the ancient deliverance from Egypt, and looking to the praise necessarily flowing from what He was, and the blessedness of the people that know the joyful sound. In His name they would rejoice all the day: in His (for we are in grace here) righteousness be exalted. He was the glory of their strength; and in His favor their horn will be exalted. Such was the blessedness of association with Jehovah in favor. But this blessing was in the faithful mercy to David. And where was this? (Ver. 18). Jehovah, the kodesh Israel, is their king. But, then, He had spoken of, not a kodesh, but a chesed, in whom all the chasdee (the same word in the plural as chesed) all the mercies were to be concentrated, and to whom the unchangeable faithfulness was to be shown-the sure mercies of David. Read of thy holy One (chesed) in ver. 19. Here he returns to the covenant made with David, showing it never was to be altered. (Ver. 34-37). 'But all was different. Yet there was faith, founded on this promise, to say, How long, Jehovah? If He hides forever, and His wrath burns like fire, what is man to abide it, and not go down into death. (Ver. 49). The former loving-kindness to David is appealed to, as' in the person of David himself but I doubt not from (ver 50) applicable to all the faithful. Still, the Spirit of Christ falls in here, as He did with the wrath, to take the whole reality of the burden. He, of course,

in that day, will suffer nothing. But he has anticipated that day of suffering, that His Spirit might speak as with His voice in His people; for the reproach of the mighty ones and apostates in that day will reproach the footsteps of God's anointed. And if the faithful walk in them, they will share the reproach from the enemies of Jehovah. Such is their then position-walking in his footsteps, looking for Israelitish covenant blessings, feeling wrath, yet in faith, but looking to God's promise in mercy to David (which was already pure grace, for the ark of the covenant was gone, and Israel Ichabod), but yet waiting for the answer. This is in the following book. We are here, as I have said, in prophetic times, in Isaiah's scenes with the Assyrian and a devastated temple. The wicked are there: people flock with them in prosperity. If we are in Daniel, it is chap. 8., not 7. The beast, the antichrist, are not on the scene, but the land. Guilty Israel, promised-not the question of a rejected Christ. This psalm closes the Third Book.

Book 4.-The Fourth Book is not so markedly separated from the Third, as the three preceding from one another; because the third, while prophetically announcing the blessing, describes a state of things which leaves the expectation of divine interference to bring in the blessing in full play. The first book had given the great principles of the position of the Jewish remnant in connection with the history of Christ; the second, their casting out; the third turns to the condition of Israel as a nation restored to their land; the fourth, as I have said, completes this by the coming of Messiah. This connects the nation and Christ, as well as the nation and Jehovah.

(Psa. 90-106)-Thus the book is introduced with Psa. 90 the nation's connection with Jehovah, looking to His returning and finally blessing them, that His beauty may be upon them. The second psalm of the book shows Christ's connection with the nation as man in this world; the third Psalm (92.) gives in prophetic celebration, the great result, into the whole establishment of which the Psalm (93.-100.) enter. Then, some deeply-interesting details as to Christ (101.,102.); while the general result, as displaying Jehovah's ways, is treated in the praises of 103., 104., as to Israel and the earth. Jehovah's dealings from the beginning and Israel's ways on the contrary with Him in 105., 106., which closes the book.

Psa. 90-The first psalm of the book (the ninetieth) places the people-that is, the godly believing part of it-on the ground of faith in Jehovah, and expresses the desire of deliverance and blessing from His hand. First, the godly Israelite owns Jehovah to have been the dwelling place of Israel for all generations, their shelter and their home; next, He was the everlasting God before the world was, and turned and returned man, in a moment, as seemed to him good; time was no time to Him. Now, Israel was consumed by His anger. But this was not all. Though His power was absolute, its use was not arbitrary. It was true and holy moral government; and unfeigned confession is made, not merely of open faults, but of that holy government of God which sets secret sins in the light of His countenance, for so, blessed be God, He does. Their days were passed in this wrath. They look that the pride of their heart may be so broken, their feeble mortality remembered, that the self-sufficiency, so natural to our hearts, might be done away with, and that heart applied to wisdom-to the fear of God. This putting of man in his place and God in His, connected with faith, as Israel in Jehovah, is full of instruction as to the moral position suited for the remnant in that day, and it, in its principle, ever true. Thus Jehovah is looked to to return for deliverance, with the word of faith: how long? And, as regards His servants, that His work might appear, as the affliction came from Him; and that the beauty of the Lord their God might be upon them, and their work established by Him. It is the true faith of relationship, but of relationship with

the supreme God in. His holy government upon earth. But, if so, Jehovah is the God of Israel.

Ps. 91.-We have now another most important principle introduced. Messiah's taking His place with Israel, the place of trust in Jehovah, was to afford the channel for the full blessing of the people. Three names of Elohim (God) came before us in this psalm-one that by which He was in relationship with Abraham, Almighty; another which Abraham, through the testimony of Melchisedek, may have known prophetically-the millennial title of Elohim when He takes His full title over the earth, (Comp. Gen. 14:18-20,) the Most High. Both, as all the names of God, have their proper meaning-one complete power-the other absolute supremacy. The question then arises, Who is the God who has this place? Who is this supreme God over all to the earth? Who shall find his secret place to dwell in? He who has found this shall be completely protected by Almighty power. Messiah Jesus) says, I will take the God of Israel as that place, Jehovah, ver. 3-8, we have the answer. Doubtless it is true of every godly Israelite, and they are in view, but led by the Spirit of Jesus, the One perfect faithful One, who took this place indeed. In verse 9, I apprehend Israel speaks; i.e., the Spirit personifying Israel addressing Messiah-Because thou hast taken Jehovah, which is my refuge, as thy habitation, almighty power shall guard thee. This continues to verse 13. In verse 14 Jehovah Himself speaks of Him as the One who has set His love upon Him. It is a very interesting psalm in this way. But we have to remark that all is viewed on earth, the character of God in all respects. How Christ as a present thing relinquished this for perfect obedience, trusting His Father absolutely, belongs to deeper views of the purposes of God and of the path of the blessed One Himself. Satan would have just used this to take Him out of the path of obedience and into that of distrust and his own will. Blessed be God, in vain, as we know. The sure mercies of David were to be in an obedient and risen One this point is treated in a psalm of unexampled beauty further on-and thus deeper blessings and higher glories brought out. But He who went in that perfect path of submission, has not the less made good all the fruit of all that is here for those who shall walk after Him in the place of this trust in Jehovah upon earth. This principle we see, indeed, in various forms all through the Psalms. Indeed, the atonement of Christ was needed, which implied His resigning personally this blessing, in order that others might walk in that path in which He could personally walk, of course, without it. The twenty-first psalm gives a divine revelation as to the way in which the promise of life was fulfilled to the Lord.

Psa. 92-This psalm takes up these names of God, Jehovah, and Most High, only it is no longer a secret place, known only-to fidelity and faith. Almighty power secures blessing and answers faith. Verses 7 and 8 explain how. What is celebrated is not the disciplinary exercise of faith, but the answer to it, showing that Jehovah (ver. 15) is upright and that there is no unrighteousness in Him. Already power had been displayed; and the full result in the judgment of all enemies and abiding blessing is looked for now, not merely as hope, but as founded on the manifested intervention of God. It is spoken in the place which Messiah had taken in the previous psalm, identified there in spirit with Israel in the latter days, restored by divine power, but not yet in the full peaceful enjoyment of divine blessing, just as we have seen in Book III. Messiah takes therefore the lead in praises and looks to His horn being exalted with honor: (Comp. 64. 6.) But Jehovah's thoughts are deeper. He sees far, even the end from the beginning, and accomplishes all His purposes and His word. This is what faith has to remember.

Psa. 93-The ninety-third psalm states the grand and blessed results. Jehovah reigns. Ever, indeed, was His throne established, but the floods had lifted up their voice.. The waves of ungodly

men had risen up high. Jehovah on high was mightier. Two other great principles complete this short but remarkable summary of the whole history of God and man in government. Jehovah's testimonies are very sure. Faith could count upon them, come what would; but further, another great truth came out as to the character of God. There could be no peace to the wicked. Holiness became his house. But 1 apprehend this last phrase describes the comely holiness of God's house for the now lasting period for which the earth was established.

We have now the details of the coming in of the Only-begotten into the world, to establish the glory and divine order in the world, introduced by the cry of the remnant in Israel.

Psa. 94-The ninety-fourth psalm gives us this cry, which is at the same time the expression of the fullest intelligence of their position, of the dealing of God, of the position of the wicked, and the result about to be produced, and is, as all the psalms in this book, based on known relationship with Jehovah. We have seen that the ninety-first psalm is Christ's taking this place with the people, that full blessing may come on them as thus associated with Him. Psa. 94 addresses itself to Jehovah as the God of vengeance, and demands that He should show Himself-lift Himself up as Judge of the earth and give a reward to the proud. The " how long " is made pressing and urgent. The conduct and impiety of the wicked is stated. Ver. 4-10 address the unbelieving Israelites on the folly of this. Ver. 12-15 give a most instructive explanation of the ways of Jehovah. Blessed is the man whom Jehovah chastens and teaches out of His law. This is the position of the suffering remnant, to give him quiet from the days of evil until the pit be digged for the ungodly. No doubt, as indeed is expressed in the psalms, the godly had sometimes well-nigh forgotten this; (73.;) not always; (27. 5;) but faith does not, and this is the true meaning of the remnant's sorrows-of ours too under our Father. The heart in the midst of evil has to say to God, not only in submission, but as a cup given of Jehovah (of our Father.) Hence the distraction and distress felt in meeting man's will in our will, without resource, is gone; and God, the will (the great hindrance,) being subdued, teaches the submissive heart, which is in a true position before Him. For faith it was withal a settled thing that Jehovah would never cast off His people. But judgment would return to righteousness, and the upright in heart would follow it. This is the great and all-important principle of the change which now takes place. Judgment, long separated from righteousness, now returns to it. Judgment was in Pilate, righteousness in Christ. There the opposition was perfect-more or less everywhere else. Suffering for righteousness' sake and divine righteousness established in the heavens may be and assuredly is a yet better portion. It is Christ's, as man now glorified; but it is not the maintenance of righteousness on the earth. This will now be effectually maintained. But who shall be found to make it good? Who will take up the cause of the godly One or stand up for the remnant against the mighty workers of iniquity? If Jehovah had not, their souls had soon gone down to silence. How true this was, as to men, of Christ, how fully He can enter into this, I need hardly say. Even when the remnant feared falling, Jehovah helped them. And in the overwhelming of thought, where all the power of evil was, Jehovah's comforts delighted His soul. In verse 20 a most remarkable appeal is made. Was the throne of iniquity and Jehovah's throne about to join together? If not, the days of the throne of iniquity were numbered. The wickedness that was there, was now patent. But Jehovah, the Defense of the godly, the Judge of the wicked, whose iniquity He would bring on themselves, Jehovah would cut them off. Thus the fullest review, as I have said, of the whole position and of Jehovah's ways is remarkably given to us in this psalm.

(Psa. 95-100)-In these psalms we have most distinctly brought out the progress of the introduction of the only-begotten into the world; but here, all through, seen as Jehovah, coming from heaven in judgment, and at length taking His place between the cherubim, and calling up the world to worship Him there. It puts the setting up of Israel in blessing by power in contrast with their old failure when first delivered.

Psa. 95-summons Israel to come with joyful songs and thanksgiving before Jehovah; 3, 4, describing His excellency above the gods and as Creator. But Jehovah is Israel's maker, His God also; and now they may look for rest even after so long time and continued failure, till power comes in to judgment, while it is called today, for in that great to-morrow no evil and no rebelliousness will be allowed. They are called upon not to harden their hearts as of old in the wilderness, when God aware that they should not enter into His rest. But now, after all, grace says, To-day, and invites to come before His presence who is the rock of their salvation.

Psa. 96-Here all the earth is summoned to come-in the spirit of the everlasting Gospel. They are to own Jehovah; the gods of the nations are mere vanity. Psa. 95 invites as of the company-" Come, let us sing." Now, they that are afar off; sing unto Jehovah, and His glory is to be declared among the nations. Verse 5, Jehovah is Creator; His excellency is then spoken of, but He is known in the sanctuary in Israel on the earth, ver. 7, 8. They are again summoned to own Him there, to worship Him according to the order of His house on the earth, for Jehovah reigns and the world is established, and Jehovah will judge the peoples righteously. This introduces a summons to a chorus of celebration of all this created world to rejoice before Jehovah, who comes to judge the world with righteousness and his people with truth; for Israel had the place of promise and the revelation of His ways.

Psa. 97-The coming itself is next celebrated; Jehovah has taken to Him His great power and His reign. The earth and the multitude of isles are to rejoice. Clouds and darkness round about Him, for it is the revelation of His judgments in power, not of Himself. Righteousness and judgment ever characterize His throne. The fire of judgment goes before Him and consumes His enemies. Jehovah, the Lord of the whole earth, comes forth out of His place. The heavens (for on earth there is none) in power declare His righteousness. The people see His glory. The effect of the judgment is then stated. Idol worship is confounded before Him, and all power and authority, from angels downwards, are now to own Him. But another fact comes out-this was joy and deliverance to Zion. The judgment of evil was her deliverance, for it was the glorious exaltation of Jehovah, her God. Ver. 10-12, we see the blessed objects of the deliverance-the godly remnant. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. It is a very complete statement of the character of the Lord's coming to earth.

Psa. 98-The ninety-eight psalm is the result celebrated by Israel on earth. Jehovah has made known His salvation, and remembered His mercy and truth towards Israel. All the land (or earth) is summoned to celebrate Jehovah as king. The heavens are not summoned here, as in 96. They are already filled with His glory, and the angels have been called to worship; but the sea and its fullness, and the world and its inhabitants are to rejoice before Jehovah, who comes to judge the earth and the whole world.

Psa. 99-This next psalm, though simple in its character, embraces some important principles. Jehovah now reigns, not only in making manifest heavenly power, but in the establishment of that

power as king upon the earth. He now sits between the cherubim, as heretofore, in Israel. He is great in Zion and high above all peoples. "I have no doubt this word 'peoples' (ammim), generally translated "people" in the authorized version, which confounds it with Israel, is used not as goyim (98. 2 and often), in opposition with Israel and the knowledge of Jehovah, but for nations not Israel, yet brought into relationship with Israel, and so with Jehovah Himself. Israel is called "Goy" (43.) when judged and rejected. Further, the king (Messiah, but still Jehovah) loves judgment, and establishes equity, executing judgment and righteousness in Jacob. Thus Jehovah, the God of Jacob, was to be exalted and in Jerusalem. But another touching and important principle is then brought out:-Israel had utterly failed, cast off Jehovah, rejected Messiah, was judged and cast off. But Jehovah had never given up His faithfulness and grace. Hence the Spirit turns back here to recognize the saints under the old covenant who had, through grace, been faithful (the remnant was always acknowledged; in one aspect we are it still, all children of Jerusalem, the desolate, and waiting under discipline and government, only now a father's). Moses and Aaron among his priests. Samuel among those who called on His name; the true prophets with no office, whatever their measure, they called on Jehovah and He heard them. The relationship of faith was there. Jehovah answered them, but governed his people, taking vengeance of their inventions; so, at the end, whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved, but how surely are their inventions punished. These are the two hinges of all God's ways, grace and the ear of goodness to the cry of the meek and needy, and government as holy and true. So with us, only we have a Father's government (still God's) after salvation and adoption. Thus new-born Israel is identified with the faithful Israel of old. The child of Ruth and Boaz is a son born to Naomi. Mara is known no more.

Psa. 100-This psalm is the summons to universal worship of Jehovah with gladness and praise. Jehovah is good. Verse 5 gives, in principle, the great truth so often laid down as Israel's hope-His mercy endureth forever-which gave them, too, to say, How long? "All ye lands," is free as a translation; it is rather, " all the land (of Israel)" or " all the earth." The claim of Israel to be His people and the sheep of His pasture seems to extend it to the earth. It is, however, to me, very doubtful if it is not simply " all the land of Israel." This closes this remarkable series picturing the coming of Jehovah (Christ) to establish righteousness and judgment in the earth and His throne in Israel. Then the Psalm- Psa. 101 -states the principles on which the King will govern His house and the land when He takes the kingdom in the name of Jehovah.

Psa. 102--is one of the most, perhaps the most, remarkable of all the psalms, and presents Christ in a way divinely admirable. Verse 10 gives the occasion of the cry with which the psalm begins. Christ is fully looked at as Man chosen out of the people and exalted to be Messiah, and now, instead of taking the kingdom, he is rejected and cast off: The time is the immediate approach of the cross, but was, we know, perhaps often, anticipated in thought, as John 12 He looks to Jehovah, who cast down Him whom He had called to the place of Messiah, but who now meets indignation and wrath. We are far, here, beyond looking at sufferings as coming from man. They did, and were felt, but men are not before Him in judgment; nor is it His expiatory work, though that which wrought it is here-the indignation and wrath. It is Himself; His own being cut off as man. He is in trouble; His heart smitten like a pelican of the wilderness and an owl of the desert. His days as a shadow that declines, withered like grass. Such was Messiah, to whom all the promises were. Jehovah endureth forever. His promises were certain. He would arise and have mercy on Zion,

and the set time was come. The whole scene from Christ on earth to the remnant in the last days is one. When Zion was restored, the heathen would fear the name of Jehovah. Jehovah will appear, and, when he builds up Zion, hear and answer the poor remnant, and thus declare His name in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem, when all nations would be gathered together then. But where was Messiah then? His strength had been weakened in His journey, His days. shortened. He had cried to Him able to deliver, to save from death. Was Zion to be restored and no Messiah; He weakened and cut off? Then comes the wondrous and glorious answer, He was Himself the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He was ever the same. His years would not fail when the created universe was rolled up like a garment. The children of His servants would continue, and their seed be established before Him. The Christ, the despised and rejected Jesus, is Jehovah the Creator. The Jehovah we have heard of coming is the Christ that came. The Ancient of Days comes, and Christ is He, though Son of Man. This contrast of the extreme humiliation and isolation of Christ, and His divine nature, is incomparably striking.

(Ps.103.- 106.)---These psalms give us the results, and the covenant in grace and in responsibility of Israel's history.

Psa. 103-The one hundred and third psalm is the voice of Messiah in Israel in praise according to God's dealing with them. Psa. 104 the same in creation. Psa. 105 God's ways in grace, from Abraham up to the giving of the land (now to be possessed in peace). Psa. 106 the acknowledgment of Israel's ways from first to last, but owning Jehovah's mercy and looking for it, for it endures forever. Grace and favor are the one foundation on which hope can be built, leading to obedience. This closes the book.

Psa. 103;104-These psalms call for a few observations on the details. No doubt the Spirit of Christ leads these praises-for His praise shall be of Jehovah in the great congregation; but it is in the name of all Israel the psalm is spoken. They have forgiveness and mercy through the tender compassions and mercy of Jehovah. As for man, he is as, grass; and the people had been as grass and withered (Isa. 40). But the mercy of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, to the obedient ones. Thus all is ascribed to goodness, yet to faithfulness, from the very nature and name of Jehovah; but the blessing is to the obedient ones, the godly remnant. Now Jehovah owned them with loving-kindness and tender mercies. All their sins were utterly removed from them. Jehovah's throne was prepared in the heavens-the only possible means of securing blessing. And now His kingdom ruled over all. It was not only His title, but established in fact. It is Israel's praise, consequent on the intervention of Jehovah, of which the previous psalms have spoken. Matt. 9:1-6, marks Jesus out as the Jehovah who now at the close healed all Israel (ver. 3). The more intimately we know Scripture, the more simple and distinct is the truth that, though Son of, man, Christ is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

Psa. 104-This psalm celebrates Jehovah as Creator. It requires very few remarks. It will be noticed that it is occupied almost entirely with the earth. He is clothed with the glory of the heavens, which is described in most beautiful language. But the earth is the subject. It is looked at as existing as the abode of men as it is, but all dependent on Jehovah's sovereign will. It is not the earth which is celebrated, but Jehovah the Creator of it. It is not paradise, but this earth, as we see it in man's hand. But the psalm looks to sinners being consumed out of it, and the wicked being no more. This gives the psalm, evidently, a peculiar character, and connects it with the introduction of the

First-begotten into the world.

Psa. 105-The hundred and fifth psalm offers thanksgiving to Jehovah, and calls on the seed of Abraham and Jacob to remember Him and glory in His name: verses 7 and 8 give the occasion. He is Jehovah their God. His judgments are in all the earth. And He has remembered His covenant forever. It was to be permanent. It was commanded to a thousand generations. He had now remembered it. The psalm then recites how God had cared for the fathers, and judged Egypt for the deliverance of His people; and, in spite of bondage, there was not a feeble person among their tribes. " He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant, and brought forth His people with joy and His chosen with gladness, and gave them the lands of the heathen, that they might observe His statutes and keep His laws." Their subsequent failure is not touched on. For now again (ver. 8) He had remembered His covenant with Abraham, and had delivered His people by judgments; for it is the accomplishment of promise. And the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The following psalm will tell us Israel's ways, but only so to bring out His mercy and never-failing goodness; for this is the theme.

Psa. 106-" Hallelujah. Give thanks to Jehovah, for it is good (or He is good). His mercy endureth forever." This last we have often seen-the expression of this unailing faithful mercy of Jehovah, which secures Israel. It then recites the character of those that are blessed; and looks personally, as in the mouth of a godly Israelite at the close, to be remembered with the favor Jehovah shows His people-desiring withal to see the good of Jehovah's chosen, and rejoice in the gladness of His nation and glory with His inheritance. It is the expression of genuine piety, which then turns to confess the sinfulness of the people-not they have sinned, though that is owned, as showing how Jehovah's mercy has endured; but we have sinned with our fathers. It is the practical piety which proves, in its own confession, enduring mercy. It then goes through all the history of Israel with this view; and at the close shows that, in spite of all, Jehovah, remembering His covenant, thought on their affliction, and caused them to be pitied of the heathen, among whom they were. For this mercy he now looks, that they may triumph in the praise of Jehovah. This closes the fourth book.

It will be remarked, that, as we had seen in the third, the fourth also speaks of all Israel, and though the humiliation of Christ is brought out and His eternal divinity contrasted with it in a remarkable way, yet it does not enter into Jewish circumstances particularly, nor the association of Christ with them, though His Spirit be in it all. In Psa. 94 antichrist is presented to us; but it is for his destruction by the coming in of Messiah, the King, as Jehovah, the Judge.

Book 5.-In the fifth book the people are looked at as brought back, and a general survey of God's ways taken, with a kind of divine commentary on it all, ending, as all His ways surely will, in praise.

Psa. 107 - The one hundred and seventh psalm is a kind of heading or introduction to all this. It celebrates the enduring of God's mercy forever, that blessed formula of faith in the unchanging goodness of Jehovah in all ages, from the display of grace in David's time. It is restored Israel's part especially to chaunt it. The psalm celebrates the two parts of that deliverance in which the mercy has been shown. They are redeemed from the hand of the enemy; they are gathered back from east, west, north, and south. This is the double character of the restoration of Israel: deliverance in the land, and gathering from amongst the heathen on every side. But the proper theme of the psalm is the goodness of Jehovah,-the various circumstance of deliverance of every kind, and that as an answer to the cry of distress of man who has brought himself low by his folly,

are gone through with the desire that men would praise Jehovah for His goodness; His wonderful works for the children of men. Israel is he in whom it may be fully learned. It goes on to their chastisement in the land after their return, but adds the complete ruin of the pride of men as the result. He pours contempt on princes and sets the poor on high from affliction, making his families like a flock. The great result of God's government is then shown-the righteous rejoice-all iniquity has its mouth stopped. Whoso is wise and will consider these ways of God will understand the lovingkindness of Jehovah. It is to be remarked how entirely the goodness of God, here rehearsed, is shown in temporal things. It does not for that cease to be His goodness and to have its sweetness, but it gives the character of the ground on which these teachings go, very clearly.

Psa. 108 - Is a psalm of a peculiar character, being composed of the ends of two others, the earlier parts of which were the cry of deep distress, and the latter containing the answer to the cry in faith and hope, have been here put together. The former part of this. (the end. of Psa. 57), expresses the fixed assurance of the godly heart, who can now give praise, and will praise among the peoples (ammim), united now in relationship with Israel, and in the various races of people. But all the results of God's favor are not yet produced, and the same faith, taking up Psa. 60, leaving out the cry of distress, celebrates the going out of Him whose mercy is above the heavens, to bring into subjection all those who are yet in possession of different parts of the territory of Israel.

It may be remarked here, that the general character of this, as indeed of the previous book, as far as regards the position of Israel, is that of the people being restored by God to the land and delivered, but not free yet from attack, nor in possession of all the promised land; so that there is thanksgiving and praise, for God has interfered, and the state of Israel is changed, but there remains the need of help and securing against enemies yet undestroyed and the full blessing of God in peace. A very few psalms at the end are of unmingled praise, and only praise called for. The state of deliverance, and yet full security waited for, is expressed at the end of psalm 107.; as to the final deliverance, the fact only is stated.

The connection of the two parts of this psalm is not without interest. The first part praises Jehovah for what He is as known to the heart in faith. His mercy is great above the heavens and His truth reaches to the clouds, mercy being, as ever, first, as the root of all. The second part begins with looking for Jehovah to rise up as God above the heavens and His glory above all the earth. He is to take His place and vindicate His name as God, that His beloved may be delivered. Verse 7 brings out the answer of God, taking up in detail all Israel's rights as His. Thus Jehovah has war with the nations possessing their land, but it is in Israel and through God they will do valiantly. Hence here it is God, not Jehovah, because it is not the covenant relation, but what He, who is so, is, in contrast with man whose help is vain.

Psa. 109-It is certain that this psalm applies to Judas; but we shall see in reading it that it cannot apply, all of it, exclusively to him-and this is a help to us to understand the way in which the psalms are written. There is the general condition of the saints in the latter day, and that even in a way which cannot apply to Christ personally at all (as 118. 10, 11); passages of general application to the righteous, and others which may be, and some with prophetic purpose and exactitude, to Christ, and the circumstances in which He was. All this has to be before the mind, and divine teaching sought. I have said that the application of the psalm is not exclusively to Judas. The greater part of it is in the plural number. Up to the fifth verse, from the outset, the enmity of the

wicked, of the band of Jews hostile to Christ, and hostile to the godly remnant, is spoken of, Judas was a special instance of this wicked hatred against Christ. But I have no doubt of the general application of even this part, and that the judgments called for are general, and no prophetic revelation, that Judas had wife and children, or anything of the sort. The 20th verse makes, indeed, the generalization of the application of these deprecations certain. So we can have no doubt that the blessed Lord stood in this sorrow; but I have none the less that it is merely as taking in grace the place of the remnant, and that the psalm applies to the remnant, who go through similar sorrows. Verses 30 and 31 show it. Still, it is most certain Christ entered fully into it, and this is of the deepest interest to us now, that His being in it gave it its true character.

Psa. 110-This psalm though of the very highest interest, is in application so simple, that it needs but brief comment. The despised and poor man, hated for his love, is David's Lord, and called to sit at the right hand of Jehovah. All the church-truth of association with Him on high is passed over, and the psalm passes from the session of Christ at God's right hand to the sending the rod of His strength out of Zion. This shows how entirely all is Jewish in these psalms. Note further, it is the answer to His rejection on earth. It is not His coming from heaven to destroy antichrist. He has already taken possession of Zion, and the rod of His strength goes out thence. This answers to the whole position of this book, when we have seen the Jews restored, but the dominion of Israel or of Christ in Zion not yet made good. But the people are now, amminadab, in the day of his power. Alas! how different in the day of His humiliation! That was depicted in Psa. 109 But this is the morning of a new day, in which we have not fathers, but the children of grace. Then we have the certain oath of Jehovah for Christ sitting thus a priest on his throne on earth. This is promise and prophecy. The day, too, of His wrath is looked forward to. Adonai, who is at Jehovah's right hand, has a coming day of wrath-one already noticed, when His enemies are made His footstool. While sitting at the right hand of Jehovah it is not so. It is then the time of mercy, the accepted time. Christ has been heard and exalted, and His work amongst men is the result of His atonement in grace. Now the time of wrath is come, in which the judgment written will be executed. I suppose in ver. 6 it is the head over a great country-the head of power in the earth, not antichrist, nor even the beast. These are destroyed on His coming from heaven. Self-exalting man is brought low. Christ, who, in humble dependence on His Father, took the refreshment given Him according to God's will on the way, shall have His head high, exalted in the earth. These psalms give the groundwork of the whole scene. What now follows is a review of the circumstances, and indeed from of old, and such as are to come, with reflections, so to speak, on them, and, praise as to the result.

(Ps 111- 113.)-These psalms go together as a hallelujah in reference to Jehovah's ways with Israel in their deliverance. First, Ps. 111.-The works of Jehovah, glorious in themselves, He has made to be remembered by His mighty intervention-in righteousness; yet showing Him full of compassion, mindful of His covenant also.. He has shown His people the power of His works, to give them the heritage of the heathen. Moreover, His works last. The occasion of the praise, a knowledge of His name, is, that He has sent redemption to His people. Jehovah being such, the fear of Him is the beginning of wisdom. This gives good understanding in our walk. Faith knows this. The Lord's appearing in judgment will indeed prove it to the world.

Psa. 112-Then the hundred and twelfth psalm on the other hand, gives the character of those who fear the Lord, and the blessing that comes upon such when the government of God is made good. This shows how impossible it is to apply these psalms to the position of the saints now, though the

exercise of faith and piety may be often in the spring of it the same. Still, then it is the deliverance of Israel which brings out Jehovah's name. (vers. 9, 10.) Ps. 113.-The hundred and thirteenth psalm is more general and full of universal praise, but on the same occasion...it is from this time forth for evermore. It is now widespread over all the earth; but He is Israel's God who dwells on high, yet looks down so low; but to exalt those He loves, to set them with the princes of His people, and fill the hopeless with joy in their habitation.

Psa. 114-The hundred and fourteenth psalm is of the highest style of poetry, but is important to us as directly connecting the ancient deliverance of Israel out of Egypt with the present deliverance of the people, and seeing the Mm Jehovah in both; calling the earth to tremble at the presence of Jehovah. It was right in these days. At Jacob's deliverance then the sea fled and Jordan was driven back. What was this; was it affright, or were they before the presence of man? The earth was now to tremble before Him who appeared for the deliverance of His people then, and for their sakes turned the sea into dry land, and the flintstone into a springing well.

Psa. 115-This psalm gives the true and full ground of this deliverance, as seen in the heart of faith. It is not that they, but that Jehovah may be praised specially in His and then His faithfulness to promise. The godly, that is, the Spirit, then refers to that cry which was the bitter grief spoken of in Joel, and referred to in Psa. 42 and 43. Why should the heathen say, Where is now their God? So in the same spirit Moses says, the-Egyptians shall hear of it, And what will thou do to thy great name? What a blessed boldness of faith. This character of sorrows shows how it was on the cross and in those last sorrows that Christ came into this character of sorrow. For the Jews practically said this to Him then, but never could have done so before. The believing Israelite's answer is-Our God is in heaven. Be then contrasts Him with idols. And Israel, the house of Aaron, and all that fear Jehovah, are called to trust Him. This last would open the door to all Gentiles who sought Jacob's face. It then recites, what we have seen to be the ground these psalms go on, that He had been mindful of and Would bless them; yea, increase them more and more, them and their children. They were the blessed of Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth. Heaven was His; the earth had He given to men. This marks how distinctly the earthly blessing is the scene before Us,. for he has not given us the earth, but the cross in it; and heaven, and what is there, as our own things. We seek the things which are above, not the things which are on the earth. So, in even almost a stronger manner, the dead do not praise Jehovah; but we, says the Spirit in them, will praise from this the time of their final deliverance, for evermore; we say, to depart and to be with Christ is far better.

Psa. 116-This psalm celebrates this deliverance when they were at the very point of death. Jehovah had heard them, and they would walk before the Lord in the land of the living, in this view, it is a continuing recital of the gracious mercy of Jehovah; they were brought low and He helped them. It drew out their love to'. Him. Such was Jehovah's character, Be preserves the simple. The soul so sorely tried could return to its rest. The death of His saints was precious in His sight; and now, before all His people, in the courts of Jehovah's house, in the midst of Jerusalem, He would pay the vows made in His distress when he called on Jehovah. He would offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving. The quotation of the Apostle shows how these psalms can he used as containing holy principles of life for every saint. In spite of suffering and trial, trust in Jehovah opened the mouth of the believer. The passage 'does not apply to Paul, nor did he say in his haste that all men were liars, though there be something like hill. "all seek their own"; but the general and important

principle the. Apostle can adopt. The word translated." haste" is. not haste in the sense of moral defect, hastiness, but in distress, rather sudden distress or alarm, from the pressure of circumstances, and hence basting away.

Psa. 117-This Psalm is the calling. the other nations and peoples to come and praise Jehovah,..who will be now King over all the earth. They join, and are brought happily into this relationship, Jehovah being made known to them by His ways with Israel. Merciful kindness here, as ever, first; and truth enduring forever, which no failure has made to fail. This, as the last, is a Hallelujah.

Psa. 118-So also is this psalm, though not formally so, rendering praise and thanksgiving as promised, connected with or rather founded on the known formula-His mercy endureth forever. The same that in psalm. 115. were called to trust in Jehovah are now called to praise Him. From verse 5, the Holy Spirit speaks in the person of delivered Israel, and speaks of the faithfulness of Jehovah, and now, he being on their side, man need not be feared; Jehovah is better than man, Jehovah better than princes. Verses 10-18 unfold the circumstances and dealings through which Israel has passed. All nations had compassed them; in Jehovah's name he would destroy them. They are quenched as fire. Verse 13, the power of the enemy had thrust sore at them; Jehovah helped them. The result in rejoicing and joy is chaunted in verses 14-17. Another aspect of it is given in verse 18. It was withal Jehovah's chastening, and He had chastened them sore, but not given them over to death, which was the power of the enemy for them. Thus we have the full character of trial, as we may see it even in Job. Instruments, men,-even all nations; next the enemy by them, and acting on the spirit, thrusting sore at the soul; but behind it, and before it, too, is God chastening, but not giving over. Now the gates of righteousness open before Israel. The turning to this at once, as the result of trial, is beautiful: he will go in and praise Jehovah. It is withal the gate of Jehovah, and the righteous enter into it. Israel there will praise, for Jehovah has heard him and become his salvation; but further and deeper truth comes out here -there is no restoration of Israel without Messiah, and Israel now owns Him once despised: The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. This is Jehovah's doing, and is marvelous in our eyes. We see in the expression, "our eyes," who is the real speaker, though the voice be one. This is the day Jehovah has made; it is His day, the blessing of His people in connection with Messiah, and His people rejoice in it. And now they cry, Hosannah to the Son of David! the Jehovah of Israel; and say, Blessed be he that comes in His name | This gives us the witness for the Lord's own teaching, who it is that speaks in the psalm, and to what time it applies; for the house was left desolate, and they were not to see Him again till they said, Blessed be he that cometh. So that it is Israel, that is, the remnant, who speak, and in the day of their repentance under grace, when they are to see Messiah again. They bless Him that comes out of the house of Jehovah. Jehovah is the God of strength, He bath given Israel light, and now worship and sacrifice are offered to Him that has delivered and blessed. Now they say, Thou art my God, and praise and exalt Him. The psalm closes with the well-known verse of Israel's thankful praise, Give thanks to Jehovah, for He is good, for His mercy. endureth forever, with which it had commenced. Thus the spiritual apprehension of God's dealings, the coming' to worship Jehovah in righteousness and the owning the despised and rejected Messiah, are all unfolded in connection with the deliverance and blessing of Israel, and the full manifestation of Jehovah's nature and character.

Psa. 119-The hundred and nineteenth psalm is in general the law written in the heart. This gives it an important place in the series of psalms. It is found distinctly connected too with Israel's sorrows in the last days. and their previous departure from God. The different divisions of the psalm show, I think, each a different phase of the exercises of heart connected with the law being written on it, though the general principle runs of course through it. I will very briefly notice the main bearing of each. The first part (ver. 1-8) presents to us naturally the great general principle. It is the third time we find the psalms taking up a state of man in general, and pronouncing " Blessed ": the return of the soul in trial and distress to the great truth of the first psalm, where the effect is seen under the immediate government of God. Psa. 32 gives the blessedness of forgiveness. This, of the walk with God on the return of the wanderer, in spite of all difficulties and contempt. We have indeed another special blessing at the end of the first book, where Christ is so fully brought in. In the last psalm of that book he is pronounced blessed who understands Christ's position, be it in Himself or in them who walk in His footsteps; for the first psalm supposed blessedness under the government of God, making good all His will towards the just. In fact, as we know, to man's eye this wholly failed (bringing a heavenly and divine righteousness and redemption). Hence true blessedness was shown in discerning, in understanding the position in which, as rejected by men, that true blessed One was-that true poor man-taking Himself practically the place He describes as blessed, as we have seen, in the sermon on the Mount, while the great truth of the law in the heart is laid down. Yet the circumstances also come out in this first part-"Forsake me not utterly."

In the second part (ver. 9-16) the word associates with. God. Not only is one blessed who keeps it, but it is cleansing: the desire of the heart is positively fixed on it. (See the connection of Jehovah and His word, ver. 10, 11).

In the third part (ver. 17-24) we find very distinctly the leaning on divine mercy in trial, connected with the law in the heart. The godly Israelite looks to Jehovah's bountiful dealing, but with a view to hearty obedience, (v. 18). Verse 19 shows his state. Verse 21, as we have seen in all this book, Jehovah's intervention, already known in deliverance, though not in complete blessing. Verses 22, 23, the contempt the poor remnant undergo. Jehovah's law had been his delight and comfort under it.

In the fourth part (ver. 25-32) the trial is more inward His soul is cleaving to the dust, but he looks to divine relief according to the word. His desire looks to the effect of that living water from God. He has been open before God, has declared His own ways: so it ever is. He desires all way of evil to be removed by God from him. He has held fast by the word-looks that God should not put him to shame. But he is looking for enlargement of heart, that he may run freely in God's ways. Such is the sure effect when tinder the discipline of God. A soul who has found delight in His will and holiness is yet looking to run in liberty. Though in the heart, the word here referred to is more of an outwardly expressed will, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, a beautiful moral expression of the remnant; with the Christian it will be more absolute and inward, more holiness than testimonies; (though it may begin by them perhaps,) whether in his first divine calling or after discipline. It is for him walking in the light.. as God is in the light -not the " ordinances and commandments of Jehovah." "Yet it is in principle essentially the same. To apply this psalm directly is to lower the divine standard of thought for the saint now. But the nature of the moral exercise may be most instructively used-just as subjection and confidence in trial is always. right, though the forms of it in the Jew are wholly below the Christian's, (Comp. Philippians, where we have Christian experience

with this).

The fifth part (ver. 33-40) looks for divine guidance, and teaching the ways and law of God.

The sixth, (ver. 41-48), for manifest mercies in that path, that he may have courage before adversaries, and hold fast the law of God.

In the seventh, (ver. 49-56), having been quickened by the word, he reckons on it, for God has caused him to trust it as His; so that now he leans on all its assurances. In troubles, when there was no outward cheering of nature, it sustained his heart.

This brings him to the eighth, (ver. 57-64), Jehovah was thus his portion. He had sought Him, judged himself, turned his feet to Jehovah's testimonies. He reckoned on Him, and would thank him in the secret watches of the night, when his heart was left to itself. He was the companion of those that feared Jehovah. This brightens up his thoughts, and he sees his power in mercy around. This is a beautiful picture of the working of the heart.

The ninth brings out the circumstances of the psalm, (65-72). In the comfort of the last part he can look with God's eye and mind at these circumstances. These

are much more before our view, that is, feelings about them, in this part of the psalm. Jehovah has already dealt well with him according to His word, and he looks for divine teaching to understand the mind of God well. He had been under discipline; but before that he had gone astray, but now had got into the spirit and path of obedience. He sees the proud lying against him, and their heart fat as grease; (no link in state or obedience with Jehovah;) and sees how good it was to have been afflicted, that he might learn Jehovah's statutes. Nothing marks more the setting right of the soul than this-the turning to Jehovah's will-" Lord, what wilt thou have Me to do?" -and counting all good that leads to this, and gives God's will as authority, and morally its place in the heart.

The tenth part (ver. 73-80) has two main thoughts. Jehovah is his Creator, has formed him. He looks to Him to guide His own poor creature as a faithful Creator. Those that fear Jehovah will be glad when they see him, because he hopes in His word. Secondly, he knows thus that in very faithfulness He has caused him to be afflicted, and now looks for mercies to come unto him, and the proud to be ashamed, and that those that fear Jehovah may turn to Him. All this is linked with soundness in Jehovah's statutes.

In the eleventh (ver. 81-88) the cry becomes more urgent. He is under the pressure of trial, his soul fainting for deliverance-looking for Jehovah to execute judgment; for he is walking in Jehovah's precepts. And the proud persecute him wrongfully: they heed not Jehovah, or His law.

But, twelfth, (ver. 89-96), creation is a witness to the abiding faithfulness of God. His word is settled in heaven. But for Jehovah's law, which sustained his heart, he had perished in the pressure of affliction. In truth, how precious to have the word in such a world! We have more than commandments. But we can say, I have seen an end of all perfection. Another and more confident thought grows up out of all this exercise-" I am thine."

In thirteen, (ver. 97-104), he expresses his own internal delight in Jehovah's law, and its effect in spiritual intelligence.

In fourteen (ver. 105-412), it guides his path. Afflicted and oppressed, he looks for comfort to Him whose judgments he has taken as his path, in spite of enemies and their snares.

The fifteenth (ver. 113-120) gives the horror of vain thoughts and looking to God as his hiding-place, with his rejection of evildoers. He looks to Jehovah to uphold him, that he may not be ashamed in his hope; and looks with solemn trembling on the sure judgment of the wicked.

In sixteen (ver. 121-128), he presses more earnestly the interference of Jehovah in deliverance. The way in which the wicked have made void Jehovah's law only makes him cling the closer to it. It was time for Jehovah to work.

The following parts all bring out the effects of his strong attachment to Jehovah's law and testimonies, its value in every aspect for his heart; the trial he was in still in this path of righteousness; and how he would walk in Jehovah's ways when set free; his grief at transgressors. He looks for teaching, quickening, keeping, and recalls the everlasting character of God's testimonies; so that he held fast, though oppressed by the wicked.

The last part (ver. 169-176) is more general as a closing one, though in the same spirit. It • sums up, so to speak, the whole. It desires that the cry of the oppressed delighter in the law may come up before Jehovah - asks for understanding according to His word- for deliverance according to it-assures praise when taught His statutes. His tongue will speak of His word. He has the sense of their righteousness-looks for the hand of Jehovah to help, because he has chosen His precepts. Jehovah's salvation has been longed for, (man not trusted in.) Jehovah's law has been his delight, not his own will, nor the prosperous man's ways. He looks for life, that he may praise, and that Jehovah's judgment may help him; for the power of death and evil was before him. He owns finally his having gone astray, and looks for Jehovah as the Shepherd of Israel to seek Him, for he has not forgotten His commandments. Such is the moral state of Israel in the last days when, in their land I apprehend, the law is written in their heart, but full deliverance and final blessing are not come.

Psa. 120- 134.-We now come to the songs of degree, which depict, I doubt not, the outward circumstances of the same period, when Israel is in the land, but the power of Gog not yet destroyed.

Psa. 120-The first of this- series begins the statement of the cry sent up to Jehovah by the godly in his distress-and Jehovah heard. The special charge here is deceit and falsehood. Judgment should come on it. But it is against the godly himself, not the violence and oppression done to Jerusalem, or the apostate oppression of the people.. His woe is to dwell in Mesech, and among the tents of Kedar. Wrong is in their hearts; and when the godly spoke of peace, they prepared for battle. It does not seem to me to be the oppression of antichrist or the beast at Jerusalem, but to apply to those who in the land found themselves where the last hostile power which had pretended to favor them, and had led many to apostatize for quietness and prosperity, now showed himself as only a deceitful oppressor.

Psa. 121-In this Psalm Jehovah, he is assured, will be His protection. He who never slumbers nor sleeps. He will not suffer His foot to be moved. The general intention is plain. I am not quite sure what is the force of the first verse, unless to identify Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, with the hill of Zion, and the city of the great King. However this may be, Jehovah, as the great

security, is the- subject of the psalm. This is very distinct, and His name reiterated for the purpose. He is referred to in the double character, Creator of heaven and earth, and the keeper of Israel, especially of the godly. Jehovah would preserve him in all circumstances and forever.

Psa. 122-The hundred and twenty-seventh Psalm celebrates Jerusalem. The saint is glad to go there. The tribes go there; the thrones of judgment, of the house of David, are there. His brethren and companions, and the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel, their God, made his heart cling to it. It is a restoring of the associations with Jerusalem, recalling the old and- establishing the new ones. The series then returns -

Psa. 123-To their sorrows and resource. Blessing, is not fully come; but Jehovah is looked to in the heavens, but as the God of Israel, the remnant say, " our God " now. But they are filled yet with contempt of those that are at ease and of the proud. The power of the enemy had been just now-

Psa. 124-Fully displayed against them, the godly in the land who trusted in Jehovah. But they had escaped, but only by Jehovah being on their side, or they had been utterly swallowed up by the last power of the enemy, I apprehend,. when the apostate beast and antichrist were gone from the scene.

Psa. 125-The position of those who trust in Jehovah is celebrated, in virtue of this intervention of Jehovah, who would now protect them forever, and they abide forever. Peace would be on Israel. Those that turn to their crooked ways, Jehovah would lead them forth with the open evildoers: in judgment. The rod of wickedness would not rest upon the lot of the righteous. There would. be an exclusion- of the: rod of wickedness, what represented the wicked as a tribe-separation from its mischief, that the righteous might not go astray. All this, I apprehend, refers- to the last inroad of the final power of Gog, or the last condition of the Assyrian, perhaps to the eighth of Daniel; only that that gives its whole character, not merely its final one; also to the final king of the north, who comes in. after the willful king in Dan. 11.

Psa. 126-The heart of the godly now finds its center in Zion, when deliverance has been learned; for so it will be. (Comp. Isa. 29:4,7). How low she was brought, according to Psa. 124 (Isa. 29:4. Comp. Isa. 17:12-14, and other passages). It was as a dream, so full, so unlooked for the joy. The very heathen now owned the. Lord's hand. But the godly look for the full blessing, and the captivity to be turned again in the fullness of possessed blessing. Still, God had manifested Himself; and to the 'faithful taking up His testimony in sorrow, and when it was shame and reproach, it was now a harvest of joy. So it ever is; for full joy only comes through sorrow-for the testimony of God is in a world of evil.

Psa. 127-These full blessings thus sought, the building the house, the keeping the city, the desired abundance of children, are all Jehovah's doing and gift, or man labors and watches in vain. The blessing is distinctly Jewish.

Psa. 128-A numerous progeny are distinctly God's gift: happy the man that has his quiver full of them. The blessings spoken of are declared to be the portion of whoever fears Jehovah. It is present temporal blessing -blessing out of Zion: and, the desire of the godly's heart, Jerusalem in prosperity all their days. Although the direct object be the remnant, the godly Gentile, so fearing Jehovah, owning Israel's God would, as a principle, enjoy the blessing, and rejoice with His people.

Psa. 129-This Psalm recurs now with joy to the sorrows and trials through which the children of Zion have gone. But Jehovah is righteous, and has cut 'asunder the cords of the wicked. The haters of Zion (for Zion is here always the central thought) are withered, without resource, and without being desired.

Psa. 130 takes up another subject, of the place of 'which we have found clear traces before-the sins of Israel between the people and God. It is not, however, now merely legal. distress. Confidence in Jehovah characterizes it, though accompanied by depth of distress and humiliation. This is the effect of the connection of the sense of sin and of mercy in the soul; mere legal distress is more selfish in its terror, though admirable 'for destroying confidence in self and throwing on mercy; conviction with the sense of -mercy is more the sense of wronging the God of goodness. It is a deeper work after all. Here there is forgiveness with Jehovah that he might be feared, and the soul waits on Jehovah, though it has cried out of the depths; there is desire, grace., being looked to, as well as waiting for Jehovah (ver. 6). The groundwork is stated in verse 7, while verse 8 skews confidence in the full results. Verse 4, is the upright acknowledgment of where the need came from, grace meeting that need; verse 7, that which can be reckoned on in Jehovah; verse 8, the full counting on it for Israel, that is, redemption, not from troubles, but from iniquities.

Psa. 131-The hundred and thirty-first Psalm briefly states the humble absence of all self-confidence, that so he has walked. Israel is now to trust in Jehovah and forever.

Psa. 132-This is, in some respects, a very interesting psalm. It is the restoration of the ark of the covenant to its resting-place, and the promises of Jehovah, in answer to the supplication of his servant. It is founded on David's bringing the ark up to Zion. This, as we have seen in the historical books, has a very important place. It was grace acting by power when Israel had so completely failed that the bond of the people with God, so far as it was founded on the people's responsibility, was wholly broken, and the ark gone into captivity, and Ichabod written on all. But now, in a fuller and more lasting, sense, a habitation was found for the mighty God of Jacob, where the godly would worship low before His footstool,. the fruit of David's body, the Messiah of Jehovah, was to sit on His throne, and that for evermore. Jehovah was entering into His rest. He and the ark of His strength. Before, if He arose it was to scatter His enemies, and then He returned to the many thousands of Israel. But now the enemies were scattered, and 'Jehovah arose to take His rest in Israel. The sovereign election of God is seen, verse 13; and, then, it will be remarked, that the promise, in answer to the supplication, goes each time beyond the request. (Compare 14, 15, and 8; 16 and 9; 17, 18, and 10). This is of the highest interest as showing the grace of the Lord and how his love surpasses all the hopes of his people, His interest in them.

Psa. 133-The people are now dwelling together in unity: it is as the anointing of Aaron which, poured on the head, gave the odors of divine favor on all, as the abundant dew of the lofty hills, but which brought, however high its source, its refreshing power where God had ordained blessing and life for evermore. I see no need to seek for any mountain of a like name near Hermon, but the contrary.

Psa. 134-This Psalm closes the series by calling on the servants of Jehovah to bless Him. Night and day should furnish praise to Him, and in the holy place holy hands be lifted up to bless. Jehovah was there, His servants there to praise Him, Jehovah, who made heaven and earth, blessed now not simply from heaven but out of Zion. It is the place of blessing Jehovah, and

Jehovah blessing. I should be disposed to count the last verse rather the voice of Christ as the son of David, something in the character of Melchisedek, who said, Blessed be the Most High God, and blessed be Abraham of the Most High God, only specially in connection with Jehovah (as Zech. 6:13) blessing the godly remnant out of Zion. The last verse is a kind of answer to the call of the preceding ones; the Spirit of Christ in the remnant calls on Jehovah's servants to bless Him, and they from Him bless the godly one.

(Psa. 135 and 136)--Both these Psalms celebrate Jehovah, who has delivered Israel and now dwells in Jerusalem, and give thanks to Him whose mercy has endured forever. The Creator of all things in goodness who first delivered them, and remembered them to redeem them when brought low.

Ps. 135. is a very characteristic psalm, giving a remarkable key to the interpretation of the book, and linking it with the early statements of Jehovah as to His relationship to Israel, so as to bind together their history in one whole. The subject is Hallelujah -praise- the name of Jehovah. He is good, it is pleasant to do it, for He has chosen Jacob and Israel for His peculiar treasure. He is then (verse 6) celebrated as the Almighty God, doing what He 'pleased, daily disposing of creation. Then as He who executed judgment on the oppressors of Israel, and freed them, and drove out the heathen and gave them their land. Now comes His name in 'connection with Israel and in contrast with idols' and the two passages, in one of which He first took up Israel forever under the name. of Jehovah, and, in the other, prophetically announced their deliverance when they should have wholly and utterly failed, are cited from Ex. 3:15 and Deut. 32:36. The first takes the name of Lord God of their Fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when He sends Moses to deliver them and declares this is His name forever; His memorial to all generations, and then promises deliverance and bringing into the land: then He takes the name of Jehovah. The second, is in the prophetic song of Moses, when he has drawn out to them their picture as apostate, their spot not the spot of God's children, when they forsook God who made them, and provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, and Jehovah hid His face from them, and, but for the fear of man's pride, had made the remembrance of them to cease from among men.. Then, when they should be helpless and hopeless in themselves, Jehovah would judge His people, and repent Himself concerning His servants, execute judgments on the heathen, and then make them rejoice with His people. So that these two verses give the first deliverance and purpose of God, and the judgments and ways of God in the last days, to which the Psalms have brought us. Thus they give the clear key to the application of the Psalms themselves. Then we have (ver. 15-18) the present judgment of the idols, spoken of in Deut. 32, and to which they had fallen away. The psalm closes with the summons to those already generally specified-the divers parts. of Israel and all that fear Jehovah-to bless Jehovah; the house of Israel, of Aaron, of Levi, and all that fear Jehovah; and this now out of Zion, even Jehovah, of whom now they could say that He dwelt in Jerusalem.

Psa. 136-The hundred and thirty-sixth psalm may be considered as the answer to. this summons. It is characterized by the formulary, as often noticed, the expression of Jehovah's unchanging goodness to Israel in spite of all; His mercy endureth forever. It celebrates Him as Creator, God of gods, the Deliverer of Israel, who had led them through the wilderness, as He, who by power slaying mighty kings, had given them the inheritance of the land; and who, finally, remembering them in their low estate had redeemed them from it, and now supplied every living thing with food-the God of heaven. This, in a certain sense, closes the historical psalms.

(Psa. 137,- 150.)-We have then a kind of supplementary series;-first, of their characteristic sorrows and Jehovah's ways in the latter days, and then of millennial praises. The sorrows are from Psa. 137 to Psa. 144; the latter, however, being the expectation of deliverance and blessing, and the millennial praises from 145. to the end. Psa. 139 has a peculiar character, as will be at once seen.

Psa. 137-This refers, and alone does, to give the full history of Israel's sorrows, to Babylon, which has only a mystic fulfillment in the latter days, but has its importance, because at that time was the closing of the period of the divine presence in Jerusalem and the setting up of the power of the Gentiles; but faith could not contain itself in a strange land nor sing the Lord's songs there, for they were not a heavenly people, hence it turns to Jerusalem, which faith never forgets. Babylon is to be destroyed and her judgments are desired, Edom's enmity not forgotten. The object of the psalm is to bring out their attachment to Zion in their captivity, there was no separation of heart from it in the strange land.

Psa. 138-gives the ground of faith-God's word; and now the godly turns to own_ it in worship; and when that word reaches the kings of the earth they shall turn and praise Jehovah and sing in His ways. Nor is His truth all. Though so high He has respect to the lowly; He revives, protects, and perfects all that concerns the believing righteous. His mercy endureth forever.

Psa. 139-This psalm, shows the complete exercise of heart that belongs to God's ways. Though faithfulness perfects all, not a thought escapes God. "There is no getting out of His presence, nor where He sees not. But this brings in another aspect. He knows all, because also He has formed all. This connects us with His taking perfect notice of us in goodness. He cares for us, watches over every member that is formed, as He knows each thought. If He does so, He has His own too, and these are precious to us. This is just the change and working of faith: It begins necessarily by conscience under God's eye; for it brings us into His presence, and then gets at God's thoughts-who has formed us for Himself, and then unfolded' bondless spheres of His own blessing and ways. God watches over him in the silence of sleep; waking, therefore, he finds himself with God. But, further, this connection with God is a perfect breaking with the wicked. God will slay them. And He calls on them to depart from him; therefore he looks at the wicked with horror, because of what they are to God-for himself, that he may be searched throughout, that no wickedness may remain in him. This psalm goes far in the relationship of man's spirit with God, though it looks to the external judgment of the wicked, and uses language which becomes verified in the Church figuratively, and which is so also in the resurrection. The great direct point in it is the full searching out of man's heart, as it will be then, as it must be ever. But this searching, when we are under our own responsibility, is, Whither shall I flee from God? But when we are God's workmanship, that is, when grace and power have come in, God's thoughts become precious to us, and we can ask to be searched, known, and tried-the more the better; that, emptied of self, we may be able to enjoy God.

Then also we look for leading. The will is broken, as the thoughts are judged, and our desire is to be led of God. We see at the same time that the character of the psalm connects it with the latter day. Surely, thou wilt slay the wicked. It looks for judgment, and has hatred and horror of the haters of God.

The five following psalms go over ground which we have trodden in detail, only they apply to a restored Israel,, still in conflict, and not fully blessed.

Ps. 140.-This psalm looks for deliverance from the evil and violent man. Israel is in connection with Jehovah, but compassed about by the proud.

Psa. 141-The hundred and forty-first psalm having learned the government of Jehovah, the godly looks for his words and thoughts to be kept of Jehovah, that Jehovah may bless him. Smiting he will accept as discipline. He looks for acceptance for his prayers. And even in the judgment coming upon the proud, (Israel, I apprehend,) he looks to it as breaking them down so as to hear His word. It is such a psalm as David might have penned when pursued by Saul. He rooks for judgment on the wicked, but that calamities may arrest some.

Psa. 142-looks to Jehovah alone as a refuge.

Psa. 143-Specially for mercy and goodness, that in the midst of the persecution of the enemy, and the pressure on the godly, Jehovah would not enter into judgment with him, but show His loving kindness. As the servant of Jehovah, he begs to be taught and guided. Thus these psalms are all of one in deep distress; but they look, in relationship with Jehovah, (not cast out, and knowing Him only as God,) for the cutting off of the enemies.

Psa. 144-The hundred and forty-fourth psalm blesses Jehovah as the source of strength. Its plea for the destruction of the enemies is, What is man? Why should Jehovah make account*of such a worm, and delay bringing in blessing by thus lingering in judgment. Deliverance is thus looked for, for the full, true, final blessing of Israel. Happy the people in such a case: happy the people who have Jehovah for their God. Directly, the psalm applies to David himself, who is named in it, and owns God, as subduing his, David's, people under him, as the source of royal power. I do not see that it brings in any personally in the latter day. Did it so, it would be " the prince;' for there will be a human house of David on the earth. But it is the bringing in of the people into that state of subjection under Christ,' when they will be willing in the day of His power-when, in the day of Jezreel, they will appoint themselves one head-when the day will be great, when Jehovah will utterly scatter the power of the enemies of Israel, give them a new song, and bless them. Messiah will surely be their Head; but it is prophetically spoken of by David in person. The true Beloved will be their sure Head.

Psa. 146 introduces the full final praises. This first the outpouring of the heart in praise to Him as the God of Jacob, celebrating what He is, and the comfort of trusting Him, the Creator, the Helper of the oppressed, the Comforter of the lowly, the Lover of the righteous, who turns the way of the wicked upside down. He shall reign forever, even Zion's God to all generations. The character of this praise, after what we have gone through, is most simple. In the next Psalm--

Psa. 147-The saints take their place now in Jerusalem and Zion to say what He is. He is their God; He builds up Jerusalem and gathers together the outcasts of Israel, healing the broken in heart and binding up their wounds. Ver. 4, 5, His greatness is celebrated and His goodness and judgment. Ver. 7-9, His goodness in blessing the earth. Ver. 10, 11, His pleasure, not in animal strength, but in them that fear Him. Ver. 12, The song of praise returns to celebrate His ways towards Jerusalem again. Ver. 16-18, His dealing with the seasons in power. Ver. 19, 20, His showing His word and judgments to Jacob as he had not done to any nation. They might have seen the creative and providential power of Jacob's God, hut His mind and laws were His people's.

Ps. 148- This psalm calls first on heaven, and all in it, to take their part in the great Hallelujah, and praise Jehovah who had created and sustains them in their place; and then on the earth, with all in it, to join in praising Him whose name alone is excellent, and His glory above the earth and heaven, but who exalts the horn of His people, the praise of His saints, (the godly ones we have seen throughout, but who now are fully Israel,) a people near to Him. The great Creator whom heaven and earth must praise is the god of Israel, and Israel His people.

Psa. 149-Here the call is upon Israel to praise; the creation and Israel, we have seen all through, to be coordinate (the new creation and the church,) and to form the sphere of the Psalms. Still, it is now in the congregation of the saints. Israel's relationship is double; Jehovah has formed him for His praise; he is king in Zion. The reasons of praise are then given. Jehovah takes pleasure in His people: but we learn who have this place. He beautifies the meek with salvation. Then he can say, Let the saints be joyful in glory; but if the high praises of God are in their mouths, the sword of earthly judgment and vengeance is in their hands to execute it on the nations and peoples, to bind the mighty ones who had once oppressed them. It was the judgment written. Such honor have all His saints. The persons here in view are thus evident, as is their position-the meek in Israel now delivered, and the Lord Jesus king in Zion, execute judgment on those who had oppressed them. Such is, indeed, as said, the judgment written, and confirms the view I have taken of the last two books, only now it is complete in its statements. The millennium itself is not described. The Psalms are the introduction to it, and by their connection of Christ, as seen in the Gospels, and the remnant of Israel with the last days, throw the greatest light on the Gospels themselves.

Ps, 150.-The hundred and fiftieth psalm is a general closing summons to praise Jehovah-only, remark, it is now freely in His sanctuary, as in the firmament of His power, with all the various instruments of the temple-praise for His mighty acts-praise for His own excellent greatness-and everything that has breath is called to praise Him. It is a loud and chorus-like termination, full of power and energy, suited to the Jewish state and temple-service.

Here we close this most interesting and instructive study, as to which I could hope only to give the outline of general principles which might enable the reader to use the Book; not its varied and beautiful contents in detail, this would have required volumes, both on the prophetic connection of its contents and the exercises and feelings of faith, so far as we can apply them to saints now.

He sets As sets the Morning Star, which goes not down

Behind the darken'd west, nor hides obscured

Among the tempests of the sky, but melts away

Into the light of heaven."....

(STEPHEN, Acts 7)

N°. 2.

Psalms

1. Blessed [is] the man who has not walked in the counsel of [the] wicked, and has not stood in the path of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of scorners. 2. But [has] his delight in the law of

Jehovah, and meditates in His law day and night. 3. And he shall be as a tree planted by brooks of water, which gives its fruit in its season, and its leaf withers not, and all which he doeth prospers. 4. [It is] not so [with] the wicked: but they are as chaff, which the wind spatters. Wherefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of [the] righteous. 6. For Jehovah knows [the] way of [the] righteous; and [the] way of wicked [men] shall perish.

2.

1. Why are the heathen in tumultuous agitation, and [why] do the tribes of men meditate vanity? 2. The kings of the earth stand up, and the chiefs plot together against Jehovah, and against His anointed. 3. Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us! 4. He that dwells in the heavens shall laugh: Adonai shall mock at them. 5. Then will He speak to them in His wrath, and in the heat of His anger will He confound them. 6. " And I have anointed my king upon Zion, the hill of my holiness." 7. I will tell of the decree: Jehovah has said unto me, " Thou [art] my son; I this day have begotten thee. 8. Ask of me, and I will give nations [for] thine inheritance, and [for] thy possession, the ends of the earth. 9. Thou shalt crush them with, a scepter of iron, as vessels of a potter shalt thou dash them in piece-S." 10. And now-kings, be ye wise: be admonished ye judges of the earth! 11. Serve Jehovah with fear, and exult with trembling. 12. Kiss the son lest he be in wrath, and ye perish [in] the way, if His wrath burn but a little: blessed are all who have their trust in Him.

Although the translator is in no way assured that the titles form an inspired part of the book, but the contrary, and the sense of many is quite uncertain (in the Septuagint Vulgate and Syriac, we have many others and different ones), yet as they are in the Hebrew, they are given. At the utmost, they give the occasion, not the divine purpose of the psalms.

3.

*[A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.]

(* See Note p. 247. Editor.) 1. Jehovah, how many are they that press upon me! Many rise up against me. 2. Many say of my soul, " [there is] no deliverance for him in God." Selah. 3. But thou, O Jehovah, art my shield around me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. 4. [With] my voice to Jehovah will I cry, and He will hear me from the mountain of His holiness. Selah. 5. I laid me down and slept; I awoke up, for Jehovah sustains me. 6. I will not fear for myriads of the peoples which have set themselves against me round about. 7. Arise, Jehovah: save me, O my God. For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheekbone; hast broken the teeth of wicked men. 8. Wit Jehovah is salvation, upon thy people is thy blessing. Selah.

Book 1.

4.

*[To the Chief Musician on Neginoth.-A Psalm of David.]

1. When I call, hear me, O God of my righteousness! In pressure thou hast enlarged me. Be favorable to me, and hear my prayer. 2. O ye sons of men, till when is my glory [to be put] to shame. [How long] will ye love vanity, will ye seek [a] lie. Selah. 3. Yet know, Jehovah has set apart the pious** [man] for Himself: Jehovah will hear when I cry to Him. 4. Be ye moved**** and

sin not. Meditate in your hearts upon your beds and be still. Selah. 5. Sacrifice sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in Jehovah. 6. Many say, " Who shall cause us to see good:" lift up upon us the light of thy countenance, O Jehovah. 7. Thou hast put joy in my heart more than in the time their corn and must was in abundance. 8. In peace

(***** Or security." But it is the consciousness of safety as well as safety. Securite, not merely surete. It is the same word, only as a noun, as "trust" in Jehovah alone. Have confidence. But " dwelling in safety " gives that idea in English. " Safety "hardly would, that is merely the fact.)

will I both lie down and sleep, for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me to dwell in safety.

5.

*[To the Chief Musician upon Nehiloth.-A Psalm of David.]

1. Hear my words, O Jehovah; give heed to my meditations. 2. Attend to the voice of my crying, my king, and my God.; for to thee will I pray. 3. O Jehovah, in the-morning shalt thou hear my voice: in the morning will I address myself to thee, I will look up and wait. 4. For thou art not a God who hast pleasure in wickedness; the evil man shall not sojourn by thee. 5. The insolent fools shall not stand before thine eyes: thou hatest all the workers of vanity. 6. Thou wilt destroy those who speak lies; a man of blood and deceit Jehovah abhors. 7. But as for me in the greatness of thy goodness, I will draw near to thy house: I will bow down in thy holy temple in thy fear. 8. O Jehovah, lead me in thy righteousness, because of mine adversaries: make thy way plain before me. 9. For there is no truthfulness in his mouth, their inward parts are-calamity;***** their throat is an open sepulcher; their tongues they make smooth. 10. Bring guilt upon them, O God, let them fall through their counsels; drive them out in the multitude of their transgressions: for they have rebelled against thee. 11. And all that trust in thee shall rejoice; forever shall they shout joyously; and Thou wilt protect them; and they that love. Thy name shall exult in Thee. 12. For thou shalt bless the righteous [man] O Jehovah: thou surroundest him [with] favor as [with] a shield.

6.

*[To the Chief Musician on Neginoth.-A Psalm of David.]

1. O Jehovah, rebuke me not in Thy wrath, and chasten me not in Thine anger. 2. Be gracious to me,

O Jehovah, for as for me I droop. Heal me, O Jehovah, for my bones** tremble: 3. And my soul trembles exceedingly: and Thou, -O Jehovah, till how long. 4. Return, O Jehovah, free my soul: save me, for the sake of Thy goodness. 5. For there is no remembrance of Thee in death: in Sheol who shall celebrate Thy praises?*** 6. I am wearied with my groaning, all the night make I my couch to swim: I dissolve my bed with my tears. 7. Mine eye has sunk through grief: grown old through all that press upon me. 8. Depart from me, all [ye] workers of iniquity: for Jehovah has heard the voice of my weeping. 9. Jehovah has heard my supplication: Jehovah receives my prayer. 10. All mine enemies shall be ashamed and tremble exceedingly: they will turn, they will be ashamed suddenly.

7.

*[Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite.]

1. Jehovah, my God, in Thee have I trusted: save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me. 2. Lest he tear as a lion, my soul, crushing [it] while there is no deliverer. 3. Jehovah, my God, if I have done this: if there be evil in my hands. 4. If I have rendered wrong to him that was at peace with me: (yea I have freed him that pressed upon me without cause). 5. The enemy shall pursue after my soul, and catch [it] and tread' my life down to the ground: and shall cause my glory to dwell in the dust. Selah. 6. Arise, Jehovah, in Thy wrath, lift thyself up because of the unrestrained fury of those that press on me: and awake for me. Thou hast commanded judgment. 7. And the assembly of the races shall surround thee; and for its sake return on high. 8. Jehovah shall judge the-peoples;-- execute judgment for me, O Jehovah: according to my righteousness, and [let it happen] to me according to my perfectness. 9. Let the wrong of wicked men cease, and establish the righteous [man]: for indeed thou art the righteous God who triest [the] hearts and [the] reins. 10. My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. 11. God is a righteous judge: and El is angry every day. 12. If [a man] turn not, he will sharpen his sword: he has bent his bow, and made it ready. 13. And against him has he made ready instruments of death: His arrows has he made burning. 14. Behold, he is in travail with vanity: and is big with mischief, and has brought forth falsehood. 15. He has dug a pit and cleared it out; and is fallen into the hole which he had made. 16. His mischief shall return on his own head: and his violence, shall come down on the crown of his own skull. 17. I will celebrate the praises of Jehovah according to His righteousness: and will sing the name of Jehovah [the] Most High.

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8.

[To the Chief Musician upon Gittith.-A Psalm of David.]

1. Jehovah our Lord how excellent is Thy name in all the earth: Thou who hast set* Thy Majesty above the heavens. 2. Out of the mouth of infants and sucklings Thou hast established praise, because of those that press upon thee: to still the enemy and the avenger. 3. When I see Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which Thou hast established. 4. What is feeble man, that Thou rememberest him: or Adam's son, that Thou visitest him? 5. For Thou madest him to be little less than the angels; with glory and honor hast Thou crowned him. 6. Thou hast made him to rule over the works of Thy hands. All hast Thou put under his feet: 7. Sheep and oxen all of them: and also the beasts of the plain: 8. Birds of the heavens and fishes of the sea: what passes over the paths of the seas. 9. Jehovah our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth.

The above translation was sent without any of the headings or titles, the translator being in no way assured that they form an inspired part of the book.

I have inserted them, nevertheless, in brackets [], because the only authorities to which I can, on the moment refer, state, that in substance, many of them are not extant in the Hebrew MSS., though very many of them are canonical parts of the Psalms.

The Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac, would not have any weight with myself against the Hebrew manuscripts.-EDITOR.

FRAGMENTS.

1.

BUT those who fight the Lord's battles must be contented to be, in no respect, accounted of:-they must expect to be, in no wise, encouraged by the prospects of human praise. And, if you make an exception; " that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world will say," beware of this, for you may turn them into a world, and find in them a world, and may sow to, the flesh in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them, nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive;-so long as you are conscious as to how they will think of you. All such motives are a poison to you, and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God-and because such a time may be needful for you, I beseech you, be prepared for a time when you shall be as persons unknown, even to those that know' God. It is not the fact, that all that see the face of the. Lord, do see each other-it is not the fact that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labor under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy, and their cheers of approbation. The man of God must walk alone with God, he must be contented that the Lord knoweth. And it is such a relief, yea, it is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenances, and human sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it brotherly love, when we are just resting on the earthly sympathy of a brother worm. You are to be followers of Him who was left alone, and you are, like Him, to rejoice that you are not alone, because the Father is with you, that you may give true glory to God. Oh, I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been, through the flesh, accessible to the praise of man, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom-he knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, peaceful and happy in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand and misconceive. Here was the victory of Jesus.

2.

For myself,-I speak as a man,-I never found peace before God, or conscious rest with Him until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth: Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani. Never, until I understood that He, who knew no sin, had (then and there, on the Cross) been made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him-could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that, -His sorrow under the wrath of God,-not being understood-that so many Christians have no settled peace at all.

The questions of sin and of guilt, have never been met in their consciences. The incarnation is amazing and beautiful. That the eternal Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, should have become a babe and been laid in a manger of an inn: the contrast between the glory He came out of and the place man assigned to Him is a contrast!-God and heaven could express their delight over Him, then and there, as well as feel it (Luke 2:8-14). But the bearing of our sins in His own body was NOT in the cradle but on the Cross-and on the Cross alone.

The flight into Egypt; the return and settling at Nazareth of the child,-the youth in the temple and in returning from Jerusalem,-the hidden retirement of His early manhood,-is beautiful, each in its

place: but none present us with Him as in the act of bearing our sins. Again, when we look at Him as (when He voluntarily identified Himself with those that owned their need of repentance, confessing their sins) at His baptism, in His service and ministries, all, and each part of all, is beautiful and perfect; but, if heaven could approve Him in each step, Heaven, too, could give its avowals of approval to Him:---yet He stood not as sin-bearer under the judgment, at any of these periods.

Again, what a contrast, and who ever felt it, as He felt it, between Himself as the seed of the woman and the race of man to whom He had come. What a contrast between Himself personally and individually and the house of Israel, His own, among whom He had come. Himself, not only God manifest in the flesh, but that Holy thing that was born of the virgin; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners-apart from sin: and yet voluntarily amid sinful men and with guilty Israel-the immaculate seed of the woman, the King of Israel in His holiness. This brought with it sorrows. So, when He had entered upon service, did the constant persecution for righteousness, which He endured-and the consciousness that there was none who could sympathize with Him, and that fallen men welcomed not the mercy of which He was the Messenger; sorrows He had to endure at the hand of the world and man, but even that was not forsaking of God. But in none of these parts, nor in the being straitened when. His soul turned to His coming baptism; nor when, in the garden, His soul passed into the scenes which then lay immediately before Him was there (any more than any where else) that which there was when He cried out: Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani. Here, too, He was perfect- forsaken of God, He would not, did not, forsake God-never did God or heaven see perfection shine out of Him as then and there, when His obedience was at the goal, " Obedient unto death, the death of the Cross." But, if heaven found, in His submission under forsaking, for the sake of others, its delight-for it was the revelation of God as the Savior-God,--there was, there could be (just because it was forsaking for sin, our sin, which He had to endure) no expression of approval-NOTHING BUT FORSAKING. Why hast Thou forsaken me?

I do not see how a sinner can find rest until he has learned somewhat of that which is distinctly peculiar to Calvary: learned that, then and there, there was a cup drunk by the Lord, in obedient submission to God,- cup of wrath due to us only undergone by Christ at Calvary. The only spot I turn to when in conscience the question is about sin, or guilt, or sins (of the human family, of myself as an individual, &c., &c.) is Calvary, and to the Lord there, crying out Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani.

He bore my judgment, in my stead, then and there, in His own body on the tree in the presence of God, and received the woe of wrath and forsaking at the hand of God. And there is my quittance, clear, and full, and complete, but there alone.

The experiences of His soul, when He said, " Why hast Thou forsaken me?"-were altogether peculiar, and distinct from that which he had to endure and experience at any other time whatsoever. In that suffering of His as forsaken-I get the measure and the judgment of my sin against God.

3.

Revelations. 22:16,17,20.

It is a great blessing when we have learned to find the key to every difficulty in Christ. In Him alone is the answer to, and the explanation, and the means of taking us out of-all our difficulties.

The two verses, 16 and 17, show us glories in Christ, which may help to throw light the first upon our position; and the second upon what is our proper occupation.

16. If Christ is the root and offspring of David,- there is no one who has any blessing in them for the earth, on which our feet stand, but He. He only can take root downward, and bear fruit upward for the earth. But the Son of David was crucified outside of Jerusalem, and, if our feet stand where His did, He is gone away into heaven, and our portion on earth is what His was, that of pilgrims and strangers.

But then He is in Heaven as the bright and morning star. He is there: and He is so there as to be looked for, the live-long night, -by a people who are waiting till the day dawn.

He is in Heaven; and I, while my feet tread the earth, look for Him, the bright morning star. All that belongs to heaven would not satisfy me. I want Him to whom heaven belongs. Thus these titles of Christ, explain to me my pilgrim character, and my character in hope.

Ver. 17 explains what our present occupation should be, and the strength of the heart in it. Though man has failed from Gen. 3 down to this hour, Christ has not failed, nor has the Spirit of God, sent down (that His people might know how He was honored on high, and not be comfortless), He has not failed. Neither does He want to keep the Bride for Himself or for another than Christ. He and the Bride, in spite of all the past failure, say "Come." The work of the Spirit and the work of faith in the Bride both conspire to say "Come"; but then, too, the individual has to say "Come." Not only in my church-place, but as an individual believer, like John in Patmos, I am to say "Come." Such, too, are in the consciousness of the blessing which is theirs as having had a fountain of living water opened in their hearts to say to those around: "Come," and take of the water of life. It is not the value of immortal souls, as man speaks; but the consciousness of the desire in Christ's heart to give the blessing which He has given to me, to others, which makes me say to others "Come." Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did-told how Samaria's daughter was a channel of grace herself-and, as such; it was her right occupation to invite others.

In ver. 20, He replies-and lets out, as from Himself, the answer to designs which were in the Spirit, and which Himself had given to the Bride: a position and an occupation which accorded with His own, "Surely, I come quickly." To Him, at least, there is, as to His return, no uncertainty. He can say, "surely," man has failed; hope has dimmed in man's heart; has flickered, and well nigh expired. In His heart, it is bright and sure, who Himself is the hope. And when He moves forward to "Come," "I come,"-then shall that which we hope-for be realized and seen. And-mark the word "quickly." To us time moves slowly on,-He seems as if He tarried. His heart, in other light than the dim twilight where we are, says "Quickly"! May our hearts live in the power of His purposes, thoughts and promise: and may we wait for the Son from heaven: be like 'unto those that wait for Him.

Simeon and Anna, and those that waited for Him had honorable occupation.--occupation much' thought of in heaven at His first coming, and so now, if we really wait for Him-is it now---heaven delights is seeing us wait for Him.

I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that is
athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of
life freely.

Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

THE Lord himself shall come

And shout a quickening word;

Thousands shall answer from the tomb:

" Forever with the Lord."

Then as we upward fly,

That resurrection-word

Shall be our shout of victory,

" Forever with the Lord."

How shall I meet those eyes?-

Mine on Himself I cast,

And own myself the Savior's prize:

Mercy from first to last.

"Knowing as I am known!"-

How shall I love that word,

How oft repeat before the throne,

"Forever with the Lord."

That resurrection-word,

That shout of victory-

Once more: "Forever with the Lord!"

Amen, so let it be!

On the Revelation

THE glory which shows itself to us at the opening of the Gospel by St. John, is both entitled and described there very simply. It is called "the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father," and borne by one who is described as "full of grace and truth."

And that Gospel is the journey of that glory in this evil world of ours, and a display of the work which it was always at, so to speak. Upon whatever scene the Son of the Father there enters, He is seen to shine in that glory which brought life and peace to sinners.

Accordingly, none but sinners discern it. It was a glory that could be seen only by the eye or heart of a convicted sinner. It was full of grace, and could not, therefore, suit itself to any other. But such ever found it to their joy and blessing. Andrew, who follows Jesus as the Lamb of God, gets entrance and dwells in ' the place of that glory, while even the mother, knowing the Lord not as a sinner, but as one who would have him honorable before men, is kept apart. (1. 39; 2. 4.) So the Rabbi who seeks him as a teacher, is kept back, while the woman and the Samaritans, who learn their sin, and that He was indeed the Savior, get His company with them for two days. (3. 4.) And it is so afterward with his kindred in the flesh, and with a convicted adulteress. They know him not, save as one whom they sought to exalt in the world; and he would have them remove from him-while she enjoys the unspeakable preciousness of finding herself alone in his company; and all between them is reconciliation and kindness. (7. 8.)

Other instances of this character show themselves in the Lord's public ministry through that Gospel, down to the end of the twelfth chapter, where that ministry closes. And so, when we see him afterward in secret with his own (8.- 17.), it is still "the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father" that is shining before us; his discourse to them is full of the Father-how he had come from the Father to reveal Him to them-how the Comforter would soon come to make that revelation effectual to their souls-how he was going away to get mansions for them in the Father's house, and that he would return to take them there. So full is this glory still of its own proper light and power, and so diligent about its due and appointed work.

And at the very end we see it still. The glory is moving upwards, returning to the place from whence it had descended, and has sinners in its train, conducting them along with itself. Jesus rises; and Peter and John follow him. His path is theirs. They all leave this earth together. The Only Begotten of the Father is on his way home, taking the younger of the family with him, and we lose sight of them on the upward journey. (21. 19, 20.)

Such, I judge, to be the glory that is seen in the Gospel by St. John-such its journey across this world, such the spoils it gathered, and such its end and home.

But, as soon, as we open the Apocalypse by St. John, it is another glory we see. It is not a revelation of Jesus Christ which the Father gave him; so that he could again say, " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" or, " Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father saith unto me, so I speak " (John 12. 14.); but it is a revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him. It is

the glory, not of the bosom of the Father (John 1:11), but of the throne of God. (Rev. 1:14.) It is the effulgence, not of Him who lay in the one place, but of Him who is to inherit' the other. And just on this glory being introduced to us, the saints, in a little ascription of praise, tell us, as it were, that they had already learned the lesson which the Gospel had been teaching them, the value of the ministry of the Son of the Father, and that they stood now in the conscious washing of His blood, and in the dignity of kings and priests unto God and his Father. (Rev. 1:5,6.)

And having thus learned the lesson of the former glory, they were prepared for the lesson of this second glory. Such is the holy order of the soul in getting the knowledge of God and of His ways. Such divine knowledge is from, glory to glory, from one revelation to another. And being instructed in the glory of " the only begotten of the Father," the saints may well stand before this glory of " the Prince of the kings of the earth," of Him who is coming forth as " the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Almighty." If the bosom have comforted us, may I say, the throne may now elevate us -if we stand in grace, we may learn judgment.

Accordingly, this book gives us the actings of the throne of God. There are judgments -voices and thunders, seals, trumpets and vials-all ordered by the power of the throne which judges right, and which is preparing for the righteous kingdom, at the time of which, the heavenly seed of God, in embodied glory, descends as the golden city or the Lamb's wife.

Such is the path of the glory here. It is a descending path. And such are the links between the Gospel and the Apocalypse of the beloved Disciple. In the one, he leads us by the light of the glory of grace out of the world, first to the knowledge, and then to the house, of the Father-in the other, he leads us, already in heaven or in the Father's house, forth from that, first to the scene of judgment (chap. 4.), and then to the scene of our inheritance and dominion. (chap. 21.)

Christ will look at the Bride with delight, when thus manifested in glorious beauty as the Golden or Holy City. But still it is herself that will be His chiefest object. The heart well and always knows this, when there is true and pure affection. And we have the expression of this on the return of the Prodigal. (Luke 15) For the Father had fallen on himself in secret, and then brought him forth and presented him in the house, clothed in beauty and honor. But his heart had been the most deeply touched at the beginning.

For, as another has said, "glory is but the consequence of love, and the source is always the sweeter. The favor out of which a benefit flows is dearer than the benefit itself."

The opening of this wondrous Book gives us its title and character. " The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." For it will be found, I judge, to be a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in such characters of glory and power as He derives from God, or a revelation of Him in the exercise of judicial authority. And, as two exercises of judicial authority awaited Him after He had ascended to God, so, accordingly, this Book has two parts.

1.- 3. These chapters give us the first part. The Lord is here exercising judgment in the church, or among the lights of the sanctuary. This is called " the things which are."4.-- 22. These chapters give us the second part. The Lord is here exercising judgment in the earth (first by agencies, and then personally), and thus preparing it for His kingdom. This is called " the things which shall be hereafter."

This is the general order of the Book. It also contains both a preface and a conclusion.

In the preface, we first learn that this wondrous Book deals with " the word of God," and " the testimony of Jesus Christ;" that is, God's counsels made known by Jesus Christ. Then we are told the manner in which Jesus Christ ministers this testimony to the churches; and blessing is then pronounced on him who acts righteously by this Book, by either reading or hearing it, and by keeping the things which are written in it. After this, the Seven Churches in Asia are called to listen; and, after a benediction on them, the Lord Jesus Christ is announced as the One who is about to come " with clouds," or in the solemnities of judgment (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30;26. 64), a coming quite according to the judicial character of the Book, and which is to make the kindreds of the earth wail because of Him, and them which pierced Him, to see Him to their confusion.

But in the midst of such an announcement of the Lord as even this, the saints have two happy utterances put into their lips. On His being here revealed as " the faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth," they praise Him as the One who had loved them; and again, when His coming in the clouds, as for judgment, is announced, they invite His, glory with full confidence still, and say, " Even so, come." For they have thoroughly learned that they may have boldness even in a day of judgment. (1 John 4:17.)

Then, when these utterances of the saints pass by, the Lord reveals himself as the "First and the Last," a title which he frequently takes in this Book, the very title, too, that he so constantly assumes when judging the idols of Babylon in Isaiah (see Isa. 40-48); all this still assuring us, that He is now about to speak in judgment again.

In the mouth, indeed, of every witness here, we learn that this Book is a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which God, not the Father, gives him, or in judgment, not in grace. But this is only here at the close of the volume of the New Testament; for we may observe, that the Lord has ever sought, so to speak, to publish His name in grace, before He does so in judgment. In one way or other He will and must make Himself known, for that is His glory; but he seeks the rather to be known in goodness than in judgment, if men will hear.

We have this variously illustrated. To Egypt, for instance, the Lord made himself known in Joseph, the witness of His goodness; for by Joseph He filled Egypt's storehouses with all kinds of wealth. But Egypt forgot Joseph. A king arose there, who persecuted Joseph's people, and said of his God, " Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?" Then the Lord had to publish His name in that land in judgment, saying to the king, "In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord, behold I will smite with the rod." He was now to be made known not in Joseph, but in plagues. So in Israel afterward. The Lord Jesus was offered to them as " the chief corner stone," the "sure foundation," the One in whom they should find salvation and strength. But being rejected

as such, He was to be revealed to them as " the head stone of the corner," in the power and judgment of an exalted stone, which was to fall and grind to powder.

And so in the world now. This present dispensation is publishing God in grace. He is beseeching men to be reconciled. But they who will not thus know Him in the great salvation, must know Him by and bye in judgment. (2 Thess. 1:8.) If the blood of the Lamb be despised, the wrath of the Lamb must be met. (Rev. 6: 16.) The same " Lord," who is " full of grace and truth " now, will by and bye send the sword out of his mouth to execute righteousness. (Rev. 19:15.)

And this is the difference between the Gospel and the Revelation by St. John. The Gospel publishes the name of the Lord in grace, the Revelation in judgment; the one flows from the Father, the other from God.

Now, according to all this, when we pass the preface, and get into the body of the Book, it is the Lord, the Son of Man, in the place of judgment that we see. (See 1. 9-20.) For these verses introduce the first scene which the Book discloses. St. John sees the Lord, as Son of Man, prepared to judge the sanctuary. He does not show Himself to John as the Priest at the Golden Altar, with his censer and burning incense, but at the Candlestick with the Golden Snuffers; as though He were inquiring (and that for the last time), whether or not the Lamps of the Sanctuary would burn worthy of the place, or whether He should not be compelled soon to remove them. It is the Son of Man with garments down to the foot, and golden girdle about His loins, with head and hair white as wool, eyes of flame, feet of brass, and voice as of many waters; in His hand holding the seven stars, and in His mouth the two-edged sword, and walking in the brightness and power of the midday sun, among the Seven Candlesticks. All this was an expression of judgment, judgment of the House of God. John shall hear himself personally and individually addressed with the wonted words of God's sweet love to us, "Fear not;" but still this is a vision that may well make the stoutest of the children of men to fall as dead.

It is to be observed, for the comfort of our souls, that, in restoring the heart of St. John to full ease in the presence of the glory, the Lord does not remind him of their intimacy in the days of his flesh; how he had lain in His bosom, how he had been with Him on the holy mount and in the garden, and how he had committed His mother to His special care-but He simply says, "I am He that liveth and was dead." For our title to confidence before God, our ability to face the glory, and to stand before it at ease and in liberty, rests not at all on any special grace which may be in us, or on any personal privilege conferred, or any peculiar place or excellence, but only and altogether on the preciousness of the blood of the Lamb, or on the death and resurrection of Jesus, which is the common property (as through boundless grace we may call it) of all believers.

The place in which the Lord is thus seen by St. John was not his natural place. He had been raised from the dead, and was now ascended into heaven, there to dwell for an age as Mediator between God and men, the Advocate with the Father, and the Lord too, the Son over His own house, the Head over all things to the Church. He had received gifts for men, and was dispensing apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists from His glory, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body here, as Lord to, and of, the Church. But his place and action here are not the necessary attributes even of this his lordship. As, though Moses was king in Jeshurun, it was not natural to him in that character to call on Levi to draw the sword and slay the thousands of the people. Jesus the Lord is here seen on the earth, and arrayed in judgment and vengeance. For he had been disturbed. It was like his action in the days of Babel or Sodom. He had either to go down and see if things were according to the cry that had gone up, or to go down to confound and to scatter. (Gen. 11:18.) It was also like the God of Israel afterward, who, while on the Mount with his servant Moses, giving him the shadows of Christ, "the shadows of good things to come," occupied there as it were with that which naturally was his in the riches of his goodness, is disturbed by Israel's apostasy at the foot of the Mount, and has to tell Moses to go down, and visit the people who were corrupting themselves there. (Ex. 32.) So here; the priest was to be in his temple in the heavens, waiting daily (as we may speak), in his natural grace, on the defiled feet of his saints, or

giving the gifts still, that he might both feed and trim the candlesticks. The Lord was on high, Head over all things to the Church, ordering everything for her blessing and profit. But, now, the corrupters again at the foot of the mount have disturbed Him, and He comes down again to see if indeed it be according to the cry of it, and if so, to confound and to scatter again.

Another character of judgment had gone on previously. I mean, the judgment of the churches within their own borders; the Lord, as the Priest, being then still in heaven. Thus Corinth had been judged. " For this cause many are sick and weakly among you, and many sleep." This was the chastening of the Lord of the Church. (1 Cor. 11:32.) But here, it is the Son of Man descended to the earth (the place for Jesus as Son of Man) with a threat to remove, and not with grace to correct and purify. The difference between these judgments appears to be the same as the judgments on Uzzah or Shelomith's son by the hand of the Lord and His congregation, and the judgment of Jerusalem by the hand of the Gentile. The first class of judgments was for correction and purity of the house of God, and for the keeping of the people still at home. The second was for their removal out of His sight. Delay there was, in thus bringing the Destroyer of the Gentiles on his way against God's city. Prophet after prophet had risen early and warned the people, and Jeremiah had wept and prayed and preached, even after Nebuchadnezzar had sat down at the gates. But when he entered, he entered with a new character of judgment. It was for the removal of Jerusalem; as here, the Son of Man has come (after the like delay and patience), but it is for the removal of the candlesticks if they repent not.

This I judge to be the place in the history of the Church which we reach here. This place and action of the Lord do not naturally, so to speak, suit him as the priest. But the Church's corrupt state puts him into it. Just as His coming in the latter day with vengeance on the world, and on His apostate Israel, is not His natural coming. At first He came offering peace and the kingdom. His heavenly heralds said, " Peace on earth!" But the unbelief of Israel, and the confederacy of Jews and Gentiles, which prevailed to cast Him out from the earth, has so changed His course, that He is now to return to the rebellious citizens in the power of " a day of vengeance." But that is His unnatural course, " His strange work," as Scripture calls it. Israel's and the earth's sin alone account for it. Just as here, the corruption of the Church changes the place and action of the Lord; and, instead of seeing Him with the towel and the water in the heavenly temple, or with His hands filled with gifts to give out from the glory on high, we see Him arrayed in judgment, taking to Him His righteous power to remove the candlestick if it repent not.

And the sight of Him in such a character overwhelms even St. John. It must-it could not but do so. For this is the Lord marking iniquities; and before Him, in such a place, who could stand? It is not the Lord talking with His own, as a traveling friend, or as a happy guest, or as a gracious Master, as once He did when He rose from the dead. But it is the Lord, awakened by sin at the foot of the hill, coming down to see if all were even according to the cry that had gone up. And who could stand when He was thus angry?

Isaiah, in his day, saw Him in such a place. The doors and posts were shaken, and the house filled with smoke, for the Lord was about to put judgment on the house that was called by His name; and the prophet, seeing himself in that house, trembles and learns his uncleanness. And the Lord restores him, as here He, restores John; though, like the Prophet of Israel, John falls as dead. But the Lord, by the seraphim and the coal from the altar, taking away his iniquity restores Isaiah; as

here, the revelation of Him who was dead and is alive again, and alive too for evermore, restores John; for that carries the restoring virtue with it. The death and resurrection of Jesus gives the sinner his full confidence; taking the sentence of death from him, to lay it on One able to bear it. And so, from this time forth, let John (our brother) be called through this book to what visions and judgments he may, he is not again disturbed. He is twice overwhelmed, it is true; but it is by the holy delights of visions of joy and glory, and not by the storms and lightning of judgment. And, according to such an introduction as this, we find our Lord in the following scene. (2. 3.) It is the Lord in "the house of God," challenging the churches to answer for themselves. He had before set them in blessing, and now He looks for fruit. It is as though he had heard a report of their unfaithfulness, and was now saying to them, "How is this that I hear of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." He had already communicated with them through the Apostles; but now He does through the Angels. St. Paul had addressed them as in the pastoral grace of Christ; St. John now addresses them as from the judicial authority of Christ. The Apostle had fed them and disciplined them as in the place of dependence; but now these epistles challenge them as in the place of responsibility.

And one striking, though it may be minute, feature of this difference in the mind of the Lord, when addressing the churches through the apostle and through the angel, the one being gracious, the other judicial, appears in this. In olden times, under the dispensation of the law, God was constantly regarded as the Searcher of the heart, the Trier of the reins of the children of men; and, then He did so, in order to reward according to every man's work (see 1 Chron. 28:9; Psa. 7:9; Jer. 17:10). But, by the apostle, God is revealed as the Searcher of the heart with another intent. "He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." That is, He is not searching the heart, in order to reward the works, or even to refine as gold is refined; but, in His search of the heart, He finds out the exercises of the spirit. This is what He considers there; that is what detains and engages Him. It is not a search ending in the detection of evil, but good-of good to be owned according to Himself, and not of evil to be judged and punished. (Rom. 8:27.)

But in this book we have Him again as the Searcher of the reins and the hearts, for the ends and purposes that He was so under the law. "All the Churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." (Rev. 2:23.)

These are the principal passages in the New Testament, presenting God in this character of the Searcher of the heart; and this comparison of them helps still to show us the Lord in judgment in this book of the Revelation, and that He has changed His aspect, now addressing the Churches through the angel, from what it was when addressing them through the apostles. He has returned now to take His place, such as it was when He was under the law, the Exacter of righteousness, the Assayer of the heart, that He might render according to every man's work done there, and not to find out the breathings of His own Spirit there; to bless and comfort accordingly. And the moment they are thus addressed, they are found wanting. As candlesticks bound to shine to the praise of Him who had set them in His sanctuary, they are now visited; and the common result of all such visitations of God's stewards may tell us the end of the candlesticks also. For the crisis or judgment has always found man unready. Whether planted in innocency, in a sphere of providence, or under a ministration of grace, man has been found unequal even to hold a blessing. "Adam, where art thou?" got this answer, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." The vineyard of Israel afterward should have yielded its

fruit to Him who had planted and dressed it; but when He came, it was only the wild grape that He found; and so it is now with the candlesticks in the house of God. They had been duly prepared by God's care. They were nothing less than golden candlesticks--Churches fed by the Spirit, blessed with blessing from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," made fully furnished and well-ordered lights in the sanctuary. But now that visitation is made in due season too, and the Son of man finds something unsuited to the holy place. These seven Churches (the sevenfold or perfect expression of the Church) are challenged by the Son of man with these words, " I know thy works;" but the sevenfold light is but dim and uncertain. This steward of God's glory is but unfaithful also; and so, by and bye, the same inquisition will be made of the "earthly gods' -the Gentile powers, to whom the Lord has committed the sword; and they will then, in like manner as Adam, Israel, or the candlesticks, be found wanting; and they will have to fall as men, and die like one of the princes. (Psa. 82) All the stewards are thus found wanting, when weighed in the balance; and the Lord is justified in His sayings, and clear. when He judges.

These seven Churches are the places of this judgment. There were, it is true, other congregations of the Lord at the time; but the seven are enough to exhibit the judgment-for seven is completeness. So some of them may be found, by this judgment or visitation, in a better condition than others; but still the Son of man sees the whole thing different from what it ought to be: one was not judged in the other, but each was responsible for itself; and thus some maintained their purity longer than others. But still the whole tone of this visitation bears with it a notice of what the end speedily was to be, as in our day we see it; for Philadelphia and Smyrna are now as fully removed candlesticks as Sardis or Pergamos.

These challenges of the Churches by the Son of Man lead us to see that all was nearly over, that there was but a step between such rebukes and their removal. And surely we do not, in our day, need to be told of the disturbance which has taken place in the " House of God."

We learn that Adam lost Eden; and the 'present groans of creation tell us so. We learn, that Israel lost Canaan; and their present wanderings over the earth tell us so. And how do we see the sanctuary? Are We not witnesses to ourselves, that we have been no more able to hold the blessing which was ours, than Adam could hold Eden, or Israel,. Canaan. The candlestick that was set for the rebuking of all else as darkness, and for being itself the embodied and well-ordered light of the world, is not now at Ephesus or Sardis, or anywhere else.

We may try our ways, most surely, by all that is here said to the Churches; but this does not amount to the Son of Man owning us as His only light in our place. And our first duty, therefore, both in grace and wisdom, is, to be humbled because of this; for,' though we may have much, in fragments, that belongs to the candlestick, yet all that does not give us the standing and privilege of the candlestick, entitling us to set aside as darkness, and as not of the sanctuary, all that is not of ourselves.

When our fidelity to the Lord became the question, we were found wanting, as any other steward. This book will, at the end, skew us that the question of the Lord's fidelity to us will be answered in the other way. For as the Lamb's wife, the Church will then be found to survive all the judgments, though here, at the beginning, she could not, as the candlestick, stand the righteous challenge of the Lord. And this is man; and this is God always. Shame and ruin mark our end; honor and peace and everlasting truth and love, the end of the Lord.

And in this shame and ruin, I believe our three chapters end. The perfect order of the seven lights of the house of God is gone, and gone too, not to be restored; and, according to this, the prophet is at once called to see other things and other places, to witness other scenes (but still a scene of judgment, as we shall find), not that of the priestly Son of Man in his temple, but that of God and the Lamb in the earth. But this judgment is delayed till all the foreknown family have come in. For "God's long-suffering is salvation" (2 Peter 3:16). "The fullness of the Gentiles" must come in, and all be brought to the knowledge of the Son of God (Rom. 11:25); and, therefore, before we are led, in our prophet, to behold this second scene of judgment, or the judgment of the earth, we are given; I believe, a sight of the Church (now gathering from all nations) in Heaven, under the symbols of the living creatures and crowned elders round the throne so that the ascension of the saints into the air had taken place at some untold moment, between the times of our 3rd and 4th chapters.

Our ascension into the air will lead us to the Lord, and then, with him, to the Father. (John 14:1-4.) But it is not these results we get here. It is not the saints either in the Lord's presence, or in the mansions of the Father's house, that we see here; but the Church before the throne of "God Almighty," of Him "who was, and is, and is to come," for whose pleasure all things were created. This scene we get here. It is not the children before the Father, but the Church in dignity before the throne. It may be a scene in the Father's house, in anticipation of the kingdom now about to be assumed; but it is not simply and merely a view of that house in its abstract form. But how perfect is the wisdom of God in appointing all the seasons for revealing His mind and purposes! A view of the Father's house in its simplest form, as the home of the children, would not have been in character here; for this is the Book, not of consolations for the children, but of judgments by which God and the Lamb are asserting their holy rights, vindicating their own praise, and delivering the long usurped and corrupted inheritance out of the hands of its destroyers. The Gospel by St. John conducts us to the Father's house; our path there ends, as the path of children, in that home of love. But this Apocalypse by St. John gives us the action that clears the earth for the kingdom and the glory, and gets the golden city ready; and our path here ends, as the path of heirs, in that place of glory. For both are ours—the joys of children and the dignity of heirs; the house of the Father, and the throne of the Son.

Here, then, when taken into vision of heavenly things, it is the throne of God, with its due attendants, and not the Father's house with the children, that we see. It is - the throne of God Almighty, Creator, and Ruler of all things; around which is, therefore, thrown the holy pledge of the earth's covenanted security; and it is the place, too, from which the subsequent action of the book, or the judgment of the earth, flows; and, therefore, lightnings, and thunders, and voices (the symbols, of those judgments) issue from it.

The thrones, crowns, and white raiment, strongly intimate that these elders symbolize the redeemed. And the living creatures do the same, only in another aspect. And the giving forth the same object, under different symbols and in different aspects, was common in the shadows of the law, to the style and language of which this Revelation by St. John so much conforms itself. For instance, the same person stands before us in the sanctuary of old, expressed under different aspects in the symbols of the Golden Altar, the Golden Table, and the Golden Candlestick.

But, as to this wondrous subject of the Living Creatures or the Cherubim, I would observe a little more particularly.

Wherever we see them throughout Scripture, they are always attendants on the throne of God-always reflecting, by their action or attitude, the mind and ways of Him who sits there.

1. Thus: They were seen at the gate of Eden, with a flaming sword; because then the Lord was expressing His own unrepenting righteousness, driving the sinner out of His place.
2. Thus, also, they are seen over the mercy-seat, in the Holiest, with fixed, delighted gaze, inquiring into the secrets of that throne of grace, because the Lord was there, expressing His work in Jesus, the fixedness of His purpose, and joy in the Gospel of His dear Son. (Ex. 25:20; 1 Peter 1:12.)

Thus, also, they are seen with unfolded wing under the God of Israel (Ezek. 1-10); because then the Lord of Israel was about to leave His sanctuary, the apostasy of His people having disturbed His rest in Jerusalem. And they are there, also, seen reaching out their hands to take fire to cast over the city; for there the Lord had commanded the judgment for its sins.

Thus, also, as here, they are seen round the throne, still attending on it, to celebrate the praise of Him who sits there, and do His will and learn His mind; still, therefore, reflecting His mind and ways.

But, in this last place of the Cherubim, we observe a distinction of great importance. Hitherto, or in the first three instances, they were angelic, because the law had been ordained by angels (Gal. 3:19); with delight the angels inquired into the mysteries of Christ (1 Peter 1:12); and the angels waited on the Lord of Israel. (Isa. 6:2.) But the Cherubim, or attendants on the throne, have now become human; because "the world to come" is to be made subject to man, and not to angels (Heb. 2:5), and this throne, in Rev. 4, is the throne of judgment preparing the earth for the kingdom, and which is by and bye (with new and changed attributes) to preside over "the world to come."

But this is glorious and wonderful. Poor sinners redeemed by blood are destined, through grace, to take the cherubic dignity and joy, in which angels, unfallen angels, once stood-the angels themselves falling back, as it were, and opening their ranks to let redeemed sinners in, and then to take their own place around them, as well as around the throne itself. (7. 11.) Angels are thus passed by; and the seed of Abraham are taken up; and it is blessed to know that angels themselves take delight in this. They desire to look into this mystery. "God manifest in flesh" is seen of them. (1 Tim. 3:16.) Their own joy is enhanced by all this; for by it they have learned more of the shining and gracious ways of Him who created them, and on whom they, as we, depend. Beggars from the dung-hill are set, as among princes, round the throne; and the living creatures and the crowned elders accordingly, never in the whole action of this wondrous Book, move out of heaven, but there abide, either in the intelligence of the mind of God, in authority under the throne, or in the holy office of leading the joy of creation. (See 5., 6., 7., 11., 15., 19.) They abide in their sphere on high, while the action proceeds on earth.

And there is another distinction touching these Cherubim or living creatures, which I must notice. In Ezekiel, they are accompanied by wheels, but here with crowned and enthroned elders. In the

Prophet, one spirit animates them and the wheels. As here, they sing in holy concert with the elders, and with them ever act as with one mind. But still, it is significant, that there, their companions are wheels; while here, they are crowned and seated elders. For, in those days of Ezekiel, the throne, whose purpose they express, was about to 'remove itself from the sanctuary, and wheels were suited to it; but in the day anticipated by this vision, the throne is at rest, with the Church, in her royal and priestly glories, around it, and crowned and seated elders are suited to it.

And, indeed, it is much to be observed, though it may draw us aside for a moment, that it is the Father who is now preparing a Sabbath for Himself, and not simply God the Creator. The Seventh Day was the Creator's Sabbath; the kingdom will be the Father's. The Creator had engaged His energy of old, and His works were the reflection of His eternal power and godhead. All was -then good in His sight. In all He delighted, and by all He was glorified. But in the Sabbath of the kingdom, He will survey richer and deeper reflections of Himself. All His excellencies will be displayed; the work of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, of our God in His grace and salvation, will then be the fairer and fuller witness of Him, than the heavens and the earth of old. And if all things in the Creation of old were needed to give Him His full glory and satisfaction then; so, in the Father's kingdom, all of us, beloved, must yield our contribution. We may be little, a small unit, in the account of redemption; but we contribute to the survey of the great Redeemer's work. Then let us not doubt our place in that system; but, by faith, take it as simply as any flower in Eden would have blossomed, to its 'great Creator's delight and praise. Grace is planting the second garden; and we are there not to our own glory, but to His, who works as much to His own praise and delight, and as much alone, in Redemption, as He did in Creation.

But, this only by the way.

Such as I have said, I judge to be the throne, with its attributes and attendants. It is the throne of the Creator and Upholder of all things, from which are to go forth the judgments which are to clear the earth of its corrupters and destroyers.

The earth has evidently now become the object of attention in heaven. The whole of this chapter, as well as the following one, indicates this; and very strikingly so, the feature of the rainbow round the throne-because the rainbow is the symbol of that covenant which God has made with the earth, the pledge to it that it shall abide before Him.

But this being so, the earth and its history and destinies now becoming the immediate object of thought and concern in heaven, it would seem, even from this alone, that the Church or heavenly people from among the Gentiles, must previously have been gathered in and taken home, as I have already suggested. Because, until that is done, the earth is not the object of attention in heaven. The bringing in of the elect, who are to be conformed to the image of the Son, and to share his heavenly joy and throne, is the object that forms and orders the concern of heaven now. There is general providence here, no doubt but earth is not the great animating object in heaven, but the gathering of sinners out of it, the washing of their feet daily when thus gathered, and the filling up of the number of those heirs of salvation. But now when we have reached Rev. 4, and when we look in at the door opened in heaven, we find the earth directly and immediately awakening thought and action there, and (as we might from this expect),. the Church already there. For when " the fullness of the Gentiles " shall come in, Israel will be thought of again; when the heavens are filled, the earth will be the scene of divine attention, and finally of divine

husbandry and preparation again.

But the throne being thus seen, and God's glory and pleasure, as Creator and Governor of all things, being thus celebrated, the question arises, " Who can He seat on this throne with Himself?" " Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place?"

The earth and its fullness is the Lord's by this title of creation here celebrated, and owned in that 24th Psalm. But it was His pleasure of old to set His image over those works of His hand. Adam was given dominion, but Adam lost his place and forfeited his kingdom. Who, then, shall reassume the dignity, and again ascend the hill of the Lord? Who is he whom the Lord God can reinstate in Adam's forfeited lordship? That now becomes the question; and, accordingly, it is raised in the 5th chapter, immediately after the exhibition of the supreme throne in the 4th. And the answer to it from every region is this, " The Lamb that was slain, the Lion of the tribe of Judah." He who sat on the throne gives that answer, by letting the book pass from his hand into the hand of the Lamb.. The seven Spirits are seen as centered in the Lamb, intimating that the administration of the kingdom is now to be lodged in His hand. The living creatures and elders join in giving this glory to Him, by singing their song of gladness in the prospect of the earth being soon the scene of their glory. The hosts of angels join in giving it, by now willingly transferring all strength and glory and faculty for dominion, into the hand of the Lamb. The angels now empty themselves. In previous dispensations they had been the ministers of power; as one of them says, " I stand in the presence of God." The law was ordained by angels; they were all ministering spirits. The prophet's servant saw the mountain filled with chariots and horses. It was an angel that went through Egypt; and an angel that stood over Jerusalem with a drawn sword. Angels accompanied the Lord in his visit to Abraham, and revealed and executed God's purpose towards Lot in Sodom. The chariots of God were twenty thousand-even thousands of angels. But now they empty themselves and lay their honors at the feet of the Lamb, and ascribe all that was once theirs executively to the Lamb. But they might easily do this; for a greater than they, even the Lamb Himself, the Lord of angels, had shown them the way to this self-emptying. He had been in the form of God, thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, but He made Himself of no reputation; He emptied Himself; He laid aside His glory, and took on Him another form altogether. So that angels, His creatures, may well follow Him. And then, finally, every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and such as are in the sea, in their order and measure, join in giving it, by uniting the name of the Lamb with that of the Creator and Lord: and they all at once feel, as though their groans were already turned into praises; for, as soon as Adam fell, creation was sensitive of the curse, and became a prisoner of hope (Rom. 8:22); but now that the Lamb takes the book, she becomes equally sensitive of deliverance, and glories in the liberty of the children of God-of course by anticipation, as the Church had just anticipated their reign. Thus is this question settled in heaven. The title of the Lamb to take dominion in the earth is owned and verified in the very place, where alone all power and

dominion or office could righteously be had, the presence of the throne in heaven, for " power belongeth to God." Messiah owns that in the 62nd Psalm; and here He again owns it by taking the book out of His hand; for that is an action which confesses, on the part of the Lamb, that powers are ordained of God, that the Lord of heaven is the fountain of office.

Thus it is from heaven and from the Ancient of days, that the Son of Man takes dominion, or the nobleman receives his kingdom. (Dan. 7; Luke 19) Jesus would not take power from the god of this world (Matt. 4:9); nor would He take it from the heated desire of the people. (John 6:15.) He waits to take it (for there alone it could be righteously received) from the hand of the God of heaven and earth, from whom Adam of old received it. And, as the Lamb here owned God on the throne to be the source of power, so God on the throne owns the Lamb to be His ordinance of power. This action of taking the book has this concord of sweet sounds in it; for the Lamb goes up to receive it, and the Lord allows it to pass from His hand, God's glory as supreme and only potentate is thus vindicated, and he commits power in the earth again to the hand of man, as fully sanctioning it there, and all the exercise of it, as of old He did in Adam, delighting again in this other image and likeness of Himself. And this governs all the subsequent action of this wondrous book; for the title of the kingdom being thus approved in the due place and form, it only remains to clothe that title with possession. The inheritance is the Lamb's by purchase of blood. That blood sealed Him as the fully obedient one, and, therefore, God could thus highly exalt Him (Phil. 3); and that blood has also reconciled all things in heaven and earth (Col. 1); and the inheritance being, therefore, thus purchased, he has now only to redeem, it-as we read " the redemption of the purchased possession." His blood, as the Lamb slain, had given Him title to it; His strength, as the Lion of Judah, must now give Him possession of it.

The extended virtue of this same precious blood of Jesus is here blessedly declared. It had already re-

deemed the saints out of all nations and kindreds, and seated them in heaven, as kings and priests unto God; but it is now also owned as giving the Lamb, who shed it, title to the inheritance, and, consequently, title to lead these His redeemed people into their reign over the earth. It had already redeemed them from the world, and now would soon seat them in dominion over the world.

For it is by His blood, the Lamb here prevails, to take the book, or the title to the inheritance. The " Lion of the tribe of Judah" is seen in the person of " the Lamb that was slain." His blood was His title. His blood made Him the purchaser of the inheritance; He is now its redeemer, as the prevailing Lion of Judah. And, consequently, as the Lamb, He is the spring and fountain of all the resulting glories of the kingdom. Extensive virtues of the blood of Jesus! It has been the object of faith-the ground of worship-the title of security-the bond of covenants-from the beginning. By it Abel was an accepted worshipper, and even Adam himself a believing reconciled sinner. By it Abraham had the, covenant of promise made with him. By it the people of the Lord dwelt safe while the sword of judgment passed over. By it the veil of the temple was rent-all distance between God and sinners removed. By it the trumpet of the jubilee might give forth its gladdening note; for on the day of atonement they were to sound it. But why say more about it, than, again, on this beautiful fifth chapter to observe, that, by it the saints, already redeemed from earth and seated in heaven, now look to return as kings over the earth, in the train and honor of that slain Lamb whose blood, but whose blood only, has all this prevalency in it.

Thus, there is no blessing or dignity, nothing of either grace or glory, which this blood cannot command for us poor sinners; but there is no other price for anything, no other ground or title for blessing but itself. It does everything, and does it all alone. Adam lost both himself and his estate;

he became a sinner in his own person, and also an exile from Eden. But the blood of Jesus, God's Lamb that was slain, restores all-" Thou hast redeemed us;" and again, " We shall reign on the earth."

In Israel, there was the ordinance of redeeming the inheritance, as well as the heir or person. (Lev. 25) If either an Israelite or his possession had been sold, it was both his kinsman's duty and right to ransom him and it. Now Jesus has approved Himself our kinsman in both ways. The Son; of God became the Son of Man, and thus showed his kinsman-nature. He died to purchase us and our inheritance by blood, and thus showed his kinsman-love. And in this Book of the Revelation we get Him, I judge, perfecting His acts as such kinsman, and redeeming our inheritance out of the hands of its corruptors. The kinsman in Israel had a title to redeem the, inheritance; but then he had to do it on condition of discharging the debt that was on it. Jesus has paid a full and more than adequate value, as is here owned; for the book or title to the redeemed possession passes into His hand. But the usurper of the inheritance is still to be removed; the enemies to be made the kinsman's footstool; and, whether the action be that of God or that of the Lamb Himself, the character' of the action is, equally clear and certain. The action is the redemption of the inheritance, flowing from the Lamb's acknowledged title. The book taken by the Lamb is His title-deed. He has already been the Purchaser of the inheritance, He is now to be the Redeemer. And that this is not a book of instructions to John as the Prophet of the Church, or anything but this title-deed that concerns the Church's inheritance of the earth, appears to me from several considerations.

Because it lay in the hand of God Almighty, the Creator of all things, before the Lamb receives it.

Because it is taken by Him, as the Lamb slain, and as the Lion of Judah, characters of purchase and strength.

Because, on the taking of it, the Church sings in prospect of her dominion over the earth-the angels who hail been previously ministers of power in the earth, 'then transfer all to the Lamb-and creation ends her groans in praises.

These witnesses establish, in my mind, the character of the Book which the Lamb takes. And the Book of the Revelation is in concord with this. It is the history of the redemption of the inheritance. I mean, of course, the second part of it, after the third chapter. It occupies the same place in the history of the acts of the Lord in the New Testament, as the Book of Joshua does of the acts of the Lord in the Old. It records the manner of redeeming the inheritance, as that did. And without His acts, as recorded in Joshua, the Lord's ways, in old times, would have been imperfect. He had redeemed the heir out of Egypt by the hand of Moses; educated and trained him in the wilderness; and thus prepared him for rest in Canaan. But He had still to redeem Canaan out of the hand of the Amorite; and this act of His is recorded in Joshua. Then, but not till then, the Lord went through the whole course of His mercy and strength. And so without this Book of the Revelation, the record of the Lord's acts would, in like manner, have been incomplete. The Gospels and the Epistles tell us, like the books of' Moses, of the redemption of the heir and of his education in the wilderness of this present evil world; but now it is this closing book of the Revelation that tells us of the redemption of the inheritance; and thus it properly closes and completes the perfect acts of the Lord in behalf of the Church of God.

And let me further observe upon the ordinance of the Jubilee under the law, that if no kinsman were found able or willing to redeem the inheritance, it returned to the heir in the Jubilee. The Lord of Israel thus kept in His own hand the means of restoring all things. He acted as Lord of the soil; and said, the land was His. (See Lev. 25:23.) He created, as it were, a tenancy for forty-nine years, and after the traffic of the occupiers had disturbed everything, in the fiftieth year He returned to the land, and then settled it anew on His family, according to His own mind.

And so with the earth, of which the land of Israel was the sample. Man may take it into his own hand for a time, and by his selfishness and iniquities disturb God's order in it. But a day is coming, the promised and expected Jubilee, the time of "the restitution of all things;" and then, the earth shall be brought back to God again, and He will re-settle it in His family according to His own holy and righteous- principles.

But "the day of vengeance" is united with "the year of the redeemed." (Isa. 63. 4;34. 8; 61. 2.) And, accordingly, the redemption of the inheritance is conducted by judgments, or vengeance on the enemies of the heir of it, its usurpers, and corrupters; and, therefore, from henceforth, in this book, until the inheritance is redeemed, until the kingdom is brought in, it is judgment-that is taking its course. (6.- 19.) It is Joshua's or David's sword again. It may be seals that are opened, trumpets blown, vials emptied; but all is judgment on the enemy, preparing the inheritance for the Lamb and the Church; all is action for the redeeming of it, and bringing it into the hand of. Him into whose hand the title-deed of it, as we have seen it, has already passed.

Thus it is henceforth a Book of judgments, as it has been hitherto; only, judgments in another sphere and for another end; not of the candlesticks, but of the earth and its corrupters. Judgment had begun at the house of God, and now ends with those who would not obey the Gospel. One enemy may appear after another, the Beast and the False Prophet, the Dragon and the great Whore, or the kings of the earth, but it is only that each, in his season, may meet the judgment of the Lord. So there may be sorrow after sorrow. The woman may have to fly into the wilderness, the remnant of her seed to feel the rage of the Dragon, those who refuse to take the mark of the Beast to know and exercise the patience of the saints, and the two witnesses to lie slain in the street of the great city, but all this sorrow is only leading on to the rest of the kingdom, or to the descent of the golden city. The inheritance is thus redeemed by judgment out of the hand of its usurpers, and then the righteous nation that have kept the truth enter, and the. Lamb takes the throne.

But in all this action, I judge the Church has no place, but that the saints have been taken to meet their Lord in the air, as I have already suggested, before it begins. This scene is one of judgment, and they have been removed, like Enoch, to another altogether; and I would now suggest a few reasons on which I ground this conclusion, as I did before, for my conclusion on the character of the sealed Book.

The saints are seen round the throne in heaven, as I have already noticed, in the fourth chapter, and throughout the Book onward from that, they are never seen but there-and this leads me to judge that the Church has been removed from the earth at some untold moment between the times of the third and fourth chapters, as I have already said.

At the opening of this action (chap. 6.), the same signs are given, as had before been given by the Lord. Himself to His Christian-Jewish Remnant (Matt, 24.), respecting the end of the world; and as in all that prophecy, the Church is not contemplated, so she is not contemplated here, but that it is the faithful Jewish election who are engaged in the action, as they only are considered in that prophecy of Matt. 24

It is a scene of judgment, as I have already noticed, and the calling of the Church is that of Enoch to be taken out of it, and not like Noah, preserved in it. (See 1 Thess. 4 5.; 2 Thess. 2) The Church had her judgment previously in 2.,3.

Besides-the saints are to judge the world, as well as to reign in the kingdom.

From such considerations, I do conclude, that the Church is not mixed up in the scene which now lies before us. They have been taken into their more immediate inheritance, which is in heaven (1 Peter 1:4), before these judgments on the corrupters of the earth, the mystic Amorites of Canaan, begin. But I do not particularly notice these chapters. Indeed I do not believe that we are competent to speak of them with authority. We may draw much warning and exhortation from them which we should lay deeply to heart, in order that we may stand in any evil day that may arise (as arise it may) to try and sift us. But of the scenes themselves, I would not speak with authority. The Lord in them is clad with zeal as a cloak; but the end is "redemption.'" For, however gloomy the way may be, this is the end of it, the end that we reach in this Book. The action was the judgment of the corrupters of the earth; and the result is, the holy occupation of it by the Lord and His saints. The wars of our Joshua end in victory and the kingdom. (20. 1-6.) " I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them.'" Of course, if I speak of the action of the Lord Jesus in this Book being like that of Joshua, I am quite aware that He Himself is not personally manifested in the exercise of judging the nations, till chap. 19. But from chap. 6. the judicial visitation of the earth had been going on, though till chap. 19. Jesus was hidden. It is this judicial character which leads me to liken the Book to Joshua-these judgments leading, like the wars of that Book, to the possession of the earth by the true Inheritor. And in Egypt there were judgments, first from a hidden, and then a manifested, God. All the plagues were poured out while as yet the Lord was hidden, using the hand of Aaron in 'the ashes of a furnace, or the rod of Moses. But at the destruction of the firstborn, He Himself went through the land; and, at the overthrow of the nation at the Red Sea, He looked through the cloud. And so in this Book. The Lamb is hidden first, and then manifested; but His hand and His power, whether hidden or manifested, are dealing out not grace and gifts, but chastenings and judgments.

But before I hasten to the result of all this action I would further observe, that in the progress of the action itself, we see, I believe, the deliverance of Jewish remnants from amid the corruption and judgment. Some of them suffer for righteousness even unto death, and then ascend to heaven to take their place before the throne; and some are hid in God's city of refuge through the judgment, sealed or measured for final security, and for a place on the earth or footstool. But in both ways, they are separated from the corruptions and the judgments around them, and, like Rahab, are safe in the Lord, whom they own in the midst of the apostate nation. And I also see, in the progress of this action, the occasional joy of the family in heaven. (See 5., 7., 11., 14., 15., 19.) Heaven, surely, is a place of continuous joy. There the saints hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the Lamb feeds and refreshes them forever. But still they may be sensible of seasons and occasions

of rapture. And this appears to be intimated to us in these passages. The joy of the heavenly family and their songs are, every now and then, awakened afresh, when some new display of grace, or some new prospect of glory, opens before them. Just as with the heavenly hosts before-for, when the foundations of the earth were laid, they sang together anew, and, still louder than before, shouted for joy..

And again, in the epistle to the Ephesians, we learned that the Church was teaching the heavenly powers a lesson of God's wisdom (Eph. 3); but here, we see the angels practicing, as it were, the lesson they had thus previously learned. The Church leads the joy, and the angels take it up. They follow the living creatures and the crowned elders in their Praise in chap. v.; and again, when the redeemed celebrate "salvation," they,, as having learned the lesson, say " Amen." (Chapter 7)

Thus much I will observe on the action of these chapters, but particularly of their contents I would not. speak. We gather great moral principles and warnings from them, which we can abundantly use; but I doubt that details are intended to be spoken confidently of, till the time comes. Of them, therefore, I would not speak.

Passing, then, beyond chapter 18., we first listen to a song over the fall and judgment of the Woman, and then praise is heard at the immediate prospect of the marriage of the Lord and of the kingdom. For the.

Wife has now made herself ready (19.), by which expression, I understand this,-that the saints, or redeemed, have till now been in heaven, as children of the-Father's. house; but that now, they are embodied to shine together in the glories of the golden city, which is the Lamb's wife. (21. 9.) He has now presented her to Himself a glorious Church. (Eph. 5) The saints are now ready to be manifested in the Son's kingdom, as they had till now been hidden, as children, in the Father's house.- The manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ then takes place after this marriage in heaven. And in this manifestation, we see Him putting on all the glories he had acquired previously (just to compare human things with divine), as on great public occasions we see persons of distinction arraying themselves with all their honors suitable to the moment.

These displayed glories of our blessed Lord are the names He bears; and they are various, being, as I have said, the glories He has already acquired, or such as now belong to Him. And they are, also, here brought forth in the order of time in which they had been earned.

1. " He was called Faithful and True." This honor he acquired by his ministry while on earth, in all things then approving himself faithful to him who had appointed him, and thus earning this title of the Faithful and True.

2. " A name written, which no man knew but himself." This honor he entered into when, having ended his faithful and true service here, he ascended the heavens; and was both glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and became the Head of the Church, the First-born of that family who have also names which none know but they who receive them.

. 3. " His name is called the Word of God." This title is his in judicial power, when, having left the heavens, he comes out with the sword of judgment to execute righteousness on the wicked confederacy, as the Word of God. (See Heb. 4:12.)

4. " A name written King of kings, and Lord of lords." This is the last honor he bears. This he will

acquire and put on when, having finished the judgments as the Word of God, he will sit down in the peaceful and complete honors of his kingdom, all nations owning him Lord, all royal powers and thrones bowing to his supremacy.

Thus, his names or honors are here unrolled in due order before us. He appears with many crowns. It is a great occasion, the re-appearing of that Man whom the world had refused-His second advent: and how changed! At his first coming, he disrobed Himself; for He was coming in grace, coming for sin. But now he arrays himself as fully as he then emptied himself; for he is coming in glory. At his first appearing, he had no name, no reputation (see Phil. 2); now he has every name, every expression of dignity and praise in heaven and earth. It was only " Jesus " then, the name both of contempt and salvation,-yea, of contempt because of salvation, for our salvation was purchased by his shame and death. But now it is a name above every name.

Such is the preparation for the taking of the kingdom or the inheritance. It is as the sword of David first, and then the throne of Solomon, as we read here: " They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (Chapter 20:4.) The shout in heaven was now realized on earth: " The Lord God. Omnipotent reigneth!"

But there is progress in this work of judgment which: thus attends the second advent.

The binding of Satan in the bottomless pit (connected with the overthrow of the Beast and the false Prophet) may be called the morning judgment, or the judgment of the quick, ushering in, as it were, the millennial day or the kingdom. Then, at the close of that day, Satan being let loose from the pit to raise the last mischief in the world, the Great White Throne is erected, before which proceeds the evening judgment, or the judgment of the dead, closing, as it will, the millennial day or the kingdom. And the day of the Lord being then over, the kingdom will be delivered up, and the new heavens and the new earth will appear, the saints exchanging the kingdom for " God all in all," or their millennial for their eternal joy, and Satan. the bottomless pit for the

lake of fire; or his millennial for his eternal doom. (21.7,21.)

Of all this our Prophet is given a passing sight, and then he is called up to another vision. He had before seen the Bride prepared in heaven (19.); and now, he is called to see her descend out of heaven (21. 2); and by and bye, he will be called, in order to see herself as descended. (21. 9.) But now, while descending, and he is looking at her, a voice accompanies the descent, saying: " Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away."

This voice interprets the results of the descending city. This voice is as if a friend, in the secret of it, were to explain to us the meaning of a procession that might be passing before us. " Behold!" it says to John, calling his attention; and then it shows him the descending city' as the witness that God was now restoring Himself to man,-" The tabernacle of God is with men," and thus; that all their sorrow should cease. But this result might not be in all its fullness at once, or during the thousand years; but the descent of the city, now at the opening of that kingdom, was the, pledge of all this restoration of God to man, and of the consequent ceasing of sorrow, and death, and tears. And so, this friendly voice now interprets it. The former things were now passing away, that state

of things in which God and man had been separated, and during which, accordingly, there had been lamentation, and weeping, and death.

The Lord from the throne then verifies all this voice from heaven, and adds His own word: "Behold I make all things new." And when he had thus spoken, he addresses John, giving him to know, that when this came to pass, all would be done; adding, moreover, such warnings and encouragements as may be listened to by all from that moment to the end, being delivered by the Lord in the consciousness of the solemn sanction which the end imparts to all things,- as it is written, " O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."

Thus this vision of the descending city, and this audience from the voices from heaven and the throne pass by, and our seer is carried to a great and high mountain, that he might see this city herself', the Bride, the Lamb's wife. (21. 9; 22. 6.)

One of these angels, who had carried the seven last Plagues, is John's conductor now; and in his presence he measures the city; and that being the sign of security (11. 1, 2), he thereby gives us a pledge, that there is no agency of destruction against it.

The Church, as the candlestick, may be shattered; but as the Lamb's wife, she shall live; and this golden city is this Bride of the Lamb, the Church of God now manifested in her perfectness. She has length, and breadth, and height equal, with twelve foundations, and twelve gates, her wall great and high, and her street of pure gold. Various all this, but all shining and costly, expressing her to be the one that is perfect in holy beauty. And she is not only thus perfect in herself, but she has her dignities as well as her beauty. She is the habitation of the glory of God, the place of the throne, a sanctuary too, as well as a palace, having a presence within her, which makes the whole scene a temple.. Thus is she the suited dwelling-place of kings and priests; and being thus in herself the beautiful one, and bearing with her this honor of the royal priesthood, all that goes forth from her, or enters into her, or dwells there, is according to these things. Light is shed from her, that the nations may walk therein; water from the river of life flows from her, bearing leaves with it, that the nations may be healed thereby; and all that goes in is purity; and all who dwell within are in joy and dignity, having no need of candle or even light of the sun, being also in the conscious dignity of their everlasting kingdom; and nothing must touch such a habitation of holiness, and gladness, and glory, but the very honor of the kings of the earth. They may bring up their glory and honor unto it, but nothing less than that can approach it..

The features of this holy city, here delineated, become so many tests (as we may observe, for it is profitable for our souls) whereby to try the condition of our own hearts towards heaven, and to ask ourselves, Is it the heaven of God that we indeed desire? Thus this place is stable,-it has foundations. Are we satisfied with it forever, or would we fain, in the waywardness of the affections, still have change? This place is a sanctuary, or place of constant worship and communion. Is that according to the heaven which we desire? It is the region of light from the Lamb. Are our souls even now delighting and basking in that element, or do we love the light, and wisdom, and beauty of men? It is the place of holy government, where all is peace. Do we love purity now; and are the workings of unclean nature an offense and sorrow to us? And it is a bosom of rich and generous benevolence, for it is ever giving forth what it has, its light, its leaves, and its waters, for the refreshing and strengthening of others. Are our hearts cultivating like affections?

Are we desiring and watching, that we live not for ourselves, but in the enlarged charities of the Gospel which thus will exercise themselves to perfection in 'that happy place?

The answer of our souls to these things will show the measure of our present sympathy, in spirit, with this heaven here revealed to us. And, thus, this divine description of the holy Jerusalem becomes not merely food for the hopes of the saint, but trial of the heart of the saint, that we may be guided both happily and safely onward. And we may surely say, this is indeed a heaven of holy happiness, a heaven worthy of God its builder.

All is thus pure and shining within and around her and she yields forth streams of light and life that all may be gladdened and blest by her. This is the manifestation of the Church. In this present dispensation, the Church is but forming, like Eve for Adam, but when the time of the kingdom comes, and Adam awakes, then will his Eve be presented to him, the associate of his joy and kingdom, the saints will be shown all fitly framed together, the Church presented to Himself, a glorious Church without spot, as here, in the place of blessing and government. Surely all this is beautiful, as is everything of our God, in its season. The incarnation and ministry of the Lord had been the manifestation of the Father and the Son-the present age is the manifestation of the Holy Ghost-and the age that we look for, and into which this vision of the golden city introduces us, will be the manifestation of the Church. For all is perfection in the ways of God's wisdom, as in the ways of His love. He tells out to us one secret after another, bringing each in due season out of His treasures. " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

But this only as we pass on. I was tracing the character of that holy city which has now been disclosed to us, and observing that everything in it told us that it was the symbol of the Church in her perfectness and manifestation in glory, or the saints in their dominion and honor. And I would again, as connected with this, recur to the difference between the gospel and the revelation by St. John. The gospel closes by taking the children to the Father's house, or hiding them in heaven. (21. 22.) The revelation, by leading them down from heaven into the place of dominion over the earth, or manifesting them as the golden city. It is not the mansions in the Father's house which, at the end of the revelation, we look into, but the place of the sanctuary, and the palace, the residence of the kings and priests unto God and his Christ. It is not the children in their home, but the saints in their glory whom we see. And all this is in full character. For the Gospel by St. John had been, throughout, training the children for the Father; but this revelation by him had been getting the inheritance and glory ready for the saints. It is a further stage in the history of the heavenly family. It is not that they have left the joy of the mansions in-the Father's house, which the Lord has now gone to prepare for them (John 14:2); but they are to receive the glory of the inheritance in addition; and that is what is here, in figure, presented to us.

And this day of the descent of the 'golden city is the promised day of power, the day for the shutting up of the influence of hell upon the earth, for the binding of Satan in the pit, and for the opening of the influence of heaven upon the earth by this descent of the city of God, and (as we may say in a larger sense) by the setting up of that mystic ladder on which the angels of God are to pass from heaven to earth, and back to heaven again. And the throne of God, seen in this city, has a new attribute. At the beginning, it was the throne of God; and the Lamb only came up to it, to take the Book from the hand of him who sat there. But now, the Lamb has ascended it. It is now " the throne of God and the Lamb." The Lamb has now got up to the hill of the Lord, and is now

standing in the holy place.

The action of this Book was preparing the throne for the Lamb. It was not that of the Son on high preparing mansions in heaven for the children, but it was the Lord on high (or God in the supreme place, for him) 'coming forth in the power of one judgment after another, to make His enemies His footstool; and then to erect His kingdom, and lead His saints into it. And accordingly, the kingdom is here displayed, as I have observed, in all its holy order and righteous authority.' It is the Golden City we get, the symbol of righteousness and power united in government-the Church with the enthroned Lamb descending out of heaven, to take association with the earth, ruling it and yet blessing it, presiding over it in righteousness, and yet dispensing to it the water of life and the light of the glory, of the very fountains of which she had now become the scene ' and the dwelling-place.

Such is the end of the second part of this. Book of judgments. Through the terrible judgments. of seals,

trumpets, and vials, we have been led to the blessing of the earth under the light and life that were in the golden city; the throne of God and the Lamb. And as we had a preface to the Book in its place, so now we have a conclusion. (22. 6-21.)

Here we first listen to the angel, who had attended St. John, attesting the full truth of all that has passed; and then, we listen to the Lord pledging His speedy coming, and a blessing (as in the preface) on those who should righteously use this Book. We then find that the hearing and seeing of these excellent things so wrought for a moment on the mind of St. John, that he falls down and worships the angel, as he had done before. (29. 10.) But on both these occasions he had been receiving some overwhelming vision. In chap. 29. he had just seen the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, and now the golden city in her glory and beauty; and his engaged and overpowered affections, awakened by such visions (as with the Queen of Sheba on seeing King Solomon), must account to us for these worshippings of the angel. But the angel rebukes him, as Peter did Cornelius in such a case; and then instructs him in one particular touching this Book, which is strikingly different from the instructions given to the Jewish prophet, on a like occasion. (Dan. 8:26;12. 4-9.) Daniel had seen and heard wonders, but was told to seal them, till the time of the end, because the vision was yet to be for many days; but here, our prophet is told to publish these things which he had seen and heard; because the time did not wait, but was at hand This marks the mind of the Spirit so differently in the Jewish prophet, and in St. John, who was standing in our dispensation addressing the saints. And, according to this, the Lord at once again breaks in with an announcement of His speedy coming, and that, too, with the rewards of righteousness, revealing Himself again, as He had done

at the beginning, in His supreme place, as " the Alpha and Omega."

After this, the attending angel returns to His own proper theme, promising a blessing in righteousness on those who obey, and setting aside all the workers of evil. For this is the theme of the Book, a book which does not say, " Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered," but pronounces blessing on the righteous, and doom on all evil-doers. For it is not a Book of ministering grace, but of executing righteousness-it is not sympathies or consolations that we find in it, but judgments, as we have been seeing throughout. It is the place of

Ezekiel which the Lord fills here, as it was that of Jeremiah which He had occupied in the gospel. In the gospel or in His ministry, through the cities and villages of the land, He was the sorrowing, sympathizing prophet; so that some said, "It is Jeremias"; but here He stands, the Son of Man, like Ezekiel, in the place of judgment, in the Spirit, saying, "He that heareth, let him hear, and He that forbeareth let him forbear" "he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is holy let him be holy still." There was no tear on the eye of Ezekiel, though rivers of waters ran down the cheeks of Jeremiah. All is so perfect in its time. The Lord knew the sympathies of the one, as He walked in the land and saw the moral ruins of Zion, and He can now know the righteousness of the other, as He stands above all that defiled ruin, and apart from it all in judgment.

After this, the Lord reveals Himself as "the Bright and Morning Star." The Church then invites Him to come, and invites others, who would "hear," to join her in this; and then those who were "athirst," having some affections towards her Lord just stirred, to come up to the full measure of her desire; and lastly, through the largeness of her heart, "whosoever would," in whatsoever mind or state they might be, to come and drink of the living waters with her.* Thus was her soul divinely moved upward and around her." But this was an interruption of the more orderly progress of the Book (like 1. 6) on Jesus being revealed. But we should be prepared for such interruptions. We should not expect that the Lord could be revealed, without the Church being moved, as in these places. Praise must fill her, if His grace be revealed, as there (1. 6)-desire must move her, if His person or glory be revealed, as here. And we should all, beloved, be cultivating that longing of heart after Him, that will lead us to take a ready part in such raptures of the Spirit in the Bride, as these.

But still this was an interruption; and, therefore, when it passes, the Lord resumes the more proper theme of the Book, and threatens plagues to him who unrighteously adds to it, and loss of life and glory to him who unrighteously takes from it. This, however, must not be allowed to close all. "Surely I come quickly" is heard again-words which had now broken forth from the Lord three times during this conclusion. For His heart was fuller of that than of any thought, and He would fill ours with it also. All was either to yield to that, or issue in it. Judgment must be executed; but judgment is His strange work. Affliction of the righteous must be gone through, but He never willingly afflicts: All is imperfect till Jesus appear. His own heart is upon this, and this is the last thought that He would leave upon ours. And the saint responds, "Come, Lord Jesus"-that the Lord may know, that this is His people's desire and point of hope, as it is His.

Here, Jesus the Lord, and His ministering angel close their testimony. The apostle, then, in his turn, takes his leave of the saints, saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." In the love of the Spirit He commends them to that which is their only provision for the way, till the journey be ended. Till He come, come when He may, bringing His glory with Him, they must stand in His grace. For the Lord gives both, and grace leads to glory. The wilderness is now proving that He has riches and stores -of -the one for us, and Canaan will, by and bye, prove that He has riches and stores of the other for all who love Him in this thankless and evil world.

This article, "On the Revelation," has been inserted (with the kind consent and corrections of the author) by the special request of several who found profit in the perusal of it in manuscript.

To the editor it seems, at the present moment, to be most important that the various students of the Apocalypse should freely communicate that which each can say he has gleaned for himself in

the study of the book.

That the Lord may, in these, apparently the closing days of the Church's sojourn upon earth, cause the light to shine out of this His Revelation, and by the Holy Ghost open the hearts of His Saints to see light as to their actual position, their path, and their hope;-is the prayer of his heart.

FRAGMENT.

"I am that I am," was the glorious name under which God 'introduced Himself to Israel. God over all-none by searching could find Him out: He would be God, and take His own way: and He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy, and would have compassion on whom He would have compassion. God is God.

" By the grace of God, I am what I am," was Paul's joy; it is mine: may it be thine, too. But, then, how different the force of the sentence when applied to Him and when applied to me, compare woid with word and you will see this only the more forcibly. And yet in both applications, the finger points out to reality, and what is-is owned, as being AS IT IS..

"God -is God."

"And I am a poor sinner and nothing at all. But Jesus Christ is My all in all."

Never, until we get to reality-never, until we let things be as they are, can we possibly have rest.

And the beauty of the gospel is, that it puts God as God and myself, just as I am, blessedly together, and appropriates all that He is to me, and identifies all that I am with Him according to the worth of the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of God and of Christ.

Thou Art a Man

From the German of " Paul Gerhardt."

" DU BIST EIN MENSCH."

Thou art a man! this, known to thee,

Why strivest thou beyond thy strength?

What God designs alone shall be,

His work and word fulfilled at length.

Wisdom and wit thou dost combine

A thousand cares to claim as thine,

Thinking of what may happen thee,

Before thy course completed be.

It is in vain, thou can'st indeed,

Not by thy over-anxious thought,

Divert the purposes decreed;

Not one hair's-breadth can'st vary aught.

Thy sorrow serves, when once distressed,

Only to rob of proper rest,

Plunges thy soul, in woe and pain,

Short'ning the days which might remain.

Wilt thou perform what God delights,

And thus thy soul's true good increase?

Roll all thy care, as He invites,

On Him who only can give peace.

Place all thy need in God's own hands,

'Tis only He who understands

A happy issue how to send:

To Him thy life and. ways commend.

Who looked on thee when close concealed
Thou wast within thy mother's womb?
Ere that thy soul, to life revealed,
Reposed as dormant in the tomb.
Who watched thee then with constant care
What could thy might accomplish there,
'Twas strength Divine, with blessings rife,
That fashioned thee and gave thee life.
Say whence thine eye and vision came,
Whose power defined thy bones within?
What artist's skill contrived thy frame,
And covered it with beauteous skin.
Who placed thy veins so neatly laid,
So orderly to each conveyed,
Thy limbs arrayed in comely grace,
Who gave to every part its place?
Where was thine heart, thy will, thy mind,
When heaven's curtain opened wide,
Who form'd the land? the sea defined?
And the remotest bound beside?
Who brought the sun and moon to view,
The herbage, tree, and creature too?
Bid them thy pleasure to fulfill,
Obey thy heart's desire and will I
Lift up thine head and look around,
Gaze well beneath, behold above!
See how God's hand is ever found,
And ever manifest His love!
Before thy being, God did care

Both food and clothing to prepare,
To meet thy need the milk should be,
Ere that thou cam'st, all there for thee.
The garments which should swathe thy form,
Thy cradle, chamber, and thy rest,
The roof to shelter thee from storm,
Ere folded on thy mother's breast,
Before thine eyes had seen the light,
Or gazed around with vision bright,
Or knew what in the world might be,
Were all things fore-prepared for thee.
And yet thou wilt be led by sight,
Guided by that which thou dost see,
And trust alone in the vain light,
Which manifests itself to thee.
What thou beginnest thou wilt own,
As clear and right, and that alone,
What fathomless to sense appears,
Occasions in thee endless fears.
Now mark it well, how all thy schemes,
And cherish'd longings came to naught,
Thy fondest wish and brightest dreams,
Were oft with disappointment fraught.
And then again events took place
Which human skill could never trace,
Or sense or reason ere devise,
To fill thy heart with such surprise.
How oft wast thou in deepest need,
Through thine own will and wish ensnared,

Thy blinded mind had death, indeed,
Instead of life for thee prepared;
It would have cost thee sad remorse,
Had but thy God allowed the course
In which thy purpose sought to run,
And left thee ruined and undone.
But He whose love no thought can bound,
Our sorrow into gladness turns,
Maketh that right which we confound,
Though all our folly He discerns.
His inward love constrains Him so
To us poor sinners here below,
That with a tender Father's care,
His children His compassion share.
And oh I how oft He holds His peace,
Yet doing all for our true gain,
Though the poor heart will never cease
To sit in grief and anxious pain.
Looks here and there, and nothing finds,
Will see, and yet the darkness blinds,
Would fain escape into the day,
Attempts, but cannot find the way.
But God pursues His counsels deep,
In His wise way His end performs,
Hushes the boisterous winds to sleep,
Guides to the port, away from storms.
And bye and bye, when all is done,
The battle over, victory won,
Then man beholds Who ruled throughout,

His purposes to bring about.
Therefore, dear heart, fresh courage take,
Nor fret thyself with anxious care,
God has a heart ever awake,
And will what's best for thee prepare.
He wont forget--believe, and learn,
His inward bowels to thee yearn,
He calls thee by endearing names,
Thy very need His love inflames.
He burns and glows with truth and grace,
And thou can'st therefore well suppose,
How strength with strength He can replace;
Though oft we mar our own repose,
Taking such weight of carking care
As well might drive us to despair,
As if it was, beyond debate,
He followed us with scorn and hate.
Put far from thee at once the thought,
Nor yield to grief, which robs thy peace,
Whate'er He does is what He ought,
Though it no present joys increase.
That which thy Father, God, doth see
For thee most good, alone shall be,
What does His mind and will content,
No human power may prevent.
Do as a child, and quiet be,
Within thy loving Father's arms,
Beseech His fostering care for thee,
His mercy which thy bosom warms.

So will He by His Spirit lead
In ways unknown to thee indeed,
But thy well-ordered conflicts o'er!
Bring thee where sorrows are no more.

" Our business it is to treasure up the Word; it is the Spirit's to bring it forth out of the store-house, and to apply it. Have you renewed your strength, to-day, out of God's word? How know you what fiery darts Satan may aim at you? Or what will be needed to quench them? One little text, held as God's own word, is oft a panoply against infidelity in the day of battle."

" What a difference it makes which side the Jordan one lives! How different the climate, fruit, prospects, etc. When once the Jordan is crossed, then, too, 'tis the Lord's battles, and not one's own."

REVELATION V.

I, SAW, in the right hand of Him
Who sat upon the throne in Heaven,
A volume writ without, within,
And closely seals - the seals were seven.
A mighty angel loudly cried,
"Who is of worth to take the book,
" Unloose the seals, unroll it wide,
" And on its hidden pages look?"
But there was none in heaven, or earth,
Or underneath to fix upon,
Who could be deem'd to be of worth
To take the book, or look thereon.
Then wept I much, in grief of soul,
To think there could be found no man.
Of worth sufficient to unroll
The volume, or its writing scan.
" Weep not," an Elder said, "nor wail;
"The Lion of Judah's royal house,
" The Root of David, shall prevail

" To ope the book, the seals unloose."
Then I beheld, and saw appear,
Amidst the Throne, amidst the Four,
Amidst the Elders gather'd there,
A wondrous sight, unseen before.
As though it had been slain, there stood
A Lamb, seven-horned and seven-eyed;
Eyes, the seven spirits of our God,
Sent forth throughout earth's boundaries wide.
Then came the Lamb, and straightway took,
Of Him that sat upon the throne,
From His right hand the seven-seal'd book,
To make its hidden contents known.
And when the mystic book was ta'en,
Elders and living creatures all,
Before the Lamb that had been slain,
With one accord did prostrate fall.
Harps had they all of music rare,
And golden vials of perfume,
Whose odor was the earnest prayer
Of saints from out this world of gloom.
They sang a new and thrilling strain-
" Worthy art Thou the book to take,
"And loose the seals, for Thou wast slain
" A sacrifice for sinners' sake.
" And hast redeem'd us by Thy blood
" From every country, people, tongue,
" And made us kings and priests to God,
" And we shall reign on earth ere long."

Then I beheld, and heard the sound
Of thousands upon thousands more;
Yea, countless angels gather'd round
The Throne, the Elders, and the Four.
Saying, as they the voice upheave,
" Worthy the Lamb that once was slain,
"Power, riches, wisdom, to receive,
"And honor, glory, blessing gain!"
And all the spacious heavens contain,
And all on earth, and all beneath,
And all within the vasty main,
Yea, every creature that hath breath,
Heard I with one accordant tone,
Say, "Blessing, honor, glory, power,
" To Him that sits upon the Throne,
"And to' the Lamb for evermore!"
"Amen!" the living creatures say;
Amen!" a confirmation gives;
And prostrate Elders worship pay
To Him who ever, ever lives.

The Vessel

"FILLED IN ALL THE Fullness OF GOD."-Ephesians. 3:19.

Ε■ς π■ν τ■ πληρ■μα το■ θεο■,

" We learn in suffering what we teach in song."

Oh! is it come - the sweet and blessed calm,
Foreseen and hoped for through those darksome
year Of anguish and of dread? Here, here at last,
I a deep vessel in the shoreless sea
Of thine own fullness, O eternal God!
Filled in that fullness, find my prayers, my hopes,
All, all fulfilled, and nothing more to crave.
The bright reality, the thing itself
Transcends all thought, eclipses every hope;
Dwelling in God, by God indwelt, I know
Love in its fullness, life to me is bliss,
All, all within, beneath, around, above,
Speak but of Thee, and tell me what I am,
The happiest of the happy! O thou peerless One!
Great God revealed in flesh, the living link
'Twi'xt Godhead and my soul! be thine the praise,
The loving worship of a loving heart
Rich in Thyself, for, oh, however filled,
Howe'er exalted, holy, undefiled,
Whatever wealth of blessedness is mine,
What am I, Lord! an emptiness, a nothing.
Thou art my boast, in whom all fullness dwells
Of the great Godhead, Thou whose name I bear,

Whose life is mine, whose glory and whose bliss,

JESUS THE BEST FRIEND.

THE best of friends is one above!

On earth indeed a friend is rare:

For in the bustle of this world

Each only for himself does care.

My thoughts then all do hither tend

" Jesus, the Lord, is the best friend."

All men do like a cradle move

, But, as the rock, He firm remains:

When trials bring me very low

He still for me. His love retains:

When joys or griefs my path attend

Still is my Lord my steadfast Friend.

The worldling sets his love for sale

To those who know to pay the best,

But when misfortune shows itself

Such love can give but little rest.

Yet, come what will, I can commend

" Jesus, the Lord, as a true Friend."

He gave His life to ransom mine,

He shed for me His own life's blood,

He stands by me in every need,

And all my debts: He made them good:

On Him alone my hopes depend

" Jesus, the Lord's a faithful friend."

All, all are mine. E. D.

No 8.

SONG OF SOLOMON.

IF we examine the Psalms, or even the Prophets, with a view to ascertain the character or circumstances of the residue of Israel in the latter days, we shall find, after their undergoing some deceptions through professed friendship, a distressed and oppressed people. The fowls summer upon them, and the beasts of the earth winter upon them (Isaiah: 18. 6). That is the state of the nation when the Assyrian shall be pressing them from without, and the beast oppressing them within. At the center of their nationality, and where their hearts have sought rest, will be trouble such as never was since there was a nation, and never will be again: the time when God is making short work upon the earth.

Though this will be in the nation at large,.. the effect on the wicked and on the saints will be very different. The nation at large will have joined with the beast and acquiesced in idolatry. Another, come in his own name, they will have received. The unclean Spirit of Idolatry, with seven others worse, will have entered into them. They have given up their God, rejected their Messiah, received the Antichrist, and what have they when oppression comes? " They shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven to darkness."

But we have to do more particularly with the remnant attached to Israel, to Israel's hopes, and Israel's relationship with Jehovah, but awakened to the sense of the evil that is going on, and suffering on all hands from it where they have not fled. The Spirit and Word of God are working in their hearts. They remember the promise to the people as God's people; they seek faithfulness to Jehovah, and are only for that reason oppressed and driven out, hated by unfaithful Israel and cruelly oppressed by her-oppressors i but brought to the sense of the nation's and, therein, their own sins, grieved over its ruin, and seeing approaching judgments and God's hand already on them in sore chastisement. They would hope yet in Jehovah and expect Messiah, though smitten into the place of dragons and finding it hard to count on one against whom they have sinned, and whose hand is out against them and to reckon on promises when all seems dark. Still the promises are there, and God will certainly set His King on His holy hill of Zion. From Deut. 32 onward, the prophets had, predicted this state of things, so that, dark and terrible as it is, and, humanly speaking, excluding hope, there was that, even in the very threats, which sustained hope.

This state of things the Psalms meet, and, as we have often seen in commenting on them, furnish a divine expression for the hopes and sorrows of these exercised hearts.. It is only the great principles of these which I would now advert to, to bring out more distinctly the different character of the Song of Solomon, and what that will furnish to the hearts and faith of the remnant. There are two great principles characteristic of their state in the midst of all their sorrows: First integrity, secondly trust in Jehovah. In these the Spirit of Christ leads them, Himself perfect in both and by His grace enabling them, in the expressions furnished them in these Psalms, to express their confidence in spite of all their failure, which rendered it more difficult than even the deep waters they were passing through. This very integrity, and the operation of the Spirit of Christ in them, leads them, however necessarily, to the confession of sin and long failure even to blood-guiltiness. It is remarkable to see in this way how declaration of integrity, and confession of sins, are found together; so with Job, so even with Peter. Hence also, in looking to God, mercy always comes before righteousness in their thoughts, He had shut them up in unbelief that they might be objects. of mercy. No doubt God was righteous in fulfilling His promises, but they must get into the true and right place to have them accomplished, the place where the interpreter, one among a thousand,

could put them. And this interpreter is just the Spirit of- Christ in- the Psalms. He chews them the place of uprightness in confessing their sin, then they can look for mercy, and so righteousness. All these are the moral dealings of Jehovah, most instructive and most interesting. The Psalms and the Prophets, too, add, that it will be through the intervention of Messiah, and the Prophets at any rate tell us plainly it will be under the new Covenant.

But the Song of Solomon seems' to me to show us something further-the drawing out, where the soul is taught. of God (an effect realized in some hidden ones while revealed and open for all) of the soul of the waiting few, into affections here figuratively presented, and the revelation of Messiah's devoted love for the people; for Jerusalem, if you please, as the center of it, over which he wept, when in its folly it rejected Him, so that the humble and instructed heart should have the consciousness of it, and confide in it, though not yet revealed.

It begins with a recognition of the blessedness of Messiah's love. His name, from the graces in Him, is as ointment poured forth, and He is loved by the uncorrupted ones-those, I suppose, who have guarded themselves from idolatry and corruption, the same class exactly as in Rev. 14, these evidently therefore also while waiting for Christ have suffered in a certain sense like him.. Next the bride (Jerusalem) looks to be drawn by Messiah, but says " we," because she really represents all the faithful. The King now appears; King Messiah. He loves Jerusalem intimately. This is valued. It is the upright ones who love Him. We have seen this character of the remnant. Verses 5, 6, tell the tale of Jerusalem, of Jacob's long persecution and desolation. The Sun has looked upon her, the heat of trial. Her place was to be a keeper of nations for fruit, she had not kept her own vineyard. Next in ver. 7, she would not be anywhere but with Messiah's flocks, not be like a dissolute wanderer with others than He. The paths marked out by those, whom God owned as guided and guides,

the testimony among God's people, were to lead her. This brings her to Messiah's own testimony of His delight in-her; and-her consciousness that thus grace is. drawn forth in her (ver. 12). What an image of this, suited to the time, was Mary's act, which Judas blamed. This is a kind of introductory statement, which gives us the aspects in which they stand, and their position, so as to recognize the bride, her place, and the bridegroom. Now the action and effect of it begins. The bride takes her place, and the bridegroom owns only her. She is the lily, the rest thorns (verse 3). It is under Christ she finds herself, she owns Him as. the true blessed fruit-bearer. And His shadow protects her, and she delights in it, and His fruit is her joy. Jerusalem and Israel are restored under Messiah, delight in Him, are sheltered under Him. Now we find how much more we have than in the Psalms, the heart's devoted confidence that His love is the spring of delight, her joy, and overpowering her with blessing. He, too, rests in His love, and in her heart she weighs and estimates the value of His love, all her delight is in His resting in His love (see Zeph. 3:17) please' (verse 7) I doubt not is right, though I had elsewhere supposed it otherwise. The remnant are entering by faith into the joy Messiah will have in His bridegroom-love to them and. expresses her own rest of heart in this. Remark here what follows, for it is a key to the bearing of this, " The voice of my beloved, behold he cometh." This connection is not accidental, we have the form of verse 7, also in 3. 5, and 8. 4, and each time it is followed by his coming, but. with progress. Here Messiah comes revealing Himself: After 3. 8, He comes crowned as King Messiah, the Son of David, Prince of peace, crowned in the day of His espousals as His mother's (Israel's) heart crowns After 8. 3, 4,- the bride is coming back out of the wilderness with Him, leaning on her beloved. Here we return to

the first principle of blessing stated in 2. 3. she was raised up under the apple tree, there she was brought forth. It was not under Moses, not under the old Covenant, that Israel or Jerusalem could truly find their blessing, but under Christ, still less was it under

Egypt; Christ was the source, the tree of blessing and life to her. Hence to complete this part of the connection of thought-instead of vineyards trusted to her,. and her not keeping her own; -Solomon,-Christ as-local Prince of peace, has a vineyard at Baalhamon, a difficult word. At any rate, it is now Solomon, Messiah Himself, who has the vineyard. I am disposed to think it refers to Christ's universal dominion over the earth, the peoples, a vineyard which will now bear its fruit. But there was a special vineyard new, once not kept which was now before. the spouse,-Israel, who through grace would now diligently keep its vineyard; her vineyard was before her. The song closes the remark with the desire that the Bridegroom would make haste. The companions hearkened to His voice for it. It was the desire of the upright ones, but in the character of spouse she prays to hear All this points out, I think, two things: one, the way faith, in those whose hearts have been opened, enters into the perfect delight of Christ's love in the blessing of Israel, specially Jerusalem. The anticipative sense of this is here furnished to draw out and encourage this faith. It is not the prophetic statement of moral principles, how- ever deeply important in connection with Jehovah's dealings with Israel they may be, but the sense of Bridegroom- love which Messiah has for his people, for the people and city He has chosen. Not as stones of course, but as the seat of election (compare Psa. 132:13,11. indeed the whole Psalm). Next it is only the anticipation of faith: for every time that she realizes it, and looks to the Bridegroom's resting undisturbed in His love, immediately follows the thought of His coming. She did not. actually possess Him. This, as we have seen, is progressive. In the end of Chapter 2 there is the consciousness. that the time was come, the Lord's grace was causing Messing to spring forth and bud (compare Psa. 102). The various exercises of heart connected with it I do not notice in detail true affection, yet failure. I only remark that the Bridegroom speaks to her, 'the bride of Him: this is just. Christ can give His approval to those He loves. The saint, Jew or heavenly, enjoys His love, can describe His excellencies with delight, but does not take upon him to tell them to Him. There is progress also in the consciousness of the character of relationship. As has been noticed elsewhere, first " My beloved is mine, and I am His" (ver.11,16); this is the first consciousness relationship. " We have found Him." He owns, indeed, His beloved; were it not so, there would be no comfort; and he enjoys with delight her beauty, but the first thought is, "He is mine;" it is not till after many exercises, failure on her part, and assurance how precious she was to Him, that she says with calmer spirit, " I am my Beloved's," I belong to Him, though the other part remains true, with deeper feeling too, for His worth and title is more felt and better known, and in it all He is ours, whatever His title over us, and still His joy is in the beauty and graces of his people. But after this, we have not exercises, but the expression of the Bridegroom's thoughts; His dove, His undefiled, is but one, there may be nations, and many more or less connected with Him, His Beloved is one, Israel only on earth has this place. But, when he so looks at it, soon He is carried on their hearts. He goes down to see the fruits of the valley, whether His vineyard bore its fruits, at least whether it flourished, and that which represented true faithfulness, as He delighted in it (as the pomegranates on Aaron's robe) was budding forth. Israel sheaving in its humiliation the breaking forth of the signs of living fruit. Or ever He was aware, His soul set Him on the chariots of His willing people, for such is the force of Aminadab. As in Psa. 110 so in Psa. 47:9, translated princes (the Nadibim) of the people. Hence Israel becomes immediately as two armies, or as Mahanaim

the hosts of God of old. When all this has taken place, and the Bridegroom has told her how He estimates her beauty, she says again in the due sense how all ought to be His, and what a blessing it was to be so in ones own right place " I am my Beloved's." He is that, her Beloved, but she is His, then all her heart could delight in: " His desire is towards me." Now this was the thought into which Israel had to grow up. Exercises of Israel, right ones, we have in the Psalms, but this thought of Messiah's delight in her is scarcely found there; but they ought to feel it. It opens out a new and most interesting element of their condition, of what grace furnishes them with, that all the feelings that grace can give may be then divinely-given to them, and they drawn_ on into this blessed confidence, and knowledge of Messiah.

It seems to me that not merely particular images or expressions but that the whole structure of this, I admit, mysterious and remarkable poem, points to Israel, to the remnant of Jerusalem, as the center of all this in the latter day, and as I have said gives a further apprehension of what is provided for, and in store for, the remnant, than any other portion of Scripture does, though we have seen it connect itself with many expressions in the Psalms, which confirm this interpretation of it. It has seemed to me that the passages I have referred to, with their combination, give a distinctive clue to the intention of the whole book.

A FRAGMENT.

HARK! hark! those notes of praise above,
That swell the ransom'd throng;
The wondrous theme, redeeming love:
How joyful is the song!
But, hark I why mounts that well-known voice
So sweetly 'bove the rest?
What makes him louder to rejoice,
As if himself more blest?
Ah! 'tis Himself, Himself alone-
His work all praise above:
And there He stands, in glory shown,
Who died for us in love.
'Tis He who gave us power to praise,
With Him alone 'tis found:
The chief of sinners saved by grace,
We by His grace are crowned.
N°. 9.

What Want I With the World?

WHAT want I with the world
And all its treasures?
In Thee alone, Lord Jesus,
Are my true pleasures.
Thou art my sours delight;
My joy I find in Thee!
My rest and peace art Thou!
My heart's tranquility!
What want I with the world?
The world is as a smoke
Which vanishes in air;
And, like a shadow fleet,
That stays not any where:
My Jesus, though, remains,
When all things else decline;
My heart's true confidence,
Jesus alone is mine!
What want I with the world?
The world seeks its renown
Among the grand and great;
Thinks not how quickly glides
Its phantasy and state:
But sweeter far to me
Is Jesu's love alone;
And this my heart's desire,
To see Him on His throne.

What want I with the world?
The world seeks worldly wealth;
Its hope on mammon rests;
Its comforts rise and fall,
With money in its chests:
There is a nobler prize,
On which my heart reclines;
The joys of Jesu's love,
Which in my spirit shines.

What want I with the world?
The world is sorely tried,
If scorn its portion be;
And most, when over-reach'd
By deeper subtlety:

I bear the cross of Christ,
His pleasure to fulfill;
His favor my delight;
My peace to do His will I

What want I with the world?
The world so high esteems
Its fleeting fancies gay;
Its follies to retain
Would barter heaven away;
She hangs her hope on that
Which-care can only yield:
I love my lord and God,
My fortress and my shield.

What want I with the world?
What want I with the world?

As grass it fades away;
The stamp of death is there;
It hasteth to decay;
Health doth itself depart;
All earthly creatures fade:
Jesus sustains; my heart
Is by his love repaid.
What want I with the world?
What want I with the world?
My Jesus is my life,
My substance, and my joy,
In this poor scene of strife:
To Him I gladly bow;
I worship at His feet;
He is my heaven, my all;
Therefore do I repeat,
What want I with the world?
-From, the German.

N°. 3. REMARKS ON 2 TIMOTHY.

A FEW remarks on the second epistle to Timothy, may, I think, not be without their use at the present moment. I will embrace in them, as throwing great light on the second, a short comparison with the first, as to its general character.

We get, in both epistles, what is evidently of the deepest interest, the confidential communications of the Apostle to one to whom, above all, he could open out all his heart, and express himself freely. But their characters are very different, and the rather as he could express all his personal feelings. Besides the interest of this, moreover, the general instruction of the Spirit in them is full of import. The first, as is soon perceived, bears in general the stamp of the quietness which characterizes a peaceful development of what was subsisting, in the main as it had been first established. The second is thrown into individual duties and earnestness, because that which had been established had departed from all consistency with its original standing. The first just guards the truth which was possessed, but is little occupied with it. Individuals were to be hindered teaching any other doctrine. Some few, hankering after the law, had already turned aside and gone into vain janglings. But, in the main, the Apostle could speak of the Church as being that which is always true as to the responsibility of the position it is in, without its suggesting a painful

sense of the discordance between fact and responsibility; namely, that it was the pillar and ground of the truth. Individuals had fallen into gnostic Judaism. The assembly was still practically, as it always is in responsible position, the pillar and ground of the truth. It had not falsified its character. The Church, and the Church alone, until judicially rejected of God, sustains -the truth before the world, though grace sustains the Church; men may minister it, but the Church, by its profession, sustains it. This thought brings no present distress to the Apostle's mind. It gives occasion to the prophetic declaration, that in the latter days some would depart from the faith. Timothy was to put the brethren in remembrance, so that they might be on their guard when that came,-but the body of the epistle supposes the Church, in the main, untroubled in this respect, though there were dangers seen in the horizon, as in Acts 20, and it is occupied, assuming the truth to be maintained, with the order and comeliness of the house of God-how Timothy ought to behave himself in the Church, which was the pillar and ground of the truth. It arranges the order of the house, in the various practical details of its administration on earth, from the elders who should rule in it, to the care of widows, and the Church's duty in respect of them, keeping in view family ties and the obligations flowing from them. It is the whole order of the Church upon earth, and the due administration of it. The Church is looked at as in this world, not as the body of Christ. It is the house of the living God, an assembly here on the earth, the vessel and maintainer of the truth in it. The Apostle looked to exercise still his administrative care himself; but instructed Timothy, meanwhile, how to behave himself, having his attention fixed on divine things, and exhorts him to fight the good fight of faith, in view of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. In a word, it is the due administration of the Church upon earth, awaiting the Lord's appearing as the term of responsibility. As a whole, the Church is seen as that to which the mystery of godliness was confided, and it was the maintainer of it on the earth. The danger of running into law and gnostic asceticism is warned against; but as yet the Church, as such, maintains the truth, and has only to be rightly administered.

It will be remembered, that Timothy was left at Ephesus to guard against any preaching of any other doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3), though instructed in the administrative order of the assembly; and this runs through the epistles, applying that truth withal to practical purposes, skewing it as the truth as it is in Jesus.

In the second epistle, the assembly is still there; but it is viewed as a great house, in which vessels to dishonor are to be found. Here the truth, as with John, takes a prominent place-that is the maintenance of the truth; individual faithfulness to the truth, and individual piety. He looks for devotedness and courage in the individual, in the man of God. Church privileges are not before his mind, he can dwell on the Jewish faith (the truth in their day) of Timothy's mother and grandmother (and the mother had married a Greek), and that of Timothy, as all running in the same divine channel, and flowing from the same divine source.

We have two characters of the assembly. It is like a great house, it has vessels to dishonor as well as to honor, and it would have, in the perilous times, the form of piety but deny its force. As to the facts which gave occasion to this train of thought, they are evident. The Apostle had been deserted by the Saints, and was looking soon to leave the assembly, and he knew what would come in after his departure, and warns of it. " All in Asia had turned away" from him, he was glad to have one that cared for him in his prison The Lord had, indeed, none. The brethren, some from worldly motives, some doubtless for service, but at any rate all but Luke, had left him. They had

not in their hearts to stand by him in his witness. They had not left Christ as to the faith, but they could not hold fast in such an exposed place as Paul's,-so at his first answer on his trial, " no man stood by him," " all men forsook him." " but he knows whom he has believed." It was to Christ he had committed his happiness, and He would keep it safe for him. A crown of righteousness was laid up for him. He had fought the good fight, he had kept the faith. Thus, strong individual personal faith, with the sense that the assembly had failed and not held on to the ground on which his soul walked, is that which gives the character and key-note to this epistle. Still, unclouded personal courage is that which he looks for. But the state of the assembly on the earth may first occupy us,

and then individual duty. It did not maintain church elevation in its position. Of this Paul was the representative, I doubt much if Timothy was at Ephesus at the time (Tychicus was sent there); but the Epistle to the Ephesians gives, at any rate, what I mean by church elevation in its position. We know how Paul was converted by the revelation of a heavenly Christ, accompanied by the declaration that all saints were one with Himself. How the fact that men, Jew as well as Gentile (for he was a pattern of a Jew), were children of wrath; that man was alienated from God, dead in trespasses and sins, that it was a risen Christ he knew, and did not know Him after the flesh, and that all in Him was a new creation, a second Adam, characterized the teaching of the apostle. How the elevation of his doctrine, which judged all flesh, and skewed what the church really was, awakened the opposition of fleshly religion, and human pride. He had first been in bonds for this, he was now on the borders of death, but had kept the faith, "had indeed not counted his life dear unto him." But here the great body of the saints held back. It pressed them out too much against the world, and the world against them; and they shrank back; he was deserted as well as persecuted. It is this aspect of things which he had to contemplate. He was largely like the Lord in it; standing as it were between two worlds, his service finished in one, and yet not passed into the other. Timothy took, comparatively with Paul, John's place with the blessed Lord on the Cross. In the service of ministry, there was a power which raised not only above sin (Christ, of course, was absolutely free from it) but above nature, when it was not sin, but where admission of it would have been a hindrance, and so a failure, was incompatible with the undivided service to the Lord. " Woman what have I to do with thee?" So, when one would bid adieu at home, the Lord says: " he that has put his hand to the plow and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God": a man must hate his father and mother. So Paul: "henceforth know we no man after the flesh." He took no counsel with flesh and blood. But when the Lord had closed his service, He said: "Woman behold thy' Son; Son, behold thy mother." So the apostle, here, returns to the thoughts and feelings of nature, I do not mean as evil, but human, kindly associations. He opens his heart to Timothy, is mindful of his tears, desiring to see him that he might be filled with joy: he had served God from his forefathers; thinks of the piety. and faith of Timothy's mother and grandmother; feels too his isolation, can speak of his cloak and books and parchments. He is, in spirit passing out of his ministry, in which he was sustained above all nature, into gracious and tender feelings (but not apart from nature), and solemnly commending the charge which Timothy was to take up to his care and responsibilities. He who had represented the Church in its higher character, and sustained it in his spiritual energy, was now in prison. This, for any, but especially for such a servant of God, is full of touching interest. But the Church-had lost withal that character in which the divinely given elevation of his spirit could have found its sphere. He had his own place from God. He was a master-builder; and, however he could prophetically point out what was coming on,

and give just war--g as to it, one may justly ask oneself, how he could, such as he was, as given of God, have wrought in the declining state of things--the rapidly corrupted Church--which did not keep, we may say, a day after his death, the consciousness of the elevation of its position, or the clear doctrine of justification as risen with Christ. It sank down to its conventional place in this world. No doubt the knowledge of Christ in that place made it incomparably superior to the world, to say nothing of individual salvation. But how could Paul have descended there? He would have been more than useless. He would have been in conflict with the whole Church, when it was falling--not reviving--or have sanctioned, helplessly, the state he disapproved of. No; God orders all things rightly. When the Church is just turning into a great house, all having abandoned the Apostle, the Apostle, called up of God, abandons the no longer applicable service, having fought the good fight and finished his course; and leaves to John, in his singularly blessed Ephesus, to record the abandonment of

their first love, and to secure individual faithfulness, and walk, where corporate consistency had failed. Meanwhile, what is ever our duty in our place, he urges on Timothy devoted and courageous faithfulness whatever the state of the assembly may be, and chews the saints' united path in it. This state of the assembly on earth in its elements, its form and our path of duty in it, I have now to inquire into.

Life and incorruptibility according to grace, given us in Christ Jesus before the world was, are now before his spirit; death being abolished in its power. The Fulfiller of the promise to the seed of David was raised from the dead. We have to suffer endure hardness --not to be ashamed of the testimony, nor of its being in prison; a day is coming which will set all clear, at His appearing, and His kingdom, He would judge. There is here, note, no thought of rapture, or Church privilege. I will touch on this further on. What then is the state of the assembly? What principles govern it? I think I see the form of the settling down of the Church into the world, in the doctrine of Hymenaeus and Philetus if the resurrection is passed already, here we are settled in our ultimate state. It had not been formed into a system, it was only in the form which took away expectation of the Lord and heavenly hopes; for, if the resurrection was passed, Christ, in spiritually freeing. His people, had set them down here contented in their worldly abode. It was, if not eternity, the germ of a kind of spiritual millennium without Christ. The Church was no longer a stranger and a pilgrim, a bride waiting for the bridegroom; she was settled down into a permanent, accepted place on the earth. It was a sad, probably unperceived, departure; but unperceived, because the sense of what the Church was was gone. That it marred the character of the assembly on earth as the recognized gathering together in one of the children of God, who had been scattered, the manifestation of God's elect, ("knowing, dearly beloved, your election of God," a decay already hinted at, 1 Cor. 10), and the body of Christ--is evident from what the seal of the sure foundation of God was: " the Lord knoweth them that are His." They were not publicly and distinctively manifested. It was no longer " the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved," nor the " perfecting of. the saints, the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come," etc. This form of truth is gone, the Lord Himself knows, and only. He, who his chosen ones are. And the same thought is stamped on the reverse of the seal, man's responsibility to act up to his profession so that it might be evidently real: if a man named the name of Christ (plenty might be doing it), he was to depart from iniquity. This state of things at once introduces the form it would take. In a great house you must expect vessels to dishonor as well as to honor. That which had, in being formed, been the body of Christ

seated in heaven (and in Him seated there itself), and the proper, suited habitation of God by the Spirit on the earth, was now a great house, where vessels to dishonor were to be expected to be found. But this, while itself guiding the conduct- of the-saint would, in the last days, develop itself into a terrible system of formed evil. Perilous times would come: men (for there was no real ground to call them saints or Christians,-whatever their pretensions and claims, the guiding Spirit would not call them so, but), men there would lie, lovers of themselves, &c., having a form of piety, and denying its power. It was not the Church letting evil in, or slipping away from its true heavenly character. To tell the truth as to it, you must begin at the other end. Men, what was really the will and wit of men, would, under the name of Christianity, be as bad as the heathen had been, have their will in, wickedness, and clothe themselves in the form of piety, denying its power. Such were the predicted forms of evil, and placed as present things, thoughts for all times, under the eyes of Timothy, as the sphere of his own responsibility,- so soon did the Church depart from its faithfulness,-the outward form a great house; and then the activity of these lovers of pleasure, without a trace of real piety, busy to lead foolish minds astray under the forms of piety!

Let us now see the spirit in which the saint taught of God, and watchful, has to walk, what our divine directions are. The first and most marked characteristic is the way the Apostle looks for spiritual courage. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. He was to be partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God. No shame as to the testimony; no shame as to the shame it brought on those who were faithful. He was to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Personal faith was to grow in the measure in which evil grew, and the saints declined. He was to endure hardness, not to entangle himself with affairs of this life. He must fight according to rule. There was a power above all the power of evil. If Paul was bound, the Word of God was not. God carries on, in spite of all, His own work. He is above all the circumstances which affect us. We do not sufficiently believe that the works that are done upon the earth, He doeth them Himself. Our part is to trust Him. So Paul had walked in enduring energy of love. See, here, how like he is to his Master; he uses language (bringing in Christ as the power of it) which Christ Himself might have used. " Therefore I

endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with °eternal glory." So Timothy was to make full proof of his ministry. If he suffered with Christ, he would reign with Him. The next point is holding fast the truth in the form taught by the Apostle-the first doctrine taught. He was to hold fast the form of sound words heard of Paul, in faith and love in Christ Jesus. We have Paul's words certainly in his Epistles, and nowhere else. There is no progress in revealed truth; in understanding it, there is. And it has been formally expressed, and by that we have to hold fast It was a deposit of doctrine committed to him. In these days, this is of all importance. The pretext of development, of the influence on the Apostles of their age and its habits of thinking, all make this holding the forms of truth given by the Apostle supremely important. In fact, development was the first path of error; philosophy soon came in at Alexandria, and the simplicity and divine perfection and purity of truth were lost. Full grace, and our being saved, now that we believe, shone distinctly in this truth (1. 9, 10). Another important principle laid down, when the form of piety reigned denying the power, is faith based on the authority of the teachers then sent of God and the Holy Scriptures. These suffice to make the man of God perfect. The acknowledgment of the authority of the apostolic writers, and of the inspiration and sufficiency of the. Scriptures to make wise unto salvation, " perfect, thoroughly furnished," is another mark of the

sound Christian in the perilous times of the last days. Connected with this, is the place the truth takes. There is such a thing as the truth. This has to be held at all cost. The Lord tells us, "the truth shall make you free," "sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth." So here, silly women, cannot come to the knowledge of the truth, the deceivers resist the truth. These would soon turn their ears from the truth. Timothy was to teach meekly, in hope that God might give repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. Thus, known direct apostolic authority, which no tradition can give, for I cannot say from whom I learned it so that it should have the Apostle's authority, truth in the form of words given by the Apostle;-the Scriptures, known truth, and the holding these fast, characterize the approved disciple, when decline and unfaithfulness had come in.

Again-enduring, faithfulness, persecution as contrasted with ease and profession, practically mark the divine path. Not uncertainty as to salvation, and a laborious procuring of it. We are saved, and called with a holy calling, according to God's purpose, before the world began. Death is abolished, so that we are not under its fear. Life and incorruptibility are brought to light. We are in the bright and blessed liberty of saved ones, for whom the whole power of death is destroyed. This was to be fully maintained. On the other hand, the Gospel brought afflictions. Timothy was to be partaker of them, according to the power of God; Paul was suffering for it; Timothy was to endure hardness as a good soldier, be disentangled from the world; so Paul was enduring all things for the elect's-sakes. But it was not merely those ministerially active who would suffer. There was another source of persecution, not Christianity now in itself, but seeking to live godly in Christ Jesus. The form of piety with abounding evil would prevail; but piety, the seeking to live godly, not to join the current of worldly profession, would be persecuted. The professing Church being in this state, the assembly in general would be a great house, and vessels to dishonor allowed in it. This leads to ecclesiastical direction, so to speak. Carelessness as to doctrine, departure from the truth, and a worldly, carnal state of the professing Church prevailing, in which the sense, that, risen already in Christ, we were looking for a resurrection to take us out of this whole state, was lost; and what called itself Christian settled into a recognition of man this side death. What was the Christian to do? Purge himself from these, so as to be a vessel meet for the Master's use. He could not leave the profession of Christianity, corrupted as it had become-that is clear; nor was he to sanction the corruption, nor could he correct it as regards the public profession. Nay-evil remained-seducers would wax worse and worse. He was to purge himself from them. But his practice was to be equally exact. Avoiding lusts, he was to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace. Was he then to isolate himself in his walk because of the evil, in thus pursuing godliness and grace? He was not. He was to recognize and distinguish those who called on the Lord out of a pure heart. If it be asked, how can he do this? My answer is, the apostle tells us to do it; he does not suppose we cannot. It was to be done. I may not be able to distinguish a person to be such. That is possible. I am not his judge; but he is not one of those who are pointed out as those with whom- I should walk. The direction is very simple. The professing Church is characterized as a great house containing vessels to dishonor. In that state of things, I, am not to rest satisfied with the dishonor; not to think of mending the house, nor of leaving it, but of purging myself from those who are so, and recognizing those who, call on the name of the Lord, own, and worship Him out of a pure heart,-to walk with them.

Some details remain, which we may notice, but now specially connected with ministry. I start from the holding fast the form of sound words; avoiding jangling on profitless questions raised, holding

to the truth itself; avoiding striving even in contending for the truth. Shunning profane, vain babblings-they increase to more ungodliness. This was not the jangling on questions to no profit, but error, as we see from the case given. They were to be shunned; nor are we to strive about words to no profit. All these shunnings and avoidings referred to keeping in the simplicity of the truth. From the corrupt profession, forms of piety, and ungodliness, we are to turn wholly away. The former were to be avoided, shunned, it was individual; the latter, left, turned away from. On the other hand, he was to be watchful and diligent to show himself a workman approved unto God; a workman not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth; it was to be rightly set chit, dissected, and applied, as well as expounded according to the mind of God. Then he was to commit what he heard from Paul to faithful men; not put men in office but commit truth to men, faithful men. Truth all through, and truth connected with unaffected and true godliness, is the leading thought of the apostle, and a suffering place in the world because of it, in contrast with an easy-going church. But all his directions are individual, not to fancy he could correct the body; he was to shun, avoid, turn away, etc., and pursue godliness with them that really sought the Lord (not mere profession), out of a pure heart. The testimony and truth were to be held fast, at all cost. We see how soon departure from the truth was the enemy's way of bringing in ungodliness and worldliness. Even when the form of godliness is spoken of, it is propagated amongst silly women, never coming to the knowledge of the truth. This laid them open. Finally, the Lord would be faithful, could not deny Himself.

T. have another remark to make here. The promise of life in Christ Jesus is the very starting point of the epistle. What is livingly personal, not ecclesiastical. So the fullness of grace, as we have noticed (i. 9); but, all through, personal responsibility is dwelt on; and, hence, we are placed, not in presence of privileged hopes, but of judgment, I mean even as Christians; for Onesiphorus mercy is desired in that day. Timothy is charged before God and the Lord Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. So the crown is a crown of righteousness; men must strive lawfully, and, laboring first, partake of the fruits. The Lord, the righteous Judge, gives him the crown of righteousness; so, as to all others, it is laid up for those who love His appearing. But he had just spoken of His appearing, as the time of judging. And so it is, first the quick, and afterward the dead. How love it? Now this supposes, first, the most complete association with Him, and acceptance, judgment being set aside for us. But more, loving His appearing supposes that its present realization awakens no feeling of anything which would have to be judged, which would hinder our loving that which will set aside evil. It is the time of glory for us. When He shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory. But, then, it is the setting aside evil; so, that, if anything is allowed in us, anything not suited to His appearing, if we are not wholehearted in the setting up of His glory, we cannot practically love His appearing. This gives, in the midst of general decline, a solemn but a very blessed character to the instruction of the epistle; indeed, it all supposes great personal nearness, proportioned to the general decline.

May we so judge ourselves, and so hold fast by that Blessed One!

N°. 4.

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