

# PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 5, 1853

by G.V. Wigram

---

*A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 5, 1853, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

58 Chapters

## Table of Contents

0. Present Testimony Volume 5, 1853
1. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
2. 2 Corinthians 12
3. Amalek to Be Destroyed
4. Christ and the Church
5. Christ's Testimony
6. The Closing Days of Christendom
7. Confession
8. Ezekiel 9
9. Daniel 9
10. Nehemiah 9
11. Ezra 9
12. Genesis 3
13. Genesis 4
14. Daniel
15. Extract
16. Ezekiel
17. Faith: Its Traits and Difficulties
18. The Feast of Tabernacles
19. Fragment: Love of the Brethren
20. Fragment: Perfected Then
21. Fragment: the Grace of God Sustaining Our Walk
22. Fragment: Two Aspects of the Lord's Coming
23. Fragments
24. Freedom According to Man and Liberty According to Christ
25. Genesis 22
26. God's Rest
27. Grace the Power of Unity and of Gathering
28. Guidance
29. Heaven
30. The Epistle to the Hebrews
31. An Honest and Good Heart
32. Jeremiah
33. The Times of Jeremiah
34. The Lamentations of Jeremiah
35. Letter to the Editor
36. Liberty in Religion: a Serious Warning to Christians of the Present Time
37. 1
38. 2

39. The Lord Jesus in John 1 and 2
40. Mark 12:1-12
41. Matthew 13
42. My Soul, Come Bless the Lord
43. Nehemiah 8:13-18
44. O Precious Savior, Unseen Friend
45. Obedience
46. Ordinances
47. Parables of the New Testament
48. Thoughts on Philippians 3 and Mark 10
49. Psalm 23
50. Psalm 23: a Psalm of David
51. Psalm 84
52. The Revelation of Jesus Christ
53. Sifted As Wheat; or Simon Peter
54. Similarities of Jude and One Part of 2 Peter
55. To Be Doing and Not to Be Doing
56. To Sin and Not Sin
57. The Unsearchable Riches of Christ

## Present Testimony Volume 5, 1853

---

## 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

---

" I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

" Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

On entering upon the consideration of the above passage, the first question is-What were these saints of Thessalonica sorrowing about? They were not, I believe, mourning because they feared lest their brethren might possibly have perished. They knew them to be believers, and hence such a suspicion could not enter their minds. Neither were they indulging themselves in mere natural grief because of their loss. This with them was altogether a secondary point. Their sorrow arose from neither of these two causes. From whence then did it arise? It arose, I believe, as the Apostle intimates, from their being ignorant with regard to these saints, of something touching the hope of the kingdom. They did not, in truth, understand how they who had fallen asleep could partake with themselves of the coming glory of Christ. This fear, therefore, the Apostle meets with a positive declaration that so far from their coming short of the blessing, in any measure, that when God bringeth in the first begotten into the world, when He introduces Christ to that kingdom which he is to receive as the meed of his humiliation on the earth, He (God), will bring with Him (Christ) those who, previous thereto, shall have died in the faith.

Ah! but the Thessalonians might have replied, " Our brethren are dead, how then can they come with Christ?" This, therefore, St. Paul meets in ver. 15, by saying " that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep." And then he goes on, in verses 16, 17, to show that in 'order to come with Him, they must be previously raised; that, as in the case of a sovereign visiting some city or province of his dominions, the nobles dwelling therein must go forth to meet him, in order to mingle among his retinue as he enters the place, so the saints (at least those of whom he is speaking-those who have fallen asleep), must ascend in order to descend with the Lord when He comes in his glory. Having, in ver. 14, spoken of the ultimate thing, he then turns back, and in ver. 16, 17, he shows what, previous thereto, must of necessity happen.

The point on which the Thessalonians were ignorant, and on which they needed to be thus enlightened, was the doctrine of a "first resurrection." Like Martha, when she said of her brother, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day;" and like many in our own day,

they had some vague thought of a general resurrection of the righteous and the wicked at the end, but of "the resurrection of life" contrasted with "the resurrection of judgment," they knew nothing. They thought that the dead and the living would meet and be equally blest in the end, but that in the interim there would be a difference; they fancied that they who were alive would "prevent," or get the start of the others. So that in proportion to the duration of the kingdom, the latter would lose the honor reserved for the former.

Probably, indeed, they had little or no idea of any of the saints, either the dead or the living, coming with Christ, but supposed, according to the notion of many at present, that He is to come and establish His kingdom on earth, as we know will really be the case with regard to His earthly people the Jews; while His Church will at the same time be manifested in heavenly glory, reigning with Him over the earth in close connection therewith. All this, then, the Apostle was called on to meet, and he does meet it, as I have said in this passage.

But it may be objected, that ver. 14 cannot apply to the Lord coming in His kingdom, because the saints spoken of here are only a part of those who are to accompany Him then. True it is, they are but a part, but this does not at all interfere with the interpretation here given. The fears of the Thessalonians, be it remembered, concerned the dead, not the living, for which cause St. Paul confines himself to the former, without (ver. 14) alluding at all to the latter; he speaks of those which sleep in Jesus, without deeming it needful to say what is true, that God will bring with His Son the rest of the redeemed, even the living, as well as those who have died, at the very same time.

True it is, when he comes to treat of the rapture of the saints in verses 16, 17, he speaks of the living as well as the dead. But why does he do so? Because the time was come for a new revelation to be made, not to these Thessalonians alone, but to the whole Church of God. And hence he takes occasion, from the circumstances of their sorrow, to bring this new unrevealed truth to light. He shows them "by the word of the Lord," the order of events in reference to the resurrection and ascension both of the dead and living. He tells them that when Christ descends into the air, the first thing which will happen will be that the dead will be raised, next that the living will be changed, and then that they will, in their glorified bodies, both be caught up together to heaven; all which we might be tempted to think would take some time to effect, but which, being God's work, will be done, as we read, "in the twinkling of an eye"- will be the work of a moment.

The foregoing remarks were written for the purpose of meeting a view of this passage which I find is more general among Christians than I was at all prepared to expect. "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him!" This, it is said, applies to the coming of Jesus when He shall descend from heaven into the air, accompanied, as is thought, by the spirits or souls of those who have fallen asleep. Now after what I have said, it is needless for me to add, that I believe this view of the passage to be wholly mistaken, and that unless we allow that ver. 14 applies to the ultimate thing, as I have said, even the coming of Christ when He appears in His kingdom, and verses 16, 17, to what will previously happen, namely, the resurrection, the change, and ascension of the saints, we do not catch the object and mind of the Spirit through the Apostle.

And here, with regard to the separate spirit, before I conclude I would say a few words. True it is, that the souls of those who are asleep are now with the Lord; and equally true, that when Christ

descends from heaven, they will take possession again of their bodies. But observe, the Apostle says nothing at all in this passage of spirits. He speaks of the saints as individuals, neither viewing the spirit apart from the body, nor the body apart from the spirit. What he treats of is the whole man-the believer. His word is not " the spirits of them which sleep in Jesus," but " them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with If, indeed, he at all speaks of one more than the other, it must be of the body, that part of us which dies-which ceases to act, in contrast with the spirit which cannot sleep, but which becomes more actively alive, more energetic than before, as soon as it is freed from our present bodies of sin and death. This, however, I say merely to strengthen my assertion as to the silence of Scripture with regard to the re-entrance of the spirit into the body; because, whether St. Paul speaks in verse 14 of the coming of these saints with the Lord, or in verses 16, 17, of their previously leaving their graves, he views them, as I have said, in the totality of their existence-as men raised to life-as beings composed both of body and spirit.

To me, I confess, the thought which I here venture to combat, seems to lead to the conclusion that the soul sleeps while apart from the body. Is it not so? Because those whom God brings are those who have been previously sleeping. Now, according to what has been said, it is the souls of the saints which are thus brought, in order that they may re-possess themselves of their bodies; and therefore the conclusion is, that these same souls will have been slumbering in the interval between death and resurrection.

Far be it from me to accuse any one holding this view of believing anything so false, so unscriptural, as the sleep of the separate spirit. I have no such thought or suspicion, I can truly say. Still, I repeat that the view, if duly considered, will be found to involve this conclusion, just as the denial of the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15), involves nothing less than the denial of the resurrection of Christ. The Apostle never meant, because the Corinthians failed in understanding this doctrine in reference to themselves, to accuse them of saying that Christ, their living Head, was not raised, because in so doing, he could scarcely have owned them as Christians. He deals plainly and candidly with them, however; he exposes the error of the views they were actually holding, by showing the conclusion to which, if followed out, they must of necessity lead.

Where the heart is right, and the eye is single, the Lord, in His mercy, keeps us from the consequences of many a mistake in the understanding of Scripture into which the wisest amongst us may fall. This is comforting, considering that now at 'best we see through a glass darkly. Still, as in the present case, we should be careful as to what views we are holding, not knowing what advantage the enemy may thereby gain over us, as he sometimes has done, by leading the saints to push their conclusions so far as in the end to get into positive error. May the Lord keep us simple, humble, and dependent, in the study of Scripture, on the teaching of His own blessed Spirit!

The Offerings.

Some points as to the offerings in Leviticus having been lately cleared up to me, and brought home to my heart, I trust I may say, in a way I had not known them before, I would simply name them, with references to the passages by which they are illustrated or proved. To many readers these remarks may suggest nothing that is new; but to some they may not have occurred; and even where they have, the mention of them may stir up to renewed consideration of the subject, and thus promote growth in the truth. How happy to be fellow learners in the school of our Divine

instructor

First.-The Lord's part in the peace (or prosperity) offerings being the fat of the inwards, and this being consumed on the burnt offering (see Lev. chapter 3:5), and with the meat offering (see chapter 7:12), the participation in the other parts of the peace offering of the priest that offered, the priests at large, and the worshipper, really brought them into communion with God's own joy and delight, not only in the peace offering, but also in the burnt and meat offerings, of which the fat of the peace offering was " the food."

Secondly.-The fat of all the sin offerings (except the red heifer in Num. 19) was consumed on the altar of burnt offerings, (see Lev. 4:10, 19, 26, 31, 35; 7:5; 16:25, etc., etc.) Thus we see, that even in that view of Christ's work, in which he was most actually and absolutely made sin for us, His own inward devotion to God, in which He was willing to be thus made sin, was infinitely pleasant and acceptable to God, forming thus a link between the sin offering and all the rest. How precious, that at the very time when Jesus was really bearing wrath for our sins; when it was impossible that God could manifest his favor to Him; when, in consequence, he had to cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" At this very time the link with God on His part (Christ's) was still, as always, unbroken! Indeed, in what one scene do we so see His complete devotion to the Father's glory, as that in which He bows to His Father's will that He should be made sin and suffer without the gate? And even when forsaken and asking "why," He calls Him "My God!"

Thirdly.-The case of the priest (see chapter iv.) whose sin interrupted the communion of the whole congregation, or the similar case of the sin of the whole congregation, is what cannot now occur. The instruction, therefore, as often in Hebrews, is by contrast not comparison. Our Priest cannot fail; and all the sins, yea, the sin of the whole congregation has once, for all, and forever, been so expiated, that nothing now can disqualify the whole church as such for communion and worship.

Fourthly.-As to the diverse force and meaning of the laying on of hands on the victim. In the one case, that of the sin and trespass offerings, a person came as a sinner, and placing his hands on the victim's head, confessed his sins, and transferred, as it were, the load of sin to the victim that suffered in his stead. In the other case, a person came as a worshipper, and placed his hands on the head of the animal, in token of being himself identified with the acceptableness of the offering.

How gracious of our God to condescend to teach us thus! May our poor hearts profit by these typical instructions, knowing, as we surely do, something of their import from the full revelation in the New Testament of the great and blessed Anti-type!

## 2 Corinthians 12

---

There is a remarkable contrast between the beginning and ending of this chapter; that is, between Paul, caught up into the third heaven, and the Christians at Corinth; between what a Christian should be and what a Christian may be.

A great privilege is here proposed to us, and it is well for us to consider it. Paul speaks of himself as a man in Christ (ver. 2), and this is the true character of every Christian, and of the Church at large. It was not in the character of an apostle that Paul was caught up, but in that of "a man in Christ." Whosoever is in Christ is a new creature, and each of us has His share in this character. So that Paul puts himself on a level with the rest of the Church. We have, through the Spirit, our participation in the same privilege, though the degree of participation is very different. We are quickened together with Christ, raised up together with Christ, and seated together with Christ in heavenly places: there is no place into which faith cannot enter.

Paul did not receive in the third heaven a revelation which he could communicate to others; on the contrary, the mysteries which he there saw, were such as could not be revealed. It was "the man in Christ" that went thither, and not the apostle as such.

When the eye of faith penetrates thus far, we get strength to walk before God in every circumstance; therein is communion of the soul with God—a spring of strength, but not a revelation to tell of. It is not Christ's glory at his return, but a communion with God, in which the body can have no part, or to which it becomes, at any rate, insensible, "whether in the body I know not." The principle of this communion may be applied to the Church, although the measure will not be the same as in Paul, but we share with him the privilege of communion with God.

There are two very different prayers in the Epistle to the Ephesians (comp. 1:17, 18; and 3:16-19). The first calls for a knowledge of the glory of Christ, the grand hope of the Church: the second seeks for communion with God for our souls, and that we may be strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, that, being rooted and grounded in love, we may be filled with the knowledge of God even to all the fullness of God. If we grieve the Spirit by seeking things below, the inner man is immediately weakened.

Paul could glory in his infirmities, because he had felt that his strength was in God. Weak as he was, many were converted by him, for God was acting with him. He rejoices in persecutions and infirmities, and in all that is contrary to the flesh. As soon as ever he becomes again conscious of the presence of the flesh, the latter seeks to rise, and the thorn is sent.

The flesh seeks its own ease, and shrinks from struggles and difficulties, but God will not ease the flesh at the soul's expense. One may earnestly seek relief from infirmities, or deliverance from painful circumstances; but God does not always grant the request. Our dependance upon God is thereby increased. Not only ought we to expect infirmities, but also desire to find pleasure in them, in order that we may see the strength of Christ manifested in us.

The thorn in the flesh was given to Paul that he might not be puffed up. It was some infirmity which rendered him despicable in preaching (Gal. 4:13,14); it was a counterpoise to the glory he had tasted. It does not follow that we should necessarily have the same thorn, for God gives to each of us the very thorn which is suitable for us.

It is Satan whom God uses against the flesh; the flesh is seen in four different circumstances.

1. Before conversion, it is under Satan's power, the conscience being hardened. As Judas, who loved money, and was a thief. When he had taken the sop, Satan entered into him to lead him on to unbridled

iniquity, and to give him over to despair when 'he saw the result of his crime.

Before conversion, the flesh acts, and Satan, presents the temptation.

After conversion, the flesh is still there; the Holy Ghost (who is the seal of redemption), has not yet fully accomplished his work in us; we are weak like Peter. Peter is contrasted with Christ in almost every circumstance, even the most amiable. Before the transfiguration, when Jesus tells of His approaching sufferings, Peter answers with love, but yet according to the flesh, and Jesus reproaches him thus, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matt. 16:20,23). In the Apostle Peter, the flesh was still under the dominion of Satan.

Satan desires to sift us like wheat, by means of the flesh. Jesus warns his disciples of this, and prays especially for Peter, in whom the flesh was strong, for he put himself forward on all occasions. The flesh is, in everything opposed to Christ. Jesus says to the disciples, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." He does not say sin. The Spirit leads Christ to prayer, and when temptation comes, it finds him perfectly calm; but the three disciples are heavy with grief, and when temptation comes they are taken by surprise.

All that could break the heart of Jesus was brought at once against Him; but even when Judas betrayed Him with a kiss, Jesus remained calm; He submitted, allowed Himself to be taken, and went through the depths of humiliation. While Jesus submitted Himself to everything, Peter drew his sword and did contrariwise. The flesh will urge a person on into temptation but can sustain no one in the midst of it. It was the flesh which led Peter to the hall of the high priest-there, Jesus witnessed a glorious confession of His own character as Son of God, but Peter, hurried on by Satan, denied him. The flesh is in everything opposed to Christ. Peter, however, truly loved Christ, yet we see him still acting according to the flesh, even after having received the Holy Ghost (Gal. 2:11).

Whenever a Christian acts in the flesh, all the weight of his piety goes to sanction and authorize his conduct before others: and therefore the effects of the working of the flesh in a believer are far worse than in an unconverted person. Peter, for instance, had carried away all the Jews, including Barsabas, in his dissimulation.

Being caught up to the third heaven, does not change the flesh; and the flesh in Paul was ready to say, "You are the only man who has been in the third heaven." But then the messenger of Satan was permitted to buffet him, and became thus the instrument of God's goodness in correcting his child. God does not do it Himself, but Satan, who loves to torment God's children, is used as an instrument to humble the flesh when it seeks to rise.

It is the circumstances that are painful to the flesh, which are those that are most profitable to our souls. What would be the use of a father giving his child as a punishment a 'thing which would not be one to the child? And thus it is with God and us. The power of God in us manifests itself, as well as our weakness in times of difficulty. When we see before us something painful, God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." He would bring us into His presence by means of a joy unmarred by the flesh: and everything which can make the flesh a burden is especially profitable for us.

## Amalek to Be Destroyed

---

The Apostle Peter closes his First Epistle with the following:- "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Psa. 34:10). " But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able" (1 Cor. 10:13). There is something wonderfully endearing in the appellation of "the God of all grace."

That which we daily need He as bountifully supplies. He fills all things; in Him we live and move, and have our being. So in His character as the God of all grace, He meets our every necessity; but not only so, He anticipates our wants: and further, under trials permitted in His sovereign wisdom to fall upon His saints, He considers every aggravation of them circumstantially and providentially; and whilst the heart is bowed down with the fetters of affliction and iron, yet, as the God of all grace, He sympathizes with our sorrows, bears with our weakness under them, would find excuses for our halting in the difficulties of the way. His bowels yearn to His saints. His anger is kindled against their enemy. " And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). He who had the heart to find a Shepherd in Ezek. 34, had first His sympathies awakened by the need of His flock (ver. 21): " Therefore thus saith the Lord God, because you have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save my flock, and they shall be no more a prey." "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," and most blessed that it is so. He knew what His people were when He gave them over to Jesus; and He gave them to Jesus because He knew what they were. All things were before Him. The past, present, and future, are as one with God. The womb of time gives birth to nothing but God foresaw it. That which is thus brought forth, gives rise to nothing but God foreknew it. O blessed resting place, the consciousness of the omniscience of God. To us revealed the God of all grace. Sin put away in the Person of Christ. Wrath fell upon him to the uttermost; grace abounds unto us. We are launched into His presence by virtue of His work and worth; with the knowledge, too, of our need of it all. Yet assured by the Holy Ghost which is given to us, that His grace has met all our need. We are there by virtue of His blood, and in virtue of our necessity. We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and are passing through the wilderness to our place in the heavenlies; with the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. We have recorded in scripture the trials of His people Israel in their journey from Egypt; and though in many instances they provoked God to chastisement, yet it must never be forgotten, that they excited His sympathy. Yes, blessed be God, the God of all grace, our trials have His sympathy.

" There's not a pang His members bear,

But He the living Head doth share."

But our unbelieving hearts are slow to appreciate the touching tenderness of God's love. Not only the kindness, but the manner of displaying it, as a gift, is doubly precious when graciously

bestowed. Our sins provoke God's anger oftentimes; and in judgment our enemy is permitted to assail us, and to gain advantage over us; yet, when conscience is awakened and sin put away, how soon is the kindness of God manifested. A father may be angry with his child, and deservedly so; the child, in its folly, may peril its safety; yet, when awakened to penitence, the suffering of the child kindles afresh the love of the father. There will be tears on the part of the child, but the parent's hand is wiping them away. There will be upbraidings of conscience, but unfeigned parental affection softens their poignancy. The folly of the prodigal son served to reveal the heart of a loving father. We have light into the character of the one by that which was dark in the character of the other. We read in the second chapter of Exodus, "The children of Israel sighed by reason of bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of their bondage. And God heard their groaning, and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And again, in the third chapter, in His interview with Moses, God is pleased to announce, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey." And God kept His word, and that by signs and wonders and mighty deeds. Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea! For forty years he has borne with their manners in the wilderness, and now they are about to "go over Jordan and possess the land." Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Faith accredits God's power to accomplish His purpose. God ever in scripture acts in the consciousness of that power. The book of Deuteronomy is a code of laws for their guidance in the land to which. God would bring them. He had revealed His purpose, and His purpose and its accomplishment are one. He would place His people in blessing yet. He would also remember their past sufferings. He had made their cause His own, and He entered into their trials as one that shared them. And He dealt with their enemies as His own, too. Indeed, because He had called forth His people whom He had redeemed, therefore Amalek hated them, and sought their injury. And their call of God, and because He had called them, exposed them to trial. Even as it is at this day. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." And what is godly living, but seeking after God revealed in His word and by His ordinances. And trials that arise from this are only laurel wreaths-family marks, as one has before designated them, by which His people may be recognized. But they call forth God's sympathy, and are the occasion of it. They secure His protection. Our object is good, when we seek to follow after holiness and walk worthy of Him who has called us. Our pursuit of this object may be more or less earnest, our watchfulness more or less vigilant. Supineness may occasion us trial. Rash energy, also. But, whether from sloth or impetuosity we are brought into it, God in His mercy remembers we are in it, and undertakes on our behalf. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." Moreover, forgetfulness of God will bring into trial; and easily, also, we can forget the occasion of it. But the love of our God to His people is from everlasting to everlasting; and His remembrance of those who have thwarted the object of that love, is everlasting also. He not only has to remind of those we should love, but also of those we should avoid. "My soul, come not thou into their secrets. Unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." And these principles are developed in the portion of His word under notice-"Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt. How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of them, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary: and he feared not God." Could anything be more beautiful than that which is here displayed of the watchful eye of God over His people? Could motives for sympathy be more happily condensed, or ground for protection be more ably advanced? Was ever the unfortunate

victim of undeserved calumny more skillfully defended? Did eloquence ever plead as God here pleads on behalf of His people? Whatever in weakness might provoke to pity is brought to the surface. Whatever increased the odium of insolent audacity is displayed to the advantage of the feeble. May His people not say, in holy exultation, " If God be for us, who can be against us?" Could power be more maliciously exercised than in attacking the hindmost, even those who through very feebleness could not keep pace with the van, faint and weary as well; dropping one by one into the jaws of Leviathan, forgotten by their comrades in the hurry of self-preservation, yet remembered by God; and their enemy ere long to be visited with just retribution? He oppressed God's people, and he feared not their God!

" Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." And is it not written (1 Cor. 10:11), " Now all these things happened unto them for types [margin], and are written for our admonition." Surely the God of all grace is our God and Father in Jesus. Alas! how little progress we make in the understanding of His grace, thus testified to us in the records of His dealings with His people of old, and still more fully in the light of His only-begotten Son. " He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32.)

## Christ and the Church

---

When God makes a place for Himself in our hearts no wonder if our standard of good and evil becomes different; and this is, in fact, what takes place.-" Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). Not only we were in darkness, but we were darkness. This is the change which takes place when we turn to God: "we are light"; from "darkness," we become "light."

We are by nature a corrupt tree, and no wonder that we should bear corrupt fruits.-The natural heart is only evil. It is the tree, or sin, and the fruits which it brings forth are sins.-But as soon as we have a new nature in us, we judge what is of ourselves, and we discern good from evil. We can say with Paul, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). Before the life of Christ entered into us, there was something in us, and that something was sin; even the natural conscience recognized the sins, but we "were still darkness."-It is well to remember from whence we have been taken.

It is evident that, if God reveals Himself, all is entirely changed, for the light manifests all, and we see things quite differently from what we saw them before. It is just the opposite of what we thought or believed before.-The measure of what we ought to be is found in this word, "Be ye imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1). Because He loves, we must love; because He forgives, we must forgive, that the character of our Father may be seen in us. We must have the character of the family. What God is, that is what we ought to be. That is the model which we have to copy.

Christ, as a Jew, was under the law, because He was born, under the law. Being God, He made Himself man, and as such He is set before us as an example.

God was manifested in the flesh, and all the life of Jesus was at the same time, the observance of the law, and the making good of this manifestation. This is why, when the apostle had said, " Be ye imitators of God," he adds, " And walk in love as Christ also hath loved us" (Eph. 5:1,2). How happy for us that those things should have been set forth not only in an abstract manner, in God, but also in Jesus as man!

The means by which we can be imitators of God, is being "filled with the Spirit" (I do not now speak of the gifts of the Spirit). "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

It is evident that a soul filled with the Spirit has motives Of action conformable to those of God, and that in this practical sense all becomes entirely renewed in such a soul. So, the measure of our walk is God, the means of realizing it is the power of the Holy Spirit, and Christ, who is the model of it in His humanity, acts through relationships which the soul can understand, while he communicates to us all that He Himself has.

If holiness were exacted, or a certain line of conduct which ought to be, nothing would be obtained; if your command works, you will not make yourself to be loved. Never, under the law, should I

have done anything, for though it gives indeed the principle of what a man ought to be, it does not impart the affections which make him capable of doing what it prescribes.

It is by the affections that we lay hold of that which is the main spring of our actions; if Jesus is this, we have the same object as God Himself, and apprehending Him in the affections, we reach forward to being like Him-Blessed be God that He has called us to be conformed to the image of His Son!-When I reflect on all He has felt and done, does that produce no effect on my heart? "Having this hope in Him we purify ourselves even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). Beholding Him, produces the affection; then we desire to realize what we see in Christ. Impossible that I should see what Jesus was here below, without that immediately raising the thought, this is "what I should like to be."

We must first fully understand this grace which has placed us where God would have us to be. This is the foundation.-In order to have the enjoyment of the position which God has prepared for us, we must have the consciousness of being there. I must have the consciousness of being a child, to be able to love my Father as such. This grace must be understood, in order to produce the affections.-We love God when we know that he has first loved us. If my conscience is not purified, and if the question of my sins is not settled, love is not there. For there can be no affection if the conscience is not purified, or if it demands, in the name of God, certain conduct under fear of being condemned. But washing us from our sins, and by saying to us, "Ye are clean" (John 15:3), He places us in His presence, without any other thought than that of His love. He has done all that was necessary.

If I have confidence in that which God has done in order to cleanse me, I say to myself, there can be nothing defective in His judgment who knows perfectly the sin of all. And He has been occupied about it and He has judged it, in Christ, according to that which His holiness required.

I myself do not know all my sins, for the more we come into God's presence, the more we learn to judge of things quite differently from what we once thought of them; and we see evil where once we saw none.

When my conscience is set perfectly at liberty, by faith in the work of Christ, my heart understands that God has loved me, in order that I may love Him, and that there is nothing more between my soul and him, but the joy of His love. When we have come to this point, we begin also to understand what God will do in other respects; and we learn it in Christ.

And it is this which is more specially the subject at the end of this chapter.-What the church ought to be is not there spoken of, but it is a revelation of what Christ is for her, "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her" (ver. 25). The expiation He made for the sins of the church is not the point spoken of here, that is named elsewhere; but it is that energy of heart by which "Christ gave Himself for her." He gave Himself. There is not in His heart a single thought, a single movement, which is not occupied with the church, as in the counsel and purposes of Christ, there is nothing of which she is not the object. He is full of grace towards poor sinners; but, for the church, in the devotedness of His heart, in the settled purpose of this devotedness, He has given Himself.

We may count upon the blessing of every believer, whatever his state may be, and on the power of grace to raise, him up, if he has fallen, when we know that Christ has before. Him this purpose to "present the church to Himself without spot and blameless" (ver. 27). Faith counts on this power

in Christ, and this prevents the despondency which would otherwise arise on seeing a person in a weak and bad state of soul.

A person in a feeble state of soul, cast down by what he sees in himself or in others, ought to think on that power which can "lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (Heb. 12:12).

The apostle Paul, after he had said, "I stand in doubt of you" (Gal. 4:20), says, as soon as his soul had risen to, Christ, "I am confident in the Lord touching you" (Gal. 5:10).. If we love Christians, how blessed it is to be able to count on their being blessed because they belong to Christ.

"That He might sanctify it" (ver. 26). I find in this, too, a source of happiness; He desires that our hearts should be separated from evil, and that they should lay hold on His grace and glory, according to the measure of understanding He gives of it. Then He skews the means of this sanctification, namely, the washing of water by His word (ver. 26). In Col. 1:28, it is said, "Whom (Christ) we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." That is to say, in order that Christ may be revealed to our hearts according to His fullness, and that our hearts may be formed spiritually according to this full revelation of all that He is.

If you tell me, "I have this sin; this lust, which hinder me," I understand you, but this is not more mighty than Christ. He works by His Spirit, and presents Himself to you. Do you not find Him more lovely than all that concupiscence could make you long for.

Supposing I am covetous, and that I think about money, even with- the thought of putting it far from me. Ah! my hand would soon grasp it again. But if I look at Christ, then I love Him and forget the money without an effort. It is no more a matter of effort to put away from me the money, for my heart is elsewhere. This is then what Jesus has done to sanctify the Church, He has loved it. "He has given Himself for it" (ver. 25), and He works to draw her affections to Him, and to form them, by revealing Himself. And what blessedness that we should be called to find our delight where God finds His! What happiness to meet with God in having the same object, and the same affections as He! It is this that makes the heart happy.

It is in proportion that I understand what Christ is, that it is evident the measure of my spirituality will increase also, and that I shall judge of things quite differently from what I once did.

It is not said, that the Church may be without spot, but "that He might present it to Himself without spot" (ver. 27). He desires it for Himself, and this it is that forms our happiness. His heart desires us such, for Himself, Himself, who will be for us the "Hidden Manna" promised to him that overcometh. It is Christ who humbled Himself, and known in His humiliation, laid up in order that I may enjoy Him.

1 Thess. 4:16, it is said, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The happiness will be, not only to reign with Him, to judge with Him (though those things are true), but the happiness will be "to be forever with the Lord."

Is this promise the joy of your hearts? Does the thought of being forever with Him make us happy? Have we sufficiently tasted His goodness and felt His love, as to be able to say, "All that I desire is to be forever with the Lord." Reader, such or such an object that is occupying and retaining your hearts, is it worthy of doing so? Look at Jesus, and you can forget all the rest. Seeing how lovely He is, you will learn that one thing only is worthy of your affections. On Christ's side, this desire to have us with Himself there is no want of. Not only He desires, but He wills that we should be with Him, as also it is said (John 17). He wills to have us with Himself, and we see in this last chapter that the joy wherewith we shall then joy with Him; is realized now in our affections, and that with a spiritual intelligence which forms our hearts into the likeness of that which is revealed, and so becomes likewise applicable to our present state.

It is quite plain that Christ already desires to present the Church to Himself without spot. Now this will, this wish of Christ becomes ours; and we seek already to be it by realizing this perfection through faith in the heart. It is not that the flesh is not still there, as so it will be, so to speak, even worse at the end, because it works in opposition to still greater light; but if the spirit is in us, it will not have the victory notwithstanding the conflict. The heart will not love sin. We cannot cease from dependance on God without a fall, and this is why we so often sin, even though we no longer love sin.

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church" (ver. 29). There are these two things: "He nourisheth and cherisheth it." The Church is in such a miserable state that it might be asked, Does He still nourish and cherish it? If we look at what has passed since, we only see a proof of the faithfulness of the love of Christ. For myself, I have seen in a special manner that whatever be the incapability of the Church to take care of the members of Christ, I have seen, I repeat, that the feeblest soul is nourished and cherished in the midst of all, by Christ Himself, and that He makes use even of evil to do it good. It is impossible that He should not make "all things to work together for good to those that love Him" (Rom. 8:27), and to present them to Himself without spot and blameless (Eph. 5:27). Reader! Does your heart think that Jesus is occupied about you in this way-that he has unceasingly your good in view?

I intreat you to think of it.

Do you think there can be a moment within His heart which has not your happiness as its object? If your desire is to glorify Him, let your soul be calm, peaceful, happy, trusting all to Him, whatever may come, knowing that, whatever may be, "goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and your habitation shall be in the house of the Lord forever" (Psa. 23:6).

Reckon on a power, a love which nourisheth and cherisheth those who are the objects of it. And in this confidence rest in Him. Remember that the end which He proposes to you is the same as He has proposed to Himself; even to present you to Himself "without spot and blameless," in order that now your affections may be fixed on Him, and find in Him a source of abundant joy. He desires that now, here below, you should be living as His betrothed.

If you desire that it should be so, it will not be difficult for you whilst looking unto Jesus. Moses did not distress himself about reflecting the glory of God; that was done without His thinking about it, because he had just been beholding the glory of God. Rest assured that all we have to do, is to think of Jesus, and to keep close to Him. Take the most common circumstances of life, as in the

verse which follows. Supposing, if I am a servant, and have a hard master, well! it is not the master I am to look at, but at Christ, and it is Him I am to serve; all will then be made easy to me.

Seek to know what Christ is Himself, in order that His grace may make you such as He is. It is joy and happiness to walk under the light of His countenance, and with the enjoyment of the fullness of His love.

## Christ's Testimony

---

"What he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth."

It is an ordinary thought concerning divine revelation, that Christ's mission was but to complete what prophets had begun; and that He added only another link (the most important it may be) to the chain of God's revealed counsels, which from the earliest ages had been running on.

This by no means gives an adequate view of the testimony of Him who "comes from above, [and] is above all."

For if we find, in the blessed person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the divine substantiation of every preceding type and promise, and anticipate in His reign the accomplishment of every foregoing prophecy, so must we understand that, in virtue of the place from whence He came, He becomes the revealer of truth, flowing from a center in which prophets never stood, and opens a field of glory on which the eyes of prophets never gazed. For "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven." "He that cometh from above is above all; He that is of the earth is earthly and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard that He testifieth."

But these revelations of the Son, "these heavenly things," of which He alone could speak, form the very basis of the church's communion and the bright objects of her hope. It is the grace of God to put us in the place of sons, and then to treat us as sons, in confidence and love, by giving us the Spirit of His Son, and by unfolding to us all His blessed 'thoughts through Christ, and all the counsels of His will. And how should our individual hearts rejoice in that touching expression of confidence towards us, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you!"

A suffering Christ, and resulting glories, might be learned from the Spirit's testimony in the prophets; and the necessity of being born again, born of water and of the Spirit, in order to even Israel's entrance into the kingdom of God, might be gathered from the same testimony. The earthly things of this kingdom which are Israel's portion, are the subjects of prophetic testimony. But the heavenly things which could only be revealed to us when the cross had opened a way for us into heaven, belong to the testimony of Him who comes from above and is above all.

"What He hath seen and heard," is the special subject of His testimony, and requires not only the new birth, but the Spirit of God's Son, and the relationship of sons in order to enjoy.

Moses stands as a type of Christ, as a prophet, or revealer of the mind of God; but even in the type, though bearing the same name, he is distinguished from other prophets, in these emphatic words; "Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark

speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. 12:6-8).

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His SON." This as to the title of Son is at once admitted to assert for Him who bears it a dignity superior to the whole array of prophets; but it is not always as clearly seen that it marks an equally corresponding elevation as to the character and subjects of the revelation of the SON. This is partly intimated indeed in the terms of this passage, which are expressive of the imperfectness of all preceding communications; but it is fully declared in the words, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He hath declared Him."

What pregnancy of meaning is there in the very terms of this passage, if, alas! familiarity with their expression, and worldliness of affections did not blunt our spiritual apprehension! "The only begotten Son!" - "The bosom of the Father!" - "He hath declared Him!" --adequately expressed this Wondrous subject-the revelation of GOD!

The heart might well be arrested to dwell on the grace of God, which shines forth in sending such a messenger to reveal His mind-for " grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"-but it is the special revelation made by Christ as the Son, which is our subject.

He is apart from all others in this, that He reveals God; and so reveals Him as to bring our souls into association with all that characterizes the blessedness of heaven. For truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

He is indeed apart from all others in the accomplishment of redemption. He stands alone as the captain of our salvation; and He is equally alone in the manifestation of the Father, and the revelation of what gives a character to heaven.

Prophets could present God's character and ways as they were manifested in His government of this world, and His dealings with men.' and blessed and wondrous are the various traits which are thus brought out; but without the revelation of the Son, the Father must still remain unknown. Now, indeed, can we say, "we have known God, or rather are known of God," as well as "we have known and believed the love which God hath to us." None but He who is from heaven can reveal what is in heaven.

"If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man which is in heaven."

They are not God's counsels about the earth, nor Christ's glory there, which are revealed by the Son. These are the subjects of the prophetic testimony, and of Christ Himself in the Apocalypse when He takes the prophetic place. But as the Son He presents those revelations through which we have fellowship with heaven, and are called to walk as sons of God and citizens of heaven while pilgrims here on earth.

For even that oracle of the prophet which is taken up in the New Testament, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," receives a new application in the hands of the Spirit, and introduces, to a far higher sphere of glory than that which attaches to it in connection with Israel's hopes. It is in the

New Testament applied to "the hidden wisdom which God ordained, before the world unto our glory"; and leads into "the deep things of God" the wondrous portion of that Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood, and which has "the mind of Christ."

Hence the necessity of faith, and a spiritual mind in the Church of God, in order to distinguish between the earthly things and the heavenly things of scripture, and to apprehend that portion in grace which God has given to her.

While the first tabernacle was standing, its unrent veil and yearly entrance of the high priest with blood into the sanctuary, declared that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." Nor could the worshipper (as now) with a purged: conscience be invited, to "draw near," until Christ, "by His one offering, had perfected forever them that are sanctified, and opened for Himself a way as the high priest of our profession, into heaven itself, there to appear in the, presence of God for us." But we must remember that He who ascended is the same that descended first-and there is the proper place of the Son in heaven, in the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, distinct from the place He takes, in -resurrection there for us.

There is the love of Christ which in honoring God reaches, in obedience even unto death, and in: divine compassion to the laying down of His life for us. But beyond this, there is the declaration to us of that blessedness which only He who " was in the beginning with God and was God" could declare. It is not circumscribed by the presentation of the happiness of the Father's house, as the object of hope and the home of the weary; but it leads us into the interior joy of that house as characterized by: Him whose house it is. It is not creature-blessing nor creature joy that is the subject of His testimony, who comes forth from the bosom of the Father; but it is the characteristic joy of heaven, as the dwelling place of God-it is that which makes heaven heaven, and stamps its joy with the divine character of the fountain from whence it flows.

"They that dwell in Thy house will be still praising Thee," shows the blessed occupation of that house; but when we listen to the voice of Christ telling us: what He hath seen and heard, it brings us into participation with the very springs of that divine goodness, from which flows this unceasing heavenly joy. And O let it be remembered that it is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of His Son, that is given in order to enter into the communion and the displayed glory which characterize the home whither we are being led.

But where is the heart to estimate this confidence of love? Where the affections so set free from earth and self, as to be able to enter into this divine and heavenly joy?

How much of heaven in its real character may we learn, by following the footsteps, and tracing the ways of that Blessed One, who on earth was owned of heaven! And into what an atmosphere are we introduced as we hear Him, in the parables of Luke (chapter 15), or in Matthew (chapter 18), teaching us the mind of heaven in contrast to the ways of man and the earthly mind! But what perfection is there that is not found in Him who was God manifest in the flesh, and who would form our souls now by bringing us acquainted with the character and ways, the thoughts and counsels of God, and by leading us into all that distinguishes the home of the divine love.

## The Closing Days of Christendom

---

I have just been thinking how the great apostate systems, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are destined to advance in strength and magnificence, as their day of doom and judgment approaches. Witness the condition of the Woman in Rev. 18, and that of the Beast in Rev. 13 and 19.

And I ask, is not this present moment, through which we are passing, giving pledges of this? Do we not see the great apostate ecclesiastical system advancing to occupy itself of the world, with something of giant strides? And is not the world, as a civil or secular thing, spreading itself out in improvements and attainments, and cultivation of all desirable and proud things, beyond all precedent? Are not these things so, beyond the question of even the very least observant? And are they not pledges that all is now on the high road to the full display of the Woman and of the Beast, in their several forms of greatness and grandeur, which are, thus, according to God's word, destined to precede their judgment? These things, I own, are very plain and simple to me.

But again I ask - Is there any notice in God's word, that the saints or the Church, are to rise to any condition of beauty or of strength befitting them, ere the hour of their translation come? The apostate things, as we have seen, are to be great and magnificent just before their judgment-but I ask, is the true thing to be eminent in its way, strong and beautiful in that strength and beauty that belong to it, ere its removal to glory?

This is an affecting inquiry. What answer do the oracles of God give us?

Paul, in 2nd Timothy, contemplates "the last days," in their perilous character, and the ruin of the Church, which we have seen, and do see at this day, all around us. But what condition of things among the saints or elect of God, does he anticipate as following that ruin? I may say with all assurance, he does not contemplate any restoration as to church order, any rebuilding of God's house, so to speak, any recovery of corporate beauty or strength worthy of this dispensation; but he exhorts the pure in heart to call on the Lord together, outside "the great house," and there also, together, to follow the virtues, and cherish the graces, which become them and belong to them.

Peter, in his 2nd Epistle, contemplates "the last days" also, and very fearful unclean abominations among professors, and very daring infidel scorning of divine promises in the world. But he gives no hint whatever that there will be restored order and strength in the Church, or in corporate spiritual actions; he simply tells the saints to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, and to be assured of this, that the promise of His coming and majesty is no cunningly devised fable. He speaks to them of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, but never of a return to a restored order of things in the church on earth.

Jude, also, in like manner, anticipates "the last time," and many terrible corruptions, such as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But what then? He promises nothing in the way of restored beauty and consistency as in earlier days, but just encourages the "beloved" to build themselves up in holy faith, and to keep themselves in God's love, but he is so far from

encouraging any hope of recovered order and strength in the Church on earth, that he tells them to be looking out for another object altogether "the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

John in his way, gives us the judgment of the Seven churches in Asia, in Rev. 2 and 3. It is a very solemn scene. There is some good and much evil found in the midst of them. The voices of the Spirit, heard there have, have healthful admonitions for us, both in our individual and gathered condition. But there is no promise that the judgment will work correction and recovery. The churches are judged, and they are left under the judgment; and we know no more of them on earth; the next sight we get of the elect is in heaven (see chap. 4).

All this is serious and yet happy; and all this strikingly verified by the great moral phenomena around us, under our eye, or within our hearing, at this moment. For we know that the great apostate things, the things of the world, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are in the advance, ripening to full bloom of vigor and of beauty, while we see the true thing broken, enfeebled, and wasted, in no wise promising to regain what once it had in days of corporate order and power.

But it is well. It is gracious in the Lord, thus to cast up before us, in His word, the high road along which we were destined to travel, and the sights we were appointed to see. And it is happy to know, that our translation does not wait for a regained condition of dispensation does not wait for a regained condition of dispensational order and strength; for, according to present appearances, we might have to wait long enough ere that could be. - But mark, further, on this same truth.

At times, when the Lord Jesus was about to deliver the poor captive of Satan, the enemy at the very moment would put forth some fresh energy of evil, and his captive apparently be in its most grievous estate.

This was another form of the same thing that we notice throughout God's word - that the apostate thing in peculiar strength and magnificence just as the time when its doom or judgment is at the door, and that Christ's thing in weakness and brokenness, just as the deliverance He brings with Him is at hand.

Joseph, Moses, and David, are samples of this also. One was taken from a prison, to feed and rule a nation; another was drawn forth from an unnoticed distant solitude, where he had the care of flocks and herds, to deliver a nation; another was raised up and manifested from under the neglect and contempt of his own kindred, to sustain, by his own single hand, a whole people and kingdom. And what may really amaze us in the midst of such things is this - that some of these were in the place of degradation and loss, through their own sin, and the judgment of God.

Thus it was with both Moses and David. Joseph was a martyr, I grant, and went from the sorrows of righteousness to the greatness of the rewards of grace. So was David in the day of Saul, when David at last reached the kingdom. But David in later times was not a martyr, but a penitent. He had brought on himself all the loss and sorrow and degradation of the rebellion of Absalom-and the sin that produced it all had this heavier judgment of righteousness resting upon it, "the sword shall never depart from thine house." Nor did it. And thus he was under judgment; he was in the ruins which his own iniquity had brought on him; he was the witness of God's visitation in holiness, when suddenly his house, in the person of Solomon, broke forth in full luster and strength-And so Moses before him: Moses was a martyr, I grant, in his earlier days, in Madian, and comes forth from the place where his faith had cast him, into the honor and joy of being Israel's deliverer. But,

like David, in later days, Moses was under judgment, judgment of God for his unbelief and sin. He trespassed, as we know, at the water of Meribah, and so trespassed as at once to forfeit all title to enter the land of promise. And nothing to the end could ever change that divine purpose. In that sense, the sword never departed from Moses' house, as it did not from David's. He besought the Lord again and again, but it was in vain. He never entered the land-and thus he was judged, and still under the judgment, when grace abounds; for he is (in principle) translated, borne to the top of the hill, and not to the fields of Canaan, to the heights of Pisgah, and not to the plains of Jericho and Jordan.

These things were so. But it is better to be judged of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world; for the poor, weak, and judged thing is drawn forth in the light and redemption of God, while the proud and the strong bow under Him.

So, I say, there is no New Testament promise, that the church shall recover her consistency and beauty, ere her translation comes. She passes from her ruins to her glory, while the world goes from its magnificence to its judgment-ruins, too, I add, which witness the judgment of God. The sword has never departed from the house.

May I not say, beloved, in the light of these truths, comfort yourselves as you look abroad, and see what it is that is strong now-a-days, and what it is that is weak. Rut let me add-let not the weakness of which I speak, the corporate or church weakness of the saints, be the least occasion for personal moral relaxation. This would be a sad and terrible use to make of the truths we are speaking of, and gathering from scripture. We are, most surely, to be separate from evil as distinctly as ever, and to cherish all the thoughts and ways of holiness as carefully as ever.

But further.-We may find some hesitation in knowing exactly how to speak of Israel's history, whether it be that of a martyr or a penitent. It has something of each in it-more, however, I judge of the latter.-But whether or not, their recoveries and redemptions illustrate the mystery which we have now before us, that the apostate thing goes to judgment in the hour of its chiefest strength and greatness, and the' true thing rises from amid its infirmities and ruins to its glory and blessedness.

They were in a low condition in Egypt, as brick-kilns and taskmasters tell us, and the exacted tale of bricks without the accustomed straw, just as the Lord was sending Moses and his rod for their deliverance.-So again in Babylon. The enemy was insulting their bonds, making merry in infidel despite of the captivity of Jerusalem and her Temple, when, that very night, the Deliverer of Israel entered Babylon.- So again in Persia. The decree had fixed a day for their destruction, and that decree would not, could not, be changed. Their Amalekite persecutor was in power, and all, as far as the eye could reach, was utter destruction-but Haman fell, and the Jews were delivered.-And so will it be again with the same people (Deut. 32:36 and Isa. 59:16). "At evening time it shall be light." The city will be taken; all the people of the earth will be round it in its day of siege and straitness; half of it will go into captivity; the houses shall be rifled, and all will be waste and degradation-but the Lord from heaven shall, in that instant, plead their cause. "At evening time it shall be light." The shadow of death shall be turned into the morning (see Zech. 14).-And again, Caesar Augustus was in strength and majesty. His proconsuls were in far distant provinces, his decree had gone to the ends of the earth, and the whole Roman world was set in beauty and order, just as Jesus was born (Luke 2). But the remnant were feeble. The family of David lived at

Nazareth, and not in Jerusalem. The hope of the nation lay in a manger at Bethlehem. A devout, solitary, expectant saint or two frequented the temple, and it was shepherds during their nightly watches who had glories revealed to them. Israel had thus fallen, together with the house of David, and fallen, each of them, by their iniquity and the judgment of God. The sovereignty of the Romans could command the chief of Israel's sons from Galilee to Judea, to be taxed and estimated, like the rest of Roman property. But the Lord was at hand. The child, who was to be for the fall and the rise of things, and people, was just born.

Let us be emboldened according to God, and judge not according to flesh and blood, but by the light of the Lord. And again, I say, as the apostle teaches, it is better to be judged of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world. Judgment has begun at the house of God. He abaseth the proud and exalteth them that are cast down. The candlesticks are visited in the keen and searching power of Him whose "eyes were as a flame of fire"- and as far as we know them here on earth, there they are left-but the place of judgment proves itself to be next door to the place of glory (Rev. 1-4)

It is all right and comforting to faith; strange to the reasoning and religion of nature. The church will go from her ruins up to glory-the world will pass from its proudest moment of greatness to the judgment. God taketh the beggar from the dunghill to set him among princes.

Would that the saints of God were apart from the purposes and expectations of the world. " Come out of her, my people."

"The feeble saint shall win the day, Though hell and death obstruct his way.."

The Lord will vindicate His own principles, and establish His own thoughts forever and ever, though the voices that witness them be feeble, and well nigh lost in the din of the world's exultation.-May the heart of the humbled, broken, saint be comforted in Him!

## Confession

---

I desire to call attention to portions of Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah; namely, the ninth chapters of each of these books. Humiliation is ours on account of failure - manifold, multiplied failure: confession naturally flows from a humbled people; these portions strikingly show the acceptability to God of confession from such: They also show, each one of them, some truth peculiar to itself, in addition to the point common to them all.

After looking at them, we may turn, a little more generally, to the testimony of Scripture upon this subject. It is one, I conceive, which is very closely connected with the glory of God, as with the peace and safety of our own souls in such a day as this. If walking with God and led by the Spirit of Christ, in a day of profession great and wide-spread, consciousness of our own failure in testimony for God ought to have humbled us, and demands confession from us.

## Ezekiel 9

---

It pleased God to set Himself once in headship to a people upon earth. Jehovah was supreme in government as King, and was pleased also to avow Himself as the God, of the nation Israel. National religion was then Divine. Jehovah had taken a nation, as such, to Himself, and had His place of worship there as the avowed God of that nation. They failed at the very outset, in making a calf and in feasting before it; and so forfeited, at once, all claim to the blessings of the relationship. God, however, was pleased to try whether they would enjoy the blessing, as the free gift of Himself as Head, spite of the failure. Their history shows how they would not do so-and how, even, all the judgments which their continued willfulnesses brought upon them, were ineffectual to awaken them to an abiding sense of God's patience and mercy, and great goodness. Without giving up His claim over Israel-rather upon the very ground that He would not give it up-the Lord transferred the seat of power in government upon earth from Israel to the Gentiles.

Government had from the days of Noah, when God put the sword into Noah's hand, been an ordinance of the Lord for blessing upon earth-His means of keeping evil in check. This same ordinance was acted upon afterward, though differently applied, in nations. While God was present as King, ruling in Israel, the nation was of course all-mighty, and the power all-wisely used for His own glory. But He could refuse, as He did, to keep Israel at the top of all nations, the only invincible people that ever really existed; and could plunge them under the stream of their own transgressions, by making a deposit of power for supremacy upon earth in the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. In such case, the beast's heart would show itself in the use made of the power, as Divine Wisdom had shown itself in the use of the power while leading Israel out of Egypt and into Canaan. In raising up Nebuchadnezzar, and giving Jerusalem into his hand, God did show that His tenure of Israel was separable from their possession of the land, or having the privileges of supreme power and access to a temple where He dwelt. The seat of power was in a dynasty or series of dynasties raised up from among the nations; but thus also separated from the mass of nations into a place of responsibility peculiar to itself, and not resting upon all nations. Israel was still the Lord's nation; but the king that could reign righteously was not come, and the seat of governmental power among the nations was not in Jerusalem. The Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which were brought away from Jerusalem into the land of Shinar, and brought into the treasure-house of the god of the king of Babylon. The temple was thus spoiled; for Israel had dealt as treacherously with the Lord as the God of Israel, as they had with Him as their Ruler. After this, and after the restoration (to which we will refer presently), of both return to the land and renewal of worship, and also of dwelling in Jerusalem, we find the Lord opening to His servant Ezekiel the horrid evil of the Jews in Jerusalem, and the judgment of the Lord consequent thereupon.

Ezek. 8 shows us what the council-hall of wickedness was in the holy city of Jerusalem. The Lord shows to His servant Ezekiel the temple, as the high court of wickedness. The Lord's word is, that to provoke Him to go far away from His sanctuary, they wrought abominations - idolatry - figure-worship - the seventy men of the ancients offered incense in thick clouds, every man in the

chambers of his imagery, saying, " The Lord seeth us not; He hath forsaken the earth"-the women wept for Tammuz-and, between the porch and the altar, five-and-twenty men worshipped the sun-and the house of Judah, having filled the land with violence, returned to provoke the Lord to jealousy, and even put the branch to the nose.

The Lord was not owned in the temple of His grace, though there. He announces then to the prophet, that He will deal in fury with the people, and that His eye should not spare, neither would He have pity; yea, He would not hear them should they cry to Him with a loud voice.

Such was the crisis where we find the ninth chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy. In the midst of judgment the Lord remembers mercy. His prophet who had sought to walk with Him and to serve, is admitted to the privilege of knowing what the Lord is about to do, and used of the Lord as the means for recording before man the wonderfulness of the ways of the Lord in His dealings with men.

"He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

"And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city.

" And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord God! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem? Then said he unto me, The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head. And, behold, the man clothed with linen, which had the inkhorn by his side reported the matter, saying, I have done as thou hast commanded me."

Surely it is better to fall into the hands of the Lord for judgment than into the hands of man. He is merciful-wills not the death of the sinner-and, as the Judge of the whole earth, wills not that the righteous should be as the wicked. In this case the judgment, holy and just, yet little when compared with the sin, was about to be poured out: they that should execute it stood ready to do so, but grace stayed the blow till inquisition had been made for those who, in the scene, had separated themselves from the evil-such must be marked for preservation. In what was their separation marked? They sighed and cried for all the abominations that were wrought around

them. The distinctive mark was not "who have not done likewise," or "who have protested or done their utmost against such sins," but "that sigh and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." It is remarkable, in one who is in the midst of evil, as an expression of similarity of spirit with the Lord, when decreeing judgment, and saying, "I will not

pity nor spare." "Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them."

The Spirit of an insulted despised God about to take judgment in wrath will, as in any one who has the mind of the Lord in the midst of the doomed scene, oft sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done around them. The blessed Lord wept over Jerusalem. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side!"

Ten righteous persons in the city would have saved the city where Lot dwelt. When it was destroyed, the Lord remembered Abraham, and saved- Lot and his two daughters; while a tremendous judgment upon his wife marked the value of implicit obedience upon an escaping people.. In this chap. 9, while the Lord said he would have no pity, and charged those that executed the sentence (ver. 5, 6), " Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women:.. and begin at my sanctuary." They that had the mark upon them, as to be spared, were those that sighed and that cried. The prophet's zeal and love for that which on earth bears the name of the Lord, led the prophet, on receiving the revelation, to a kindred expression. " And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?"

If that which bears upon it the Lord's name in our day, is looked upon by any as in any sense the Lord's house, or responsible for His glory, have such hearts to sigh and to cry for the Worldliness, and carnality, and idolatry found in it-have they hearts as loving it to fall on the face and intercede for it that the moldering and crumbling which is going on in it may be stayed. Sure I am that they who talk of it as the Great House, and believe it morally incapable of meeting the Lord's claim may well tax their own hearts with the questions, Do I indeed sigh and cry for the state of that which is dead to God upon earth?-do I love the members of Christ body, the church, and intercede for them amid the desolations around?

No hard spirit of judging others-no using of the light of prophecy for individual self-exaltation and contempt of others, are consistent with such a position. Entire separation from the evil (from the spirit as well as practice of it) is imperative-is but self preservative-when the Lord's judgments are in hand: but if we have Christ's Spirit-while we purge ourselves from all idolatry (1 John v. 23); while we seek to bring every high and lofty imagination into captivity (2 Cor. 10:4); while we guard, with all anxiety, against human plans, human energy, and every energy save the Divine-let the heart be free to pour forth earnest affections and feelings; let it be large and tender-if it might be so, as large and tender as was the blessed Lord's in His day. I speak not for the sake of the effect upon others; but for our own sakes, and for the sake of the honor and glory of the God whose we are and whom we serve, and for the name's sake both of our Lord Jesus who has called us, and of

His Spirit who leads us.

I fear greatly we are not sufficiently clear from the evil our own selves, to have the full display of the broken spirit of the sigher and cryer-of the zeal of the servant of the Lord.

## Daniel 9

---

In this chapter we have as deep and beautiful an expression as ever flowed from the heart of a mere man: it flowed, in all its tone of deep abasement, out of a soul that had just gleaned from the prophetic page promises of mercy about to dawn.

" In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto -the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.

And it led to a fuller revelation (of the Seventy Weeks) being made to the prophet direct from God.

"And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against Him. And He hath confirmed His words, which He spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil has come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all His works which He doeth: for we obeyed not His voice. And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and. cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not

present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

Blessed is the recognition, here, of the character of the Lord (ver. 4); of the entire failure of the people (ver. 5); of their perverseness against multiplied testimonies (ver. 6); as is also the unfolding of what magnified and made more striking their sin, together with the appropriation of it all-the sin of all-to himself [Daniel] in common with all Israel, wherever any member of it might be found (ver. 7-14); and then how freely flows forth the fervent supplication! (ver. 16-19).

Such ought to be the effect of the perception, through faith, of God's being at hand to fulfill the promises of His free grace. And where such living sympathy with the blessed Revealer above, and the people revealed to below, exists-surely the first taste of prophetic testimony, embittering the belly as it may, will lead on to fuller and deeper understanding of the hopes which await us.

The position, occupation, service, life, of one connected with the people of the Lord, have a Divine futurity stamped upon them. If we are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, how shall we best share the character of Him from whom that Spirit has come to us? The glory of God-His purposes of grace (which the failure of the people cannot set aside)-deep shame as to the failure, in every part of it, of that which we find ourselves connected with-failure in the presence and in contrast with such purposes of grace-shall they not form the heart and mind and life, and give distinctiveness of position, occupation, and service to those that have them? May the Lord grant that the icy hardness of His people now may be judged by themselves in the light of His presence and love; in the presence, too, of the failure as much deeper in that which was placed of God as His witness at Pentecost, as its privileges and blessings and responsibilities were higher than those of Daniel's people.

What a place was Daniel's in his day! The nation of the Lord under judgment of the Gentile statue-himself in the highest part of the oppressor's court, through faithfulness to God-placed there to receive and speak out and record the Lord's thoughts of judging that which, used by Him as a means of judging Israel, had exalted itself and sinned against Him. The people of the Lord are not of Babylon. Of another origin, their interest is in that which its existence and power reproach. If they keep themselves unspotted from the world, they will find light as to good things to come their portion, and testimony to it their duty. But they cannot separate themselves from what is of God, and they must bear its shame as their own before Him.

## Nehemiah 9

---

The grand subject of the book of Nehemiah is, the restoration of the city to dwell in, at the time of "the restoration."

When the wall was finished in the twenty-and-fifth day of the month Elul-the work was obviously wrought of God-the doors were set up, and the porters, singers, and Levites appointed, and the care of the gates and walls appointed (chap. 6). Then came the reckoning of the genealogies (chap. 7). In chap. 8 we have the reading of the law to the people. A joyous feast, though the hearts were broken, followed (ver. 9-12): then the feast of tabernacles, with its gladness (ver. 14-18). Chapter 9 begins with-The twenty-fourth day of the same month there was a solemn assembly of the people, with fasting, and sackcloth, and earth upon them; and the day was spent in hearing the law of the Lord read, and in confession and worship. The Levites, Jeshua, etc., called to "stand up and bless the Lord," etc. In the recital, for the people, of their outpouring, we find a remarkable tracing-out of the acts and ways of the Lord from the beginning, mixed up with the dark contrast of the returns Israel had made to Him. The creation (ver. 6); the call of Abram, and the change of his name, and gifts to him (ver. 7, 8); the mercy to Israel in deliverance from Egypt (ver. 9-11); His dealings with them; the pillar of guidance; Sinai; the Sabbath, the law, the manna, water, the promise of the land (ver. 12-15). From ver. 16 we have Israel's returns for such goodness-proud dealings, stiffened necks, refusal to hearken, return in heart to Egypt; God's graciousness; the molten calf; God's patient continuance of mercy through forty years, and in their entrance into the land, and blessing and multiplication in it-to ver. 25. Their wickedness (ver. 26); judgment and deliverance (ver. 27); wickedness, judgment, and deliverance (ver. 28); the contrast of the character of the Lord with that of Israel in His triumphing in grace over their ways (ver. 29-35).

Verses 36-38 give the peculiarity of the actual position-

"Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it."

Though the Lord's people, they were, through sin, in the hand of an adversary, and had to own that it was of the Lord's grace that they were permitted even thus to be in their land and in the beloved city, Jerusalem. How fallen that city from what it was in the days of Solomon! How different the aspect and position of the people from the time when under the Prince of Peace! As to themselves, their state was, though one of restoration, humbling enough: to their hearts as Jews, to whom the promise of the Messiah belonged, their position had deeper and better blessing: it was, in that point of view, not the comparison drawn between Shushan and Jerusalem-or between Jerusalem in its actual state and in a past state of glory-but it was the renewed taste to their souls of the unwavering faithfulness of God to His promises: to Him

Jerusalem was still an object of delight- the city of the great King-His self-chosen city of habitation-metropolis yet to be, of the whole earth.

In the presence of all this goodness on His part, and evil, vile requital, on theirs, they renewed the covenant with the Lord-to walk in his law as given to Moses (chap. 10:29), and to be a separate and peculiar people to Him (ver. 30, 31., etc.).

How should the slipped feet of a fallen people get a firm footing in renewed blessing, save by humiliation and confession-by the recognition that, spite of their own evil doings, the Fountain of Goodness remains pure, and that God can shame man by pouring out blessing even in the midst of failure-blessing, however, of this kind, it will always be found, is of such kind as points onward to the glory to come, and which cannot be rightly enjoyed apart from the anticipations of what is to come. Let its connection with that which is to come be forgotten, and the heart must feel its contrast with what is gone before, or the presence of thorns of judgment which still remain. But if pointing onward, how shall the glory to come be thought of, be brought to mind, and be better tasted through the present mercy! And can this be, without deep self-loathing and humiliation being produced in the soul? Sure I am, that those who look into the glory to come, or look to Jesus as He is, will find enough to make them bow the head, as having had their hearts already bowed down by the taste of the rich, full, free, unmerited grace which presents such scenes before them as theirs-their very own -on the bright to-morrow of the Lord.

## Ezra 9

---

As the great work of Nehemiah, the governor, is the rebuilding of the city, so the great work recorded in the book of Ezra, the scribe and priest, is the previous rebuilding of the temple.

The second chapter shows (ver. 61-63) the presence of the children of the priests, and the decree as to those who could not spew their genealogies; (68-70) the offerings, of the chief of the fathers, for the house of the Lord; (chap 3:2, 3) the setting of the altar, point of access to God, upon its base and the offering of burnt-offerings; (4, 5) the keeping of the feast of tabernacles, and of, all the set feasts and ordinances; (9-13) the

setting forward of the workmen in the house of the Lord-the laying of the foundation of the temple-and the different effect it produced on those present, according to their experience; then (in chap. 4) the various acts of opposition of the adversaries, round about, to the workmen by feigned friendship (2-4); by hired counselors (5); by accusations (6); then by accusation of the city, as a rebellious and bad city (7-16); with the king's answer, and its result, the work stood still.

In chap. 5, we have Haggai and Zechariah prophesying (verse 1); Zerubbabel and Jeshua beginning to build the house of God (verse 2). This moves fresh difficulty, but it could not cause them to cease, for the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews. The opposition of Tatnai, the governor, had, however, tried their faith. His letter to Darius drew forth, from the God of faith, an answer from Darius (other than the adversary desired) that the people did well to build, and were to be helped in every way.

Note, here, that Tatnai did but his duty as caring for his master's interest; and that the sanction of Darius, as given, while it spoke of present mercy from God, told of Israel's failure and captive state (chap. 5:3, to chap. 6:13).

The power and value of the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah is again referred to (verse 14); as, also, the building and finishing of the House, "according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes" (verse 14). The dedication of the house is kept (ver. 16, 17); and the passover and feast of unleavened bread (19-22).

Here (in chap. 7) Ezra is introduced in full, with his description and commission from Artaxerxes. In chap. 8 we have his deliberate gathering of the chief fathers (1-14); of the people and priests; his seeking and obtaining Levites (16-20). Then, his renewal of strength in humiliation and confession, " Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us." His giving in charge what had to be conveyed (24-30); with the record of their journeying mercies, safe arrival, etc. (31-36).

This brings us down to chap. 9.

"Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass."

This gives the burden of the confession. The effect upon the prophet is very deep; as ever ought to be the case, on the discovery to a holy mind of an ungrateful return having been made to the God of mercy (see ver. 3-5).

The confession follows.

"And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we were bond-men; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now, therefore, give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth forever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this; should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? O Lord God of Israel, thou art, righteous for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this."

And the prayer was heard, and the confession accepted: for in chap. 10 we find the hearts of the people brought to recognize the evil and to seek to remedy it.

What distinguishes each of these prophets' testimonies to the value of confession is plain enough.

EZEKIEL, Prophet of God's Strength. He sighs and cries for abominations wrought in the temple in Jerusalem; prays for a remnant to be spared.--No direct answer in full till chap. 11:17-21.

DANIEL, Prophet of God's Judgment. His confession takes in the sins of all, whithersoever scattered; prays for restoration of the sanctuary, city, and people.-Answer: The end of the evil is decreed and measured.

NEHEMIAH, Prophet of God's Comfort (in the restoration of the city). Confession, in a resume of the detailed thread of God's goodness, and their sins from the beginning till then; the covenant signed with the Lord.

EZRA, Prophet of God's Help. The temple rebuilt; confession of the defilements; the strange wives and mixed seed put away.

The confession in these four cases is not "of" man or "to" man; neither is it the bewailing of the individual inconsistencies of the confessor. It is in each case the simple and heartfelt sympathy with both the glory of a gracious God and the sorrows of a failed erring testimony, in which their own lots were respectively inseparably bound up; the utterance of a spirit-led servant, or servants, of God. Had they been walking carelessly and heedlessly themselves, they never could have breathed such thoughts; and because occupied with God's glory and their companions blessing, their own hearts were kept from wandering; for both may be true. Present failure unfits for present sympathy with God and His people; and present sympathy with God and His people preserves from individual failure.

(To be continued.)

Confession

WE may now turn (after the proof which the four chapters cited give of the value of confession), in a more general way, to the testimony of Scripture upon the subject. Let us quote a few cases of it. Confession, as used here, consists in the putting into the light that which (in one's own self) the light makes manifest, as not being in itself to our praise. A man oft goes on, where there has been failure in others against himself, without perceiving it: God, never. His Holiness and His justice forbid the thought that His omniscience should not fully, clearly, weigh and judge all evil. Connected with His ways, who pardoneth iniquity, for He is merciful and compassionate, there is a frequent recording of the perception of the evil; sometimes, also, the making of it felt and known, ere lie goes on, even to bless.

## Genesis 3

---

(a)-In the third chapter of Genesis-after man has failed, entirely. failed, by putting himself into the hands of Satan-we find a remarkable inquisition and investigation made by the Lord as to the facts of the new state of things, their mode of introduction, and their source. Conscience-stricken, Adam and Eve had made themselves a vesture; had tried to avoid the presence of the Lord, for they were naked (vers. 7-10). The cited Adam accuses Eve (ver. 12); Eve accuses the serpent (ver. 13); the serpent, then, first, gets a double sentence (part present and part future) pronounced upon him (vers. 14, 15); next, Eve hears the sentence of a present judgment to be inflicted upon her pronounced (ver. 16); and, lastly, the same is done as to Adam (vers. 17-19). It may be said, "What has this to do with confession?" Much, every way; because confession by man derives its whole value from the character and ways of the God to whom he confesses. The portion before us suggests, and the testimony of Scripture amply confirms the suggestion, that it is one of God's ways to make manifest the real character of that with which He deals; He who is light cannot have much to do with anything, or body, without its real character becoming manifest; for that that doth make manifest is light. In having to do with God, we may be pretty sure that what we were and are will be made manifest; no flesh shall glory in His presence, that is, in itself: glory it may, it ought, in Him; and that it, in all its ruin as a creature, has known Him who will have mercy, and will abundantly pardon. What should a marred, self-ruined creature glory in? In self? That would be really to rejoice in the enemy's work. If it glories in God-in what He has revealed Himself as Redeemer-God to be-its failure cannot hinder that glorying; but it shuts out all other. It cannot hinder that, because He is Redeemer-God only to those that need redemption. But if He rolls forth a tide of redemption's blessings for the lost, His glory and their liberty both demand that the character of the new relationship of the new blessings should be known.

## Genesis 4

---

(b)-This chapter presents a case somewhat similar to the last, in the case of Cain's petition for protection of his life when sentenced to be a fugitive and a vagabond.

" And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

(c)-In nothing, perhaps, was the wisdom and moral power of Joseph more shown than in his so acting as to extort confession from his brethren as to their sin against himself, ere he revealed himself to them. That it was not resentment or retributive justice which lead him is plain; the course he pursued tried his own brotherly affections more than it oppressed them. But how could he have confidence in them, how could they find his presence to be refreshment and shelter if he had, at the first, avowed " I am Joseph." I cannot doubt that Joseph was specially overruled in his course of action, because the whole scene so plainly points to a greater than Joseph. Their confession was simple, little as they knew before whom it was made.

" And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto y on, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter."

The avowal "I am Joseph," coming in after the devoted offer of self-sacrifice and the pleading of Judah, as found at the close of the forty-fourth chapter is powerful. The whole history points to what is yet to come, the conduct and acting of the Lord Jesus, that second Joseph, with the Jews, in the latter days, whereby He will draw forth from them confession of their guilt-yearnings of heart and devotedness of purpose ere He reveals Himself to them as the present Messiah in glory, the once despised and rejected Jesus of Nazareth.

(d)-When the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor, and their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field (Ex. 1:13,14). Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage; and God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham (Ex. 2:23,24).

In the eighteenth of Genesis we find (vers. 20, 21) " the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great;" and the Lord says, " I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." He went down, and judgment was the answer. The cry that came up had an answer according to what God in government was, not according to the thought of those from whom it came. So here when the cry and groaning of

distress from the children of Israel came up before the Lord, the answer was not according to their thoughts, but according to the mind of God upon that cry-it led to deliverance. It is important to remember this. Intelligence as to the result of sorrow poured out before the Lord is sustenance to the heart and mind; but the groan, the sigh that is poured forth before him, will in no wise lose its reward, even when intelligence is defective or absent.

How blessed the word (chap. 3:7) " I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows;" and (ver. 9) " behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them."

(e)-Instruction of no little value is to be found, to the servant of the Lord, in comparing Moses, when running before he was sent (as recorded in Ex. 2:11-15), and Moses when commissioned to go, as recorded in chaps. 3 and 4. Until his sense of power and energy, and conceit in his own ways were broken down in him, and feelingly confessed, he was in no state to be a vessel used of the Lord. Alas the discipline that broke down self, and made him know what Egypt was, made him forget the counsels and power of the Lord. What a thing will, fallen human will, is! It will either accomplish divine counsels and plans in its own way, and by its own energy; or if it tastes the circumstances of difficulty sufficiently to discredit itself (as not being in itself equal to meet them), it will refuse to be obedient to the Lord.

Still, be it noticed, that oversight of God's presence and power to bless, all-sinful as it is, does not present the impediment to progress which a heedless, unbroken good opinion of one's own wisdom and energy does. The self-complacent, energetic Moses, that kills and buries the Egyptian in the sand, disheartened because his brethren have not confidence in him, flees from the face of Pharaoh into Midian. Mistrustful of self, of his own wisdom and power, he is forced of the Lord to go and have honor thrust upon him. Such is poor fallen man! Such is the God who makes a man to be his servant and uses him as such.

(f)-In glancing for a moment at Israel's deliverance from Egypt, we see one of those awful cases of confession extorted in judgment, which show plainly the error of those who would either supplant "faith in Grace" by confession; or consider that confession necessarily supposes that faith in grace exists.

The folly of these notions, and the narrowness of the human system out of which they flow is proved by such cases as Judas.

" Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself" (Matt. 27:3-5); who "fell that he might go to his own place" (Acts 1:26).

The way that the Lord extorts, again and again, confession from Pharaoh and his partners in iniquity, and his sinful people, ere the full judgment falls on Egypt-is a solemn lesson. Awful proof of what the potsherd is when it strives with its Maker, and its mad folly in so doing. Such " pillars of salt," as may herein be found are strong enough to bear throughout man's day, the names and inscribed confessions of such as Pharaoh and his hosts; an Achan; a Balaam; a Saul; a Judas; a

Simon Magus; barren in themselves, may they serve as beacons and guards to ourselves!

(g)-I pass by, with a simple reference to them, the large place which confession (in the better connection of confession flowing out of man's relationship to God) holds in the polity and mediatorship: tabernacle and priesthood; feasts, sacrifices, and ordinances, etc., of Israel: every part of which, however, is redolent with the truth, and deeply typical of more important realities in those eternal, heavenly, persons and things, which were the counterparts. To take one example: see, for instance, the frontlet of gold with " Holiness to the Lord" inscribed upon it upon Aaron's forehead, that he might bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel should hallow in all their holy gifts; to be upon his forehead, that these might be accepted before the Lord.

(h)-While Israel was worshipping and sacrificing before the golden calf, Moses was praying for them in the mount. He pleaded the Lord's glory, and prevailed, for " the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people" (Ex. 32:14). Yet when he had known their sin for himself, after descending from the mount, he had to return up again to pour out his confession.

" And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Moreover, the Lord said to Moses:

" Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiff-necked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee; therefore, now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the Mount of Horeb" (chap. 33:5 and 6); and then (ver. 7) "Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the Congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp." All which things were expressions of failure and humiliation, therefore by Israel.

Among the sacrifices, the sin and trespass offering, and among the feasts, the great day of atonement, may be specially noted as avowals of failure.

(i)-When Moses was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, because a certain sacrifice should have been eaten of, Aaron replies ('twas at the time of the death of Nadab and Abihu)-" Behold, this day have they offered their sin-offering and their burnt-offering before the Lord; and such things have befallen me; and if I had eaten the sin-offering to-day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord? And when Moses heard that, he was content."

And many a neglected, unused privilege stands for a record of sin against us, if the failure and judgment which hinder us the enjoyment are not pleaded before the Lord.

(j)--I will now advert to two passages of peculiar interest connected with Israel under judgment, and how it gets again into blessing-Lev. 26 and Deut. 30. After describing the ten-fold judgment upon them, mercy's rays dawn in thus--" If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant

with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land... And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly; and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord." As sure as are the mercies which are in store for Israel-" a covenant ordered in "all things and sure"-so surely is there but one narrow neck of land (isthmus of confession, and acceptance at the Lord's hand of His judgments) that leads, as the way, into that land and its blessings.

In Deuteronomy we have the same truth, with the blessed addition of the explanation of the reason of this, viz., the obedience of faith.

" And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the, land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as He rejoiced over thy fathers: if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul."

The discovery of their real state (v. 1), and return of heart and soul to obey the Lord (v. 2), will lead to the Lord's turning to them (v. 3); gathering from all lands (v. 4), and blessing in the land (v. 5); to inward blessing (v. 6) and outward deliverance (v. 7), to liberty of obedience and external prosperity (v. 8 and 9).

(v. 10). " If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep His commandments and His

statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God, with all thine heart and with all thy soul" -and then follows, from verse 11 to the end of verse 15, the obedience of faith, as quoted by Paul in the 10th chapter of the epistle to the Romans, as lying at the root of our blessing.

Yes (and it is an important truth ever to bear in mind), God cannot deny Himself. Give up the place of supremacy He cannot; admit any one into blessing, save in the spirit of obedience, is as

impossible as to admit any one into blessing, save upon the ground of a perfect obedience. His grace to us claims our being subject, so subject as to be willing to renounce the natural law of creature-blessing, the obedience of works, and to accept His appointment to us as sinners, and submit ourselves to the righteousness of faith without works. He maketh us willing in the day of His power.

(k)-In the intercession of Moses for Israel at the time of its murmuring, as given in Numbers, the 14th chapter, he winds up his splendid intercession with these words" And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

To which this gracious reply is added-" And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

The study of these cases may well cheer the heart, and strengthen faith in every cloudy and dark day.

No temptation but such as is common to man has befallen any of us; the Lord knows how to deliver: and, blessed be His name, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, whom we should wrong (even Moses himself being judge) did we set Him in comparison with Moses, though divine grace has stooped to glorify Moses, in making him a type (feeble and failing) of Him that was to come. Coming up out of darkness, the eye can avail itself of the least, the feeblest rays of light, and see in it and use thankfully objects, which, when we have got into the full light, and in sight of objects therein, have no glory in comparison.

In chap. 16:15, and again in chap. xx. 10, we find two failures of Moses in mediatorship, such as have no parallel in our blessed Lord-perfect in all things: as true to the feeblest of the people as to the glory of Him that sent Him.

(l)-There is a remark which might well be made upon the Book of Numbers, in connection with that which produces humiliation and confession in the people of the Lord, viz. the sense of failure against a gracious and faithful God. The name of Numbers is, doubtless, derived from the numbering of the people here recorded; but the book is, in a certain sense, the picture of the camp in the wilderness. As such it contains, alas! the record of the number of the failures of the people, stiff-necked and rebellious people as they were. In the midst of this record of their sins, a beautiful and touching proof is introduced of the graciousness and faithfulness of the God against whom they sinned. Balak hires Balaam to curse the people. He comes, for reward, to do so, but cannot, for the testimony that bursts from him is for blessing. " God hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel," etc. Amazing grace and faithful love, which, on the one hand (because it is love), claims a response, and will not hide from its object the pain and displeasure it feels in being treated unworthily in return for all its goodness; and which, on the other hand, counts the efforts of the adversary to curse to be an attack upon itself; its right to choose, its capacity to justify, its unwavering faith- fullness and purpose to bless. God will not pass by our dishonoring of Him, or, in so doing, our forsaking of our own mercies. Holy, love cannot

pass it by. But He judges His own people. The effort of Satan is not merely to curse the people, but also to impugn the God who has taken them for His. Neither effort can be successful. The introduction (in the heart of that book which tells us of God's reckonings of His people) of such efforts of the adversary is striking: the juxtaposition of the two things helps the soul into humble confession.

(m)-In Deuteronomy, chap, 26, there is a new phase of confession, viz., in connection with blessing in the land. Come into the land, the Israelite was to take the basket of first-fruits to the place where the Lord should set His name. The priest, receiving the basket, should place it before the altar. (v. 5). "And thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous." Then follows the mention of oppression crying to God, deliverance, and entrance into the land (v. 6-9); all of it by the Lord's power, shown toward them in their distress.

The basket of first-fruits records His grace which them into blessing, worship, and joy. The real blessedness of the position held by Israel in the land could, never be enjoyed otherwise, for the cream-the kernel-the sweetest part of the blessing, was not in itself or in the enjoyment of it, but in the truth of its being God's gift in grace to a poor and feeble people. He had put the blessing on them. It was His gift and purpose blessing for them. Precious truth! and distinctive; peculiar to and in harmony with Deuteronomy, the second law-book testimony of how a weak and feeble people could get blessing, even by the obedience of faith.

(n)-In reading chapters 28 to 33 how plain is it that until Israel learns how to blend obedience, as of failed people, with the mercy of their God they never can get their promised blessing.

In Joshua-book of the entrance, through Divine grace and power, into the Land-we get, consistently enough, few references to confession. There is one chapter, however, the seventh, in which we find a vivid an important contrast drawn between bewailing upon one face, weakness, when it is the effect of covered sin, am the putting away of the evil. The camp was all-victorious; for God was with them; -suddenly their strength is found to have departed, as suddenly as does Sampson's, when his hair is cut. In vain does nature stir itself up, to fresh efforts. God had been dishonored by Achan, and the covered sin is the camp's weakness. Joshua goes to humble himself before the Lord: he is met with a stern command to sanctify the people. He uses the appointed lot and Achan is taken-and judged; and the strength of the Lord is with them again.

Judges-as the picture of Israel's possession of the land-is a book replete with causes for, and instances of humiliation, and also of the value of confession. The declension is gradual, but steady: what can man keep safely in his own hand? and the motives which act in the people and in the Judges whom Mercy raised up, from time to time, are more and more mixed, as the book progresses. The energy and grace of God had -approved themselves in Joshua, and a God-honoring people, who marched into blessing. But what will man do when, being as he is, he is left in possession of blessing? He will corrupt himself, dishonor God, and find the blessing to be a judgment.

No difficulty, no adverse circumstance can triumph over the man that walks with God; but possession, in divine things, is not always retention. To keep what has been won, supposes the

winner to abide in the power by which he won. Often while "getting of possession" is in question, there is a purpose and intention of God in the soul, which enables it to put down self, but which it retains not when in possession; then it would enjoy the winnings; it forgets God; self enters, and the blessing is gone. Compare, on this subject, the blessed Lord's untainted course through an evil world when Satan was Prince of it, and man's course in the millennial earth, when Christ has set the world to rights: If self is entirely subject to God-what can prevail against us? If self is not wholly for God, there is but the lack of "an occasion" between us and rebellion. There is we know but one that is perfect. It is well to remark the different aspects of energy in faith," as connected with getting into blessing- standing fast in it-partial recoveries-and when all, outwardly has failed. God never fails; and there is always a present path with him, and for him, to those that are his upon earth. May we find and keep to it.

What a book is the Book of Ruth! What a divine presentation, in the simple history of a poor woman's experience of the Divine ways and counsels. More than this: for He who, being God over all, blessed forever, could show such individual delight in the ways and counsels which would issue in His people's blessing, as to have cast the history of this poor woman in the type of the blessed things of His Son,-surely! He has His character made manifest thereby. So it is, and ever has been, from the beginning. His delight in salvation has multiplied types of it. Who can read this account without the thoughts of redemption-blessing as contrasted with creation-blessing rising to His mind. God as the God of resurrection, too, stands confessed. Redemption and resurrection as principles acted upon in domestic circumstances; for redemption as an end and resurrection as a way, are so completely, so inseparably connected with what are essentially divine glories, that not only will they eventually form a vast scene above and below into which God will bring his glory; but, when He acts to display Himself anywhere (even in a poor woman's history), His action takes that form. No creature standing in its perfectness, as a creature, with blessings committed to it, can possibly be so blessed as a failed creature brought, with a renewed heart and new nature, through redemption, into the glory of God, as being part of the purchase of the Lord Jesus. Neither outside, nor inside, can the blessedness of the former case be made equal to that of the latter. Now in this view it is clear, if man was set as the center of a system and has lost all his character and portion, through sin,-but that redemption has come in to make good the thought of Man the center of a system, and that this is found true in the Son of man, the Lord Jesus; then, we that are gathered around Him, rejoicing in Man the center of a system, we have Him, who is that center, and Him only to glory in.

And so will it be throughout eternity. The redemption-glory is not separate from God.-The glory of God was not the sphere proper to the mere creature man, it is the sphere we look for as redeemed sons of God-and, O how ineffably connected with all the height of divine blessedness, God the Father; the Son of. God-Son of man; the Church His Bride-the new Jerusalem in the heavens, full of the Holy Ghost-vessel of His Heavenly glory; on earth-Israel in the land,-the Gentiles around, blessed,-the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. How could Eden compare with such a chain of blessedness? And one's self there; myself; confession surely is natural;-

"There no stranger God shall greet thee,

Stranger thou in courts above."

For myself I do not doubt that the whole picture given in the hook of Ruth is typical. The names are all remarkable; Elimelech (God as king); Naomi (pleasure); Ruth (satisfied); Orpah (nakedness of mouth); Boaz (strength); Obed (servant). God as king has ever had a pleasant purpose before Him of grace. He has shown it in two different ways in this world of distance from Him. The two covenants are witnesses hereof. Both, as seen here below fail; but of one only can we say that the purpose of it never failed, and that, returned to the Lord's presence, it came under the guardianship of Him who is Strength, and brought forth a servant-the heir and line of all blessing.

It was grace, full and free grace, which introduced a Tamar, and a Rachab, and a Ruth into the line of descent of the root and offspring of David; and has thus stained the pride of man. Poor Naomi, she who had longed for children and murmured against God for having dealt very bitterly with her-how was she reprov'd when the Lord gave her a son-and she heard her neighbors say "Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him."

In Samuel 1 we have the account of the failure of the office of prophetic Judge, and a view given us of man's King and God.

In the 12 chap. there is a most memorable portion;- one that shows how wherever man may find himself, however he may have wrought folly, still that nothing can shut the door, if there be but the obedience of faith.

Samuel recalls the nation's past sins, and the mercies which confession had often brought in, together with the present sin.

" When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the Lord, then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place. And when they forgat the Lord their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the band of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried unto the Lord, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee. And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king."

He then, ver. 13-15, exhorts them to the obedience of faith and warns against the disobedience of unbelief; charges home upon them, their exceeding great wickedness, and gives them a sign from the Lord thereof,-(v. 16-18). When fear seizes upon their hearts (v. 19), he puts before them this solemn truth:-

" Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great

things He hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

Confession of entire failure,-purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord,-obedience according to present circumstance, -upon the sure ground of the vanity of every other course, and on the firm footing that the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people:-what blessed rallying in the day of rout and defeat is here.

'Twas a lesson Saul never could learn; but David he apprehended it and practiced it.

In the second book of Samuel there is a portion to be noticed, the seventh chapter. It is full of instruction as to the ways of God, and the feebleness of the heart of man. Man, when blessed, oft finds the blessing, given of the Lord to him too much for him: affecting his heart and drawing forth affections beyond the measure of his judgment, in the ways and thoughts of God; it sometimes discovers the weakness of the receiver and puts him into the place of being judged. David,-delivered from his enemies and established in the kingdom,-bethinks himself of the God who had saved and exalted him. 'Twas right and meet he should so, and should prove and show forth his gratitude. To do this, however, wisely, he needed a waiting on the Lord's thoughts, and a humble following of them out in the set of circumstances in which the Lord had placed him. He might have bethought himself, as did Solomon, in his wisdom, how shall I be able to rule the Lord's people? 'Twas a heavy fall and broken bones, however, which brought forth, from the sweet psalmist of Israel, the expression (accompanied with a sigh, " my house is not so with God"! ) " He that ruleth over men must be just ruling in the fear of God." Instead of being occupied with the line marked out for him, it was in his heart that he should build the Lord a settled house. Nathan consented and encouraged: how different is Nathan here, sent for by the king, from Nathan sent, in c. 12, to the king. The Lord comes in in grace to correct prophet and king. He lets David down into his proper place. He was not to be the Patron but the patronized. God recalls to him whence he was, and how he got into the place where he stood, and gives him "a why" for it-that the Lord loved his people Israel, meant to establish them, that he would build David a house (instead of David's building him one of stone), a house of living children, among whom was to be found Him who was the root and offspring of David-the True Beloved One-in whom God would always be well pleased. David is now in his right place.

" Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house that Thou hast brought me hitherto And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto Thee? For Thou, Lord God, knowest Thy servant, For Thy word's sake, and according to Thine own heart, hast Thou done all these great things, to make Thy servant know them."

And then he goes on musing and speaking of what the Lord is.

There is something in this sort of confession which is strangely sweet; which blessedly connects itself with the thought of glory-of grace and glory. Never shall we be more little in our own eyes than when we find ourselves in that glory which the Father has given to the Son and which he gives to His Bride.

It does seem that there is a solemn lesson to be learned in David's history, the vast difference between floating, with many a rude buffet and struggle, in the current of God's power, over all circumstances of difficulty, to a point of desire-and the gaining the mastery over one's self. The David that overcame all was self betrayed afterward. There is a difference, and it is a marked one, between the king's song of triumph - triumph through the Lord's power over all his adversaries (as found in the 22 chapter), and the humble confiding thanksgiving (in the 23 chapter) of how he found grace could triumph over His own sin. Deep and awful was the sin which used the pinnacle of glory to which God had raised him, as the place in which to dishonor God. The king who should have ruled for God committing such sins as David, the man after God's own heart, did! Well may man tremble even to the end of his course. Deep was the sorrow, sore the judgment which resulted. The sword was never to depart from the house and retributive justice avenged the dishonor put upon the Lord's name by the sin, after it was pardoned, by pouring into David's own heart, as a father, into the very midst of his family, the self-same evil. No humiliation, no confession could avail to remove the judgment in government, though the sin was forgiven and the soul of David was restored to communion with the Lord.

It may be well to call attention to the fact of the difference of God's dealing with the soul as to the question of remission of sins, and his dealing with the person as a member of the society on which his name is called. He saves us as being in ourselves chiefest of sinners-we should thereupon be holy-if we sin, and live in sin, our communion with Him is interrupted, and His Spirit is quenched and grieved. When sin is confessed, His Spirit will again act freely in blessing, though we may find the effect upon our own souls of sin and its habit; but intercourse with God is renewed. No sooner was David awakened to a sense of the deed he had done by Nathan's parable and application, and avowed (chap. 12:13) " I have sinned against the Lord," than the assurance is instantly given. "The Lord hath also put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." But while this assurance was immediately given to David's confession,-he had to bear before man the chastening of the hand of the Lord. If the entire difference of these two things are not marked, there must be weakness: either the sin will be supposed not to be forgiven because the judgments are continued; or the judgments thought lightly of and overlooked, because the sin is known to be forgiven.

It may be true, in His dealings with His people, that God's ordinary way is as to those that walk with Him to pardon a transgression before He chastens for it; but if the governmental conduct of God is known, His walk with His people through the wilderness, then, the correction will be looked for, and such visitations as will mark before man that sin cannot be committed in impunity where God professes to be, or in those who profess to walk before Him. It is a solemn and a very serious thought for our souls in such a day as this is. But

David had his protracted discipline after the sin was pardoned. See, for instance, the death of the child (chap. 12); Amnon's sin and violence against Tamar, the sister of Absalom; and Absalom's treacherous murder of Amnon (chap. 13); Absalom's rebellion leading to David's flight (chap. 15); Shimei's cursing, and Ahithophel's hostility (chap. 16); David's agony about Absalom; the consequences among his people (chap. 19); and all this in spite of the spirit of gentle submission and confession shown by David throughout. Doubtless there was not only the Lord's avenging of His own name in all this, but also a forming and fashioning of the soul and mind of David to the mind and will of God. The need of this in David and in the people is shown in chap. 24.

The confessional supplication of Solomon at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8) seems to identify itself in principle with the confession implied in the whole sanctuary. The blessing was one that supposed sin in the people and judgments resulting therefrom.

The confession (1 Kings, chap. 10:4-9) of the Queen of Sheba before Solomon in his glory, as compared with the confession of Moses before his father (Ex. 18) is worthy of notice. At the beginning, in the very outset, of the dispensation which measured man, while it was full of types and shadows of better things to come—things which would proclaim God and His answers to man's known need. Moses, the mediator, and Aaron, the high-priest, defer to this Midianite stranger in sacrifice; and then Moses is directed by him what to do—and longs to take this stranger with them for eyes to them in the wilderness: but when the dispensation had run out its exhibitions into such an item as that and the kingly glory to come, all earth, as it were, bows before the monarch, and there is no heart left in the queen of Sheba, when she had seen the king of glory.

Alas, what is man! This same Solomon (blessed type of a greater that was to come) degrades himself, through his many wives, and sinks down to the sanction of idolatry.

" His wives turned (1 Kings chap. 11:4) away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites," etc. We have no record of his restoration similar to that of David; but his Book of Proverbs stands as his witness against his folly, and the Book of Ecclesiastes, as his avowal of the entire insufficiency of any display of God in providential circumstances to satisfy the heart of man. His wisdom, his blessedness, and his wealth, were not so good as the fashion of David as a man after God's own heart.

The tender mercy of the Lord in the midst of judgment, remembering mercy is ever sweet-blessed His remembrance of David, when rending the kingdom from out of the family of Solomon, and giving " one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there." How merciful was the Lord when in judging Jeroboam (chap. 14) He thought of the little child, "And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam." So again how affecting is the word, " For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash."

These instances may, for the present, suffice as illustrations of individual confession; they present, I think, most of the different aspects in which confession is seen in Scripture. To pass through all the cases which are recorded can easily be done by those that desire it. Those already cited will show the difference between confession of dispensational failure and confession of sin individually committed by oneself. There are other connections of the subject which may well be considered, at another time, if the Lord so will.

## Daniel

---

In the book of Ezekiel, we have seen the government of God on earth fully developed in connection with Israel; whether in condemning the sin which occasioned the judgment, or in the restoration of that people, under the authority of Christ, the branch that should spring from the house of David, and who, in the book of that prophet, bears even the name of David, as the true "beloved" of God; the description of the temple, with its whole organization' being given at the end. In this development we have found Nebuchadnezzar, the head of the Gentiles, introduced as the Lord's servant (29:20; 30:24), for the judgment of sinful Israel, who were rebellious and even apostate, worshipping false gods. But God had made Israel the center of a system of nations, people and languages, that had arisen in consequence of the judgment on Babel, and that existed before God independently of each other. The nation of Israel was doubtless very distinct from all that surrounded it, whether as a people to whom the true God was known, or as having in their midst the temple and the throne of God. But whatever the contrast might be between the condition of Israel as a nation, and that of the other nations, still Israel formed a part of that system of nations before God. In executing the judgment on Israel, Nebuchadnezzar set aside this whole system at once, and took its place in the absolute and universal dominion which he had received from God. It is of this order of things, and of its consequences, this dominion of the head of the Gentiles and of the Gentile kings, in the successive phases that characterized it, that the book of Daniel treats, bringing into notice a remnant of Israel, in the midst of this system, and subject to this dominion. The king of Judah having been given up into the hands of the head of the Gentiles, the royal seed is found in the same position. The remnant becomes the especial object of the thoughts of God, revealed by His Spirit in this hook. Besides the testimony rendered to the Lord, by the fact of the faithfulness of the remnant in the midst of the idolatrous Gentiles, two important things characterize their history, as developed in this book. The first is that the spirit of prophecy and of understanding in the ways of God is found in this remnant. We have seen this raised up in Samuel, when all Israel had failed, and subsist through their whole history under the shadow of royalty. This spirit of prophecy now again becomes the link of the people with God, and the only resting-place for their faith, amid the ruin which the just judgment of God had brought upon them. The second circumstance that characterizes the dealings of God with regard to this remnant, is that preserved by God through all the misfortunes into which the sins of the people had cast them-this remnant will assuredly share the portion which God bestows on His people, according to His government and according to the faithfulness of His promises. We find this in the first and last chapters of the book we are considering.

This book is divided into two parts, which are easily distinguished. The first ends with the sixth chapter, and the second with the close of the book. The first and last chapters having, nevertheless, a separate character, as an, introduction and a conclusion, respectively making known the position of the remnant, to whom, as we have said, the testimony of God was confided, at the beginning and at the end. The two great divisions have also a distinct character. The first sets before us the picture of the dominion of the Gentiles, and the different -Positions it would

assume before God, according to the ' \_Inman pride which would be its active power. This, picture contains historical features which plainly indicate the spirit that will animate the ruling power. in its different phases; and then, the judgment of God. This division is not composed of direct revelations to Daniel, except for the purpose of recalling Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It is the heads of the Gentiles. that are presented. It is the external and general history of the monarchies that were to succeed each other, or the different and successive features that would characterize them, and the judgment of the one which God had Himself established, and which represents all the others, as being invested with this character of divine appointment. The others did but inherit providentially the throne which God had committed to the first. It is a question between God and Israel that gave this monarchy its supremacy. It is the spirit of presumptuous idolatry, and of blasphemy against the Lord, the God of Israel that leads to its destruction. The sixth chapter does not give king, the iniquity of the kin except as submitting to the influence of others. It is the princes of the people who will have none but the king acknowledged as God, and who undergo the same punishment that they sought to inflict on those who were faithful to the Lord.

The second part of the book exhibits the character of the heads of the Gentiles in relation to the earth, and their conduct towards those who shall acknowledge God; and at last the establishment of the divine kingdom in the person of the Son of Man. A kingdom possessed by the saints. The details of God's dealings with His people at the end are given in the last chapter. We may also remark that the seventh chapter gives essentially the history of the Western power; the eighth that of the Eastern. The ninth chapter, although especially regarding Jerusalem and the people-the moral center of these questions-is connected on that very account with the Western power that invaded them. From the tenth to the end of the eleventh we are again in the East.

Let us now examine these chapters consecutively.

Chapter 1 sets before us the royalty of Judah, formerly established by God over His people in the person of. David, falling under the power of Nebuchadnezzar; and the king, the Lord's anointed, given up by the Lord into the hands of the head of the Gentiles, on whom God now bestowed the power. That which was announced. by: Isaiah (chap. 39:7), falls upon the children of the royal seed; but God watches over them and brings them into favor with those that kept them. This was especially the case with respect to Daniel. The two characteristics of the faithful remnant in captivity are prominently marked in this chapter. Faithful to the will of God, although at a distance from His temple, they do not defile themselves among the Gentiles, and their prayer being granted, understanding is given them; as we see in chapter two, in Daniel's case, even to the knowledge of that which God alone can reveal, as well as His purpose in that revelation. They alone possess this understanding, a token of divine favor, and the fruit of their faithfulness through grace. This is the case with Daniel in particular, whose faith and earnest fidelity marks out the path of faith for his companions. This did not interfere with their subjection to the Gentiles, which was the ordinance of God for the time being. On the other hand, we see in the second chapter the mighty king of the Gentiles, made the depository of the history of the Gentiles, and of God's entire plan, as the recipient of these \_divine communications; yet in such a manner as to exhibit Daniel, the captive child of Israel, as the one whom the Lord acknowledged, and who enjoyed His favor. But the details of this chapter, as a general picture of Gentile power, beginning with the dominion bestowed on Nebuchadnezzar, must be considered more attentively.

We may first observe that the Gentile kingdoms are seen as a whole. It is neither historical succession nor moral features with respect to God and man, but the kingdoms all together forming, as it were, a personage before God; the man of the earth in the eye of God-glorious and terrible in his public splendor in the eyes of men. Four imperial powers were to succeed each other, as the great head of which, God had set up Nebuchadnezzar himself. There should be in certain respects a progressive deterioration, and at length the God of heaven would raise up another power that would execute judgment on that which still existed, and cause the image to disappear from off the earth, setting up in its place a kingdom that should never be overthrown. In the progressive decline of imperial power, there would be no diminution of material strength. Iron, that breaks in pieces and crushes all things, characterizes the fourth power. The strength of the head of gold appears to me to consist in its having received-authority immediately from God Himself. In fact, the absolute authority of the first power was founded on the gift of the God of heaven. The others succeeded by providential principles. But God, known as supreme, bestowing authority on the head, replacing His own authority on the earth by that of the head of the Gentiles, was not the immediate source of authority to the others. Babylon was the authority established of God. And, therefore, we found in Ezekiel (and the same thing is seen elsewhere), that the judgment of Babylon is connected with the restoration of Israel and of the throne of God. Observe, nevertheless, that God does not here present Himself as God of earth but of heaven. In Israel, He was God of the earth. He will be so again at the restitution of all things. Here He acts in sovereignty as God of heaven, setting up man, in a certain sense, in His place on the earth (see verses 37, 38). Although more limited, it is a dominion characterized by the same features as that of Adam. It differs, in that men are placed under his power; it is more limited, for the sea is not included in his sovereignty, but it reaches to every place where the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven exist. Human strength is found at the end; but the subsisting power is much more remote from the ancient relationship of God with the world., The mixture of iron and of potter's clay, is a change wrought in the primitive character of the imperial Roman power, an element introduced into it. The character remains in part, but another element is added. The energetic will of man is not there in an absolute manner. It is the introduction into the imperial Roman power of an element distinct from that -Which constituted its imperial strength, namely, the will of man devoid of conscience-military and popular power concentrated in one individual without conscience. There are two causes here of weakness-division and the want of coherence between the elements. The kingdom (verse 41) shall be divided, and (ver. 42) it shall be partly strong and partly brittle. The "seed of men" is, I think, something outside of that which characterizes the proper strength of the kingdom. But these two elements will never combine. It appears to me that the Barbaric or Teutonic element is probably here pointed out; as added to that which originally constituted the Roman empire. The fact of a subdivision is seen in verse 44. It is then announced that in the days of these last kings, He who rules from heaven will set up a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and that shall never pass into other hands. This is properly the only kingdom that, on God's part, takes the place of the kingdom of Babylon. The God of heaven had established Nebuchadnezzar in his kingdom, and had given him power, and strength, and glory, making all men subject to him. Doubtless the three others had followed, according to the will of Him who orders all things. But it is only with respect to the kingdom of verse 44, that it is once more said, "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom." The character, and some leading features in the history of the last of the four kingdoms are given. Nothing but the existence of the two preceding

ones-it stated, except the inferiority of the former of the two. So that the Spirit of God gives us the divine establishment of the first, the character of the fourth, and the divine establishment of the fifth or final kingdom.

We will now observe the manner in which this last kingdom is established; and we see that it is accomplished by means of a judicial and destructive act which reduces the image to powder, bringing about its complete dissolution, so that no traces of it are left (vers. 34, 35). The instrument of this destruction was not formed by the wisdom or the schemes of man. It is "cut out without hands." It does not act by a moral influence, that changes the character of the object on which it acts. It destroys that object by force. It is God who establishes it and gives it that force. The stone does not gradually increase in size to displace the image. Before it enlarges, it destroys the image. When it has become great, it is not merely a right given by God over men-it fills the whole earth-it is the exalted seat of a universal authority. It is on the last form of power exhibited in the image, that the stone falls with destructive force; when the empire is divided and is partly strong and partly weak, on account of the elements composing its members. We may also observe; that it is not God destroying the image, in order to establish the kingdom; but the kingdom which He establishes smites the feet of the image as its first act. It is the outward and general history of that which, by God's appointment, took the place of His throne and His government in Jerusalem, and which had gradually degenerated in its public character with respect to God, and which at length comes to its end, in the judgment executed by the kingdom established of God without human agency. The kingdom of Christ, which falls on the last form of the monarchy formerly established by God, destroys the whole form of its existence, and itself fills the world.

I have nothing particular to say on the four monarchies. We find Babylon, Persia, and Greece, named in the book, as being already known to the Jews, and-the Romans introduced, by the name which their territory bore, the coasts of Chittim, so that I receive without farther question, the four great empires ordinarily recognized by every one as pointed out in this prophecy. It does not appear to me that these prophecies leave room for any doubt on the subject.

The effect of the communication which proves that God is with the remnant, who alone understand his mind, is that the haughty Gentile acknowledges the God of Israel as supreme in heaven and on earth. That which characterizes the remnant here, is that God reveals to them his mind.

After this general picture, we have, historically, the characteristic features of these empires, marking the condition into which they fall, through their departure from God; primarily and principally Babylon.

In chapter 3 we have the first characteristic feature of man invested with imperial power, but whose heart is far from God-a distance augmented by the very possession of power. He will have a god of his own, a -god dependent on the will of man; and in this case, dependent on the depositary of the imperial power:

This is man's wisdom. The religious instincts are gratified in connection with the supreme power; and the influences of religion are exercised in binding all the members of the empire in one blended mass around the head, by the strongest bond, without any appearance of authority: For the religious wants of man are thus connected with his will; and his will is unconsciously subject to the center of power. Otherwise, religion, the most powerful motive of the heart, becomes a

dissolvent in the empire. But the will of man cannot make a true god: and consequently Nebuchadnezzar, although he had confessed that there was none like the God of the Jews-forsakes Him and makes a god for himself. The Gentile government rejects God, the source of its power; and the true God is only acknowledged by a faithful and suffering remnant. The Empire is idolatrous. This is the first great feature that characterizes the dominion of Babylon. But the faithfulness that opposes this wise system, which binds the most powerful motive of the whole people to the will of their Head, uniting them in worship around that which he presents to them-faithfulness like this touches the main-spring of the whole movement. The idol is not God at all; and however powerful man may be, he cannot create a God. The man of faith, subject indeed to the king as we have seen, because appointed of God, is not subject to the false god which the king sets up, denying the true God who gave him his authority, and who is still acknowledged by the man of faith. But power is in the king's hands; and he will have it known that his will is supreme.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are cast into the fiery furnace. But it is in the sufferings of his people that God in the end appears as God. He allows their faithfulness to be tried, in the place where evil exists, that they may be with Him in the enjoyment of happiness, in the place where His character and His power are fully manifested, whether on this earth, or in a yet more excellent manner in Heaven.

We may observe, that faith and obedience are as absolute as the will of the king. Nothing can be finer and more calm than the answer of the three believers. God is able to deliver, and He will deliver; but happen what may, they will not forsake Him. The king in his fury defies God. "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" God allows him to take his own way. The effect of his headlong rage, is that the instruments of his vengeance are destroyed by the fierce flames prepared for the faithful Hebrews. The latter are cast into the furnace, and (outwardly) the king's will is accomplished. - But this is only to manifest more brightly the power and the faithfulness of God, who comes, even into the midst of the fire, to prove the interest He takes in the fidelity of His servants. The effect, to them, of the fire is that their bands are consumed, and that they have His presence whose form is like the Son of God, even in the eyes of the king, who denied His almighty power. The result, is a decree forbidding the whole world to speak against the God of the Jews, and the glory of that weak and captive people. Remark here that the remnant are characterized by their faithfulness and obedience. They manifest their faithfulness by refusing to have any God but their own God. No concession-it would be to deny Him. For, to acknowledge the true God, He alone must be acknowledged. Truth is but the full revelation of Him, and can only recognize itself. To put itself on a level with falsehood, would be saying it was not truth.

We find three principles marked out with respect to the remnant; they do not defile themselves by partaking of that which the world bestows-the king's meat. They have understanding in the mind and revelations of God. They are faithful in refusing absolutely to acknowledge any God but their own, who is the true God. The first principle is common to them all. The second is the Spirit of prophecy, of which Daniel is here the vessel. The third is the portion of every believer, although there may be no Spirit of prophecy. The nearer we are to the power of the world, the more likelihood there is of suffering if we are faithful. It must be observed that all this is connected with the position and the principles of the Jews.

In chapter 4, we see the manifestation of human pride; the king glories in the work of his hands, as though he had created his own greatness. This pride brings judgment. Power is reduced to the condition of the beasts that know not God, and are devoid of man's understanding. The only true privilege of man, that which ennobles him, is that he can look up to God and acknowledge Him. Without this he looks downward; he is degraded. Dependence is his glory, for it sets him before God, gives him to know God; and his mind, associated with God, receives from him its measure and its knowledge. Pride and independence separate man from God; he becomes a beast, devoid of real intelligence. Now this condition depicts that of the kingdoms of which the prophet speaks (looked at as a whole before God, and represented by the head established by God, Nebuchadnezzar.) Seven times, or seven years, pass over the head of Nebuchadnezzar deprived of his reason. He had exalted himself; he has been humbled. The times of the Gentiles are characterized by the absence of all such understanding as would put governmental power in connection with God. To make idols, to build Babylon, and not to know God; such were the moral characteristics of a power that God had established in place of His own throne at Jerusalem. Such is the moral capacity of man in possession of that power which has been committed to him.

But the scene closes with testimony to the glory of the Most High God, the King of Heaven. Nebuchadnezzar recognizes His majesty and blesses Him, now that His judgment is removed. He acknowledges Him as Him who liveth forever, who abases and exalts whom He will, doing according to His will in heaven and on earth, all men being but vanity before His power and majesty. Here, it is not the deliverance of the faithful which produces its effect, but the judgment that fell on the Gentiles themselves, who, after the judgment, are delivered, and understanding given them with respect to the Lord; and that in connection with the testimony committed to the Jews by the Spirit of prophecy which God had bestowed on the remnant. The king lifts up his eyes to heaven, instead of being only a beast that looks down upon the earth; he becomes intelligent and submissive, and joyfully blesses the Lord, the Most High God, the God of Israel. We may remark this title of "Most High." It is the name given to the Lord in the interview between Melchizedek and Abraham, in which is added thereto, "Possessor of heaven and earth." This is, in fact, the character that God will assume when He shall gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth; and Christ shall be the true Melchizedek. The Gentiles shall be fully subjected to God. This will be "the restitution of all things," spoken of by the prophets.

There are yet some detailed observations to be made. It judgment, followed by deliverance, which produces this result. We may notice the force of this, symbol of a great tree. It is a mighty one of the earth, capable of taking others under its protection. It was in the highest position. The fowls of the heaven had their habitation in it. That is to say, that all classes of persons sought shelter and protection in it. We learn also that God takes knowledge of the principles that guide the governments of the earth, considered as the depositaries of the power which they hold from God; although it is not (as in Israel), His throne on the earth, God watches over all and judges that to which He has committed authority. He does not rule immediately; but He holds responsible him to whom He has entrusted the rule, in order that he might own the authority of God as supreme in this world. With respect to the term "watcher," I do not think that intelligence as to who it was that brought the decree of judgment, goes beyond Nebuchadnezzar's religious condition. Daniel ascribes it immediately to the Most High. That angels may be its intelligent instruments, and that

its administration may be in some sort committed to them, presents no difficulty, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as other scriptures, teaches us that angels are thus employed. The world -to come will not be thus subjected to them. -We see in verse -27, that Daniel sets this responsibility before Nebuchadnezzar, exhorting him to alter his conduct. We may also remark here, that it is the "King of heaven" whom Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges. This was necessarily His place. The God of the earth had His throne at Jerusalem. But then Nebuchadnezzar would have had no place there. We never find the throne at Jerusalem in Daniel, either morally or prophetically. His prophecies always stop short of that. He is a captive among the Gentiles, faithful to God there, and taught of Him. But God cannot be to him the God of the earth. The seed of David will not be in captivity at Babylon, when God takes His place as the God of the earth. It is the God of heaven, ruling every where and over all things, doing according to His will in heaven and on earth; but not yet reigning over the earth as the king of the earth. On the contrary, He had just renounced this; and had committed the power to Nebuchadnezzar, while He withdrew from the presence of His earthly people's iniquity, to shut Himself up in His supreme and immutable power; the results of which would not be shown till afterward, but according to which He even then governed, although hidden from the eyes of men.

The reader may perhaps expect more detail. It will be found in the communications made immediately to Daniel. But those who have laid hold of the principles we have been establishing (and the great object of these chapters is to present them), will possess elements of the greatest importance for understanding all the prophecies of this book; and without these principles, the meaning of its revelations will never be clearly apprehended. It must be remembered, that we are on the ground here of the Jews in captivity among the Gentiles, understanding God's dealings with them, and His judgment of their condition while the power had been left in their hands.

In chapter 5, the iniquity of the head of the Gentiles with respect to the God of Israel, reaches the highest point, and assumes that character of insolence and contempt which is but the effort of weakness to conceal itself. In the midst of the orgies of a great feast to his lords and courtiers, Belshazzar causes the vessels of the temple of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken away from Jerusalem, to be brought, that he and his guests might drink therein; and he praises the gods of gold, and of silver, and of stone. The madness of the king puts the question between the false gods and the Lord the God of Israel. The Lord decides the question that very night, by the destruction of the king and of all his glory. The warning which God gives him is interpreted by Daniel. But although subject to the king, Daniel does not treat him with the same respect that he had for Nebuchadnezzar. Belshazzar had taken the place of an insolent enemy to the Lord, and Daniel answers him according to God's revelation of his doom, and to the ostentatious manifestation which the king made of his iniquity, magnifying his own gods and insulting the Lord. Accordingly the warning was no longer remedial, and left no room for repentance. It announced judgment; and the very annunciation sufficed to destroy all the insolence of the impious king. For he had neglected the warning given him by the history of Nebuchadnezzar. This narrative gives us the last character of the iniquity of the sovereign power of the Gentiles, in opposition to the God of Israel., the Most High; and the judgment which falls in consequence upon the monarchy, of which Babylon was the head, and to which Babylon had given its own character. For whatever may have been the long-suffering of God and His dealings in other respects towards the monarchy of the Gentiles, as the power to which He committed authority in the world, all was already lost for these

empires, even in the days of Babylon. Another form of iniquity appears besides that of Babylon.

Cyrus, personally, had better thoughts; and God, from whom they came, made use of him for the temporary re-establishment of His people, in order that the Messiah should come and present Himself to them-the last trial of His beloved people. It is not Cyrus, therefore, whom we find here, the instrument of the iniquity which sought to destroy Daniel-of that human will, which can never endure faithfulness to God. Here it is not idolatry, nor is it insult offered to the Lord, but the exaltation of man himself, who would shut out all idea of God, who would have no God. This is one of the features that characterizes the depths of the human heart.

Man in general is pleased with a god who will help him to satisfy his passions and his desires; a god who suits his purpose for the unity of his empire and the consolidation of his power. The religious part of man's nature is satisfied with gods of this kind, and worships them willingly. The true God suits neither their conscience nor their lusts. The enemy of our souls is well pleased to cultivate in this manner the religiousness of our nature. False religion sets up gods that correspond to the desires of the natural heart, whatever they may be; but which never call into communion and never act upon the conscience. They may impose ceremonies and observances, for these suit man; but they can never bring an awakened conscience into relationship with themselves. That which man fears, and that which man desires, is the sphere of their influence. They produce nothing in the heart beyond the action of natural joys and fears. But, on the other hand, the pride of man sometimes assumes a character that changes everything in this respect. Man will himself be God and act according to his own will, and shut out a rivalship which his pride cannot endure. A superiority which cannot be disputed if God exists, is insupportable to one who would stand alone. The enemies of the faithful avail themselves of this disposition. Cruelty is less inventive, save that in flattering the higher power, it does not appear to blame any except those who disobey and despise his word.

The contest being with God Himself, decides the question more contemptuously with men. Passion allies itself less with pride than with the will of man. He is the slave of those who pay him the tribute of their flattery. Self-will is more its own master. Deceived by his vanity, the king finds himself bound by laws, apparently instituted to guard his subjects from his caprices, under color of attributing the character of immutability to his will and to his wisdom. A character that belongs to God alone. Daniel is cast into the lions' den. God preserves him. He will do the same for the remnant of Israel at the end of the age. The judgment which the enemies of Israel sought to bring upon those who were faithful among that people, is executed upon themselves. But the effect of this judgment extends farther than in the former cases. Nebuchadnezzar forbade any evil being spoken of the God of Israel, and he extolled the King of Heaven by whom he had been humbled. But Darius commands that in every place the God of Daniel and of Israel should be acknowledged, the only living God, whose kingdom is everlasting, and who had indeed delivered the man that trusted in Him. Historically, it appears that Darius had some feelings of respect for God and for Daniel's piety. It was not his God, but the God of Daniel; still he honors Him, and even calls Him the living God.

Thus we see that idolatry, impiety, the pride that exalts itself above everything, are the characteristics of the great empires which Daniel sets before us, and the causes of their Judgment. The same features will be found in the last days.

The chief object of the seventh chapter, is the history of the fourth beast, or the last form of the Gentile empire, which commenced at Babylon-the great western power, in which was to be developed all that man in possession of power, would become, with respect to God and to the faithful. But the introduction of this western beast is briefly given. Four beasts come up from the sea, that is to say, from the waves of human population. These powers are not looked at here as established by God, but in their purely historical character. We have seen the empire established immediately by God, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. But here-although every existing power is established by God-they are seen in their historical aspect. The beasts come up out of the sea. The prophet first sees them all at once, arising out of the agitation of the nations. This part of the vision contains characteristic features, but gives no date. In ver. 4, we have Babylon in power, and then abased and subdued. The body of a lion, with eagles' wings; that which; humanly speaking, was most noble and energetic in strength; that which hovered over the nations with the highest and most rapid flight-characterized this first energy of the human mind, when the will of God had committed to it the empire of the world. The second beast devoured much, but had neither the energy nor the rapid flight of the first; it appropriated other kingdoms to itself, rather than created an empire; twofold in its strength at first, it raised itself up more on one side than on the other. It is ferocious, but comparatively unwieldy. It is the Medo-Persian empire. This chapter says but little of the third; lightness and activity characterize it, and dominion was given to it. It is the empire founded by Alexander. The fourth is the subject of a separate vision. It will be well to remark, in passing, that the chapter is divided into three visions, followed by the interpretation given to the prophet. The first vision comprises the four beasts seen together, and the character of the first three slightly sketched. The second vision contains that of the fourth beast with much more detail. The third vision presents the appearing of one like the Son of Man before the Ancient of Days. They commence respectively at the first, seventh, and thirteenth verses, the interpretation occupies the remainder of the chapter from the fifteenth verse. The features of the fourth beast are clearly drawn. It is strong exceedingly; it devours and breaks in pieces, and tramples the residue under foot. It has not the same character as the preceding monarchies. It has ten horns, that is to say, its strength was to be divided into ten distinct powers. Strength and rapacity sparing and respecting nothing, appropriating everything, or trampling it under foot without regard to conscience; such are morally the characteristics of the fourth beast. Its division into ten kingdoms distinguish it as to its form. The uniform simplicity of the other empires will be lacking to it. But this is not all. Another very distinctive and special element attracted the particular attention of the prophet. While considering the horns, he saw another little horn come up among them; three of the first fell before it; it possessed the penetration and intelligence of man, its pretensions were very great. Such was its character. A power arises among the ten, by which three of them are overthrown. This power is clear-sighted and penetrating in its intelligence. It not only possesses strength, but it has thoughts and plans besides those of ambition and government. It is a beast that works morally, that occupies itself with knowledge, and sets itself up with pretensions full of pride and daring. It has a character of intelligence, moral and systematic (in evil) and not merely the strength of a conqueror. This horn has the eyes of a man. Afterward, the thrones are set and the Ancient of Days sits. It is a session of judgment, the throne of the Lord's judgment; it is not said where, but its effect is on earth. The words of the little horn are the occasion of the execution of judgment. It is executed on the beast, which is destroyed, and its body given to the flames. With respect to the other beasts, their dominion had been taken away, but their lives prolonged; the

fourth loses its life with its dominion. The scene of judgment forms a part of the vision of the fourth beast, and especially relates to it. In verse thirteen there is another vision. One like the Son of Man is brought to the Ancient of Days, and receives the kingdom and universal dominion, the rule of the Lord entrusted to man in the person of Christ, and substituted for the kingdom of the beast. Observe, that this is not the execution of the judgment, but the reception of the earthly kingdom; for, in all this, the government of the earth is the subject.

There are two parts in the interpretation. Vers. 17, 18, are general; and then, with reference to the fourth beast (19-28), there is more of detail. The general part declares that these four beasts are four kings, or kingdoms, that shall arise out of the earth; but that the saints of the high places shall take the kingdom, and possess it forever. These are the two great facts brought out in this history. The earthly empire, and that of the saints of the high places; the first being composed of four kingdoms. We are then given some details with respect to the fourth of these. It will be noticed here, that, in the interpretation, an element of the highest interest is added, which was not in the vision to which the interpretation belongs; namely, that which relates to the saints. In communicating to the prophet the meaning of the vision, God could not omit them. The 18th verse already presents them in contrast with the empires of the earth. These empires were seen to arise in the vision, according to their public or external character. Here the Spirit of God tells of that which made their conduct a subject of interest even to the heart of God, who would testify this interest to the prophet. The saints are immediately brought to view, but in a suffering condition (ver. 21). This is the first characteristic of the little horn, when his actions are in question. But the 21st and 22nd verses demand a few more remarks. 'The little horn not only makes war with the saints, but prevails against them up to a certain time; that is, until the session of the Ancient of Days. Something more definite is given here, than the fact that God will judge the audacity of man. We are no longer occupied with the public history, and with general principles, but with explanations for the saints, in the person of the prophet. It is the coming of the Ancient of Days that puts an end to the power of the little horn over the saints. Other important events are its result: 1st, judgment is given to the saints of the high places; and 2nd, the saints take the kingdom. Observe here the especial title, "of the high places." The little horn persecutes the saints on earth, and prevails against them until the Ancient of Days comes. But it is only to the saints of the high places that judgment is given. "Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that the saints shall judge the world?" Nevertheless, we must not go beyond that which is here written. It is not said "to the Church" -an idea not found in these passages. It is the saints who are linked with the name of the Most High God in heaven, while the earth is in the hands of those who do not acknowledge Him, and while His government is not exercised to preserve them from suffering, and from the malice of the wicked. This applies in principle to all times; until the Ancient of Days comes. But there is a period especially characterized by this spirit of rebellion, namely, that of the power of the little horn. There is another class of persons spoken of farther on -the people of the saints of the high places. "The kingdom" is given to them. But in this instance the Spirit does not say, "the judgment." Thus, in verse 22, when the kingdom is mentioned, it is not said, "the saints of the high places," but simply "the saints possessed the kingdom." We have thus the power of the little horn exercised against the saints, and prevailing against them, put an end to by the Ancient of Days. The earth being the scene of that which is taking place, this event is accompanied by two other events, which result from it, and which change the whole aspect of the world. Judgment is given to the heavenly saints, and the 'kingdom is given to the saints. The first of these two events is confined to the heavenly

saints. The second is more general, the saints on earth sharing it according to their condition, without excluding the saints in heaven according to their condition.

In verse 23, begin the historical details of the little horn. The general character of the fourth beast is set forth. It devours, treads down, and subjugates' everything. It is not only a consolidated empire, of such or such an extent, it ravages the whole earth as by right. There, are, then, ten kingdoms arising in the bosom of the empire, and dividing its power. This is its outward and general character. But when the ten are already existing, another power arises, of a different character from the ten, three of which it subdues. Now this horn speaks against the Most High; magnifies itself in words against Him, and in its malice destroys the saints who are united in heart to the God of heaven, and confess His name and His authority on the earth. It seeks to change the religious feasts and the law; and they are given into its hand for three years and a half. In this last circumstance, we find pretty clearly the oppressor of the Jews. Their whole system is given into his hands. These three characteristics are sufficiently plain and distinct; he speaks against the Most High; he persecutes those whose hearts are in heaven; and he does away with all public evidences of the earthly religion. It will be remarked; that there. is no question at all here of the church, except in very general terms, which might apply to any saints whatever on the earth. It is well also to observe, that it is not the saints (as has been thought), who are given into the hand of the little horn, but the forms of the Jewish religion. God may will and permit for the good of the saints, that there should be persecution; but He never gives up His saints to their enemies. He could not do it. He cannot leave and forsake his own. In a word, whatever may be the general principles, capable of application during the course of the ages, this prophecy, as an especial and definite revelation, refers-like the whole book-to the earth, of which the church is not-and to the Jews, with respect to whom God exercises His government on the earth. This, understood, throws light on the three characteristics of the little horn. He rebels against the Most High. He speaks great words against God, and against all the saints who, rising in spirit above the earth, acknowledge the Most High God in heaven, and expect deliverance at His hand; whose hearts take refuge in Him, when the earth is given up, as it were, into the hands of. the wicked. All those who thus maintain a true testimony against the man who arrogates to himself every prerogative on earth, and will have nothing to do with heaven, are persecuted by Him. At length, the Jews having re-established their regular feasts and ordinances, his tyranny, which allows no power but its own, destroys all trace of these ordinances; which however vain, as thus restored in unbelief, were nevertheless a testimony to the existence of a God of the earth. But the judgment sits, to take cognizance of all this pride. The dominion of the little horn is consumed and destroyed. We may notice here, that it is in fact the little horn that in the end wields the supreme power. It is his dominion which is destroyed. Afterward the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven, is given to the people of the saints of the high places. It appears to me that the meaning of this expression, remarkable as it is, is yet sufficiently plain. The Most High reigns, but he reigns in connection with the system which makes it manifest that "the heavens rule"; as it is said on this subject in the case of Nebuchadnezzar. The man of the earth would reign, and he defies heaven; and withdrawing the earth from the government of Him who dwells in heaven, he would possess it independently of God. But the judgment proves his folly, and the Most High reigns for evermore. The saints who have acknowledged Him are given the judgment and the glory, and the people who belong to them on the earth have the supremacy and reign. These are the Jews. But, definitively, it is God who reigns.

There are two words translated "Most High," the one singular and the other plural. The latter signifies "the high (places)." I do not doubt that this word gave rise to the expression "heavenly places," in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which however goes much farther in the revelation there made. For here, government only is the subject, and in the Ephesians it is the things that belong to the heavenly places, or that are in them. This distinction enables us to understand the difference between the Church, or even Christians, and the saints of the high places in Dan. 7. With respect to Christians, it is those who enjoy-in spirit at least-the blessings of the heavenly places, sitting there in Christ, and wrestling against the spiritual wickednesses that are there. Here, on the contrary, it is the government which belongs of right to the heavens and to Him that reigns there, which is to be recognized in the presence of a power that denies and sets itself up against this, choosing to own no other power than itself on the earth. The meaning of the prophecy is plain, and easily understood. To recognize the right of government in the heavenly places, and to be sitting there in the enjoyment of the blessings proper to them, are too very different things. Everything has its own place in the mind of God, where perfect order reigns.

In sum, we have besides the power of the four beasts in general, the western power divided in ten, and at last, the empire in the hands of the little horn, which subdues three of the ten horns, and sets itself up against God in heaven, persecutes and prevails against the saints, destroying by its persecutions those who identify themselves with the God of heaven, abolishing all the Jewish ordinances, and finally, is itself destroyed. This abolition of the Jewish system continues for three years and a half, or 1260 days; which period of time belongs only to this last point. All the others are characteristic and not chronological.

The government of the earth, formerly given to man in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, is not again, established -as it had been at Jerusalem-in a merely earthly throne. During the interval, in the presence of rebellion of the earthly power against the Most High, the saints have assumed a character which is the result of their looking to heaven and to Him who reigns there, God, with respect to His government of the earth, having taken the name of the God of heaven.. A very intelligible position, seeing that He had forsaken Jerusalem.

It is the saints of the high places who will take the kingdom; but after the judgment of the rebellious horn; the earthly people possess the dominion under the whole heaven, in dependence on those who are seated in heaven. So that we have three clear and important elements in the dealings of God. The earthly throne' at Jerusalem forsaken; the Gentile throne established by the authority of God, the God of heaven; the rebellion of this Gentile power against Him that had given it authority. The saints distinguished by their acknowledgment of that God whom the earthly power denied; they are of the heavens, where God had now His place and His throne, being no longer on earth at Jerusalem. We have, then, judgment executed on the rebellious power: judgment given to these saints of the high places: the earthly people established in the kingdom under the heavens, in connection with them. This was the dominion of the God of heaven which should not pass away. In connection with this, is the character given to Him that pre-eminently receives the kingdom. It is not now the Messiah, owned as king in Zion, but ONE in the form of the Son of Man; a title of far greater and more wide significance. It is the change from the second to the eighth psalm. Nor this only: for, when the events are accomplished, we find that it is the Ancient of Days Himself who comes and puts an end to the power which afflicted the saints.

We have here the great picture of man's government -coming into all its characteristic development at the end-anti its setting aside by - the government of God, which establishes the faithful in authority, and, above all, the Son of Man Himself, and His people on the earth.

The eighth chapter gives details of that which takes place from another side in Judea, with reference to the Jews. The two empires of Persia and Greece, or of the East, which succeeded that of Babylon, under which the prophecy was given, are only introduced to point out the countries in which these events are to take place, and to bring them before us in their historical order. The Persian empire is overthrown by the king of Greece, whose empire is afterward divided into four kingdoms, from one of which a power arises that forms the main subject of the prophecy. In the interpretation, we find the positive declaration, that the events here related happen "in the last end of the indignation." Now it is the indignation against Israel that is here meant (chap. 11, ver. 36). This time of indignation is spoken of in Isa. 10.25: it ends with the destruction of the Assyrian, who (ver. 5), is its principal instrument. All these passages show us, especially in studying their context, that it will be in the last days that the events of these prophecies will be fulfilled. It will be "the time of Jacob's affliction, but he shall be delivered out of it." The Lord Himself alludes to this period (Matt. 24), calling His disciples' attention to that which Daniel says respecting it. Compare Dan. 12:1-11 with the Lord's words. It appears to me that the prophecy itself does not relate so absolutely to the last days as the interpretation does. The thing spoken of is not the last end of the indignation; but the fact that a little horn arises out of one of the four kingdoms, which had succeeded Alexander. Nevertheless, the grand object of the Spirit is to reveal that which will happen at the time of the end (ver. 17). Let us examine the principal features of the little horn. The power designated by "the little horn" enlarges its territory towards the East and towards the pleasant land, or Ornament [of the earth], that is to say, as it appears to me, towards Jerusalem or Zion. This horn exalts itself against the host of heaven, and casts down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and tramples on them. Who are the persons intended by this expression, "the host of heaven and the stars?" Let us remember, that it is the Jewish system that is before us. When once we have hold of this, the application of the passage is not difficult. The expression applies to those who, professedly at least, surround the throne of God, and particularly those who shine eminent among them. It is not the faithful who look towards heaven, of which chapter 7 speaks. To be the host of heaven, describes a position and not a moral state (compare ver. 24). But this passage assumes that the Jews are again in this position before God, even although it would be but for judgment. That is to say, they are again under the eye of God as in relation with Him, as an object about which He concerns Himself, as a people still responsible for their former relationship with Him, although the Gentile power still exists. Now, if their condition does not answer to the position they reassume in His presence, they are, by the very fact of this position, the object of God's judgments. Observe here, moreover, that transgression is the thing spoken of, and not the abomination which some one sets up, and which makes desolate; and in the interpretation also, the transgression is come to its height. This horn is then the instrument of chastisement on the Jews, who have returned-as to profession-into relationship with the Lord, and into their land, assuming the character of His people, yet carrying transgression against Him to the highest point. The horn completely destroys some of them. But this is not all He (for the word is no longer it, in agreement with the word horn-perhaps to designate the king in person), he magnifies himself even against the Prince of the host. He carries his pretensions so far as to oppose himself to Him, to set himself against Christ in His character of Prince of Israel, against the Judge who

comes, the Head of Israel, who is the Lord Himself; for it is the Ancient of Days who comes. Here, however, all is looked at in a Jewish aspect. He is the Prince of Israel. We see that it is the Lord, because it is His sacrifice that is taken away-His sanctuary that is cast down; but He is presented as the Prince of the host. The daily sacrifice is taken away from Him (not by Him). The Jewish worship rendered to the Lord is suppressed, His sanctuary cast down, and a time of distress appointed for the daily sacrifice (it is thus that I understand the verse), on account of transgression; and the little horn (for here the word it, agreeing with horn, is again used), casts down the truth, practices and prospers. The duration of the whole vision, with especial reference to the transgression which occasions it, and, it may be, comprising also the duration of the transgression that maketh desolate; in a word, the: whole scene of transgression and consequent desolation (the sanctuary and the host being trodden under foot), continues for 2300 evenings and mornings.

We see in the interpretation, that the vision relates to: the time of the end. A very important notice for the understanding of the passage. And this is what shall happen in the last end of the indignation, (upon Israel) when the transgression of the Jews is at its height. A king of fierce countenance, who understands dark sentences, shall arise. A kind of teacher or rabbi, but proud, and audacious in appearance. He will be mighty, but not of his own power. He will make great havoc, will prosper and practice, destroying the mighty, or a great multitude of persons, and especially "the people of the holy ones," i.e. the Jews, (7:27). He is subtle, and his craftiness is successful. He will magnify himself in his heart, and will destroy many by means of a false and irreligious security. At length he will stand up against the Prince of princes. He will then be destroyed without human intervention; that is to say, that at the time of the end, when the purposes of God will be unfolded, when His indignation against Israel draws to an end, the transgression of this people being already at its height, a king shall arise in one part of the former Grecian empire, whose power will be characterized by its increase towards the east and south, and towards Jerusalem; i.e., it will be established in the present Turkey in Asia-Jerusalem being the point it aims at. This power will cause much destruction, and its strength will be great; yet, properly speaking, it will not be its own strength. The king will be dependent on some other power. He will also destroy the Jewish people. But there is something more than destructive power; there is a character of wisdom, resembling that of Solomon in some respects. He is very subtle, and succeeds in destroying the Jews, by lulling them into a security in which they forget the Lord. We see him then occupying himself about -the Jews, not only as a conqueror, but as a teacher, by craft and by a deceptive peace. At length he stands up against Christ in His character of the Prince of princes or kings of the earth; i.e. in his character of earthly supremacy he is destroyed by divine power, without the hand of man.

This king is distinct from the little horn of chapter seven, who rules the great Western beast. He is a king of the East, who arises, not from the Roman empire, but from the former Grecian empire established in Syria and the adjacent countries, who derives his strength from-elsewhere and not from his own resources. He will interfere, (in his own: way) with the religious affairs of the Jews; but it seems to me, that that which is said of him is more characteristic of the desolator whom God allows the enemy to raise up on account of the transgressions of His people, than of the one who makes a covenant with them for a time, in order to ruin and drag them afterward into the depths of apostasy. It is one who will oppress them, having his seat of action in the East, as the little horn of

chapter seven rules -in the West. The desolation is brought before us on the occasion of this little horn. The eleventh verse is a kind -of parenthesis which relates entirely to the Prince of the host; and the two last things it mentions, namely, that the sacrifice is taken away and His sanctuary cast down, are introduced in connection with the Prince of the host, as a part of the desolation of Israel, to complete its description, without, as it appears to me, pointing out who it is that does these things. They are not spoken of in the king's own history, at the end of the chapter. They form a part of the desolation of those days.

The ninth chapter gives us a third history, which unfolds the evil of the last days, adding some farther characteristics. The prophet had understood, not by a direct revelation, but by the study of Jeremiah's prophecy, by the use of those ordinary means that are within the reach of the spiritual man, that the captivity, the duration of which Jeremiah had announced was near its end. The effect on Daniel's mind (true sign of a prophet of God) was to produce an ardent intercession on behalf of the desolate sanctuary, and the city which the Lord loved. He pours out his heart in confession before God, acknowledging the sin of the people and of their kings, the hardness of their hearts, and the righteousness of God in bringing evil upon them. He pleads the mercies of God, and demands favor for the Lord's own sake. The prophecy is God's answer to his prayer. Seventy weeks are determined upon the people of Daniel and upon the holy city. The Lord does not yet acknowledge them definitely for his own, but He accepts the intercession of the prophet, as he had formerly done that of Moses, by saying to Daniel, "thy people and thy city." Daniel stands in the place of mediator. He has the mind of God- His words-and thus he can intercede. Compare, on this deeply interesting point, Gen. 20:7, Jer. 27:18; John 15:7.

At the end of these seventy weeks, separated from among the ages, the time should come. decreed of God, to finish the transgression, to seal up i. e. to make an end of sin, and to put it away; to pardon iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness; to seal up [all] vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Holy of holies; this, observe, with respect to the people of Israel and to the city. It is the entire re-establishment of the people, and of the city, in grace. This period of seventy weeks is divided into three parts, seven, sixty-two, and one. During the first part, or the seven weeks, the desolate city and its overthrown walls would be rebuilt, in troublous times, or in the strait of times. After sixty-two weeks, that is after sixty-nine altogether, the Messiah should be cut off and should have nothing (this is the true sense of the words). He to whom the kingdom and the glory belonged instead of receiving them, should be cut off and have nothing. But after this event, the city and the sanctuary which had been re-built should be destroyed; and the end should be like a desolating flood; and there should be an ordinance or determinate decree of desolation until the end of the war. This is in general the complete history of the desolations. Sixty-nine weeks have been accomplished, after that the Messiah is cut off, but the precise moment at which this takes place is not indicated. The course of the seventy weeks is thus entirely interrupted. The cutting off of the Messiah was not the moment of the re-establishment of the people and of the city. The result is plainly announced, a period of desolation until the end; its duration is not given. We shall find in chapter 11 the same manner of treating an analogous period. The people of a prince who was yet to come, should destroy the city. After this, the Spirit of God takes up the seventieth week, the details of which were not yet unfolded. The prince that shall come, confirms the covenant with the mass of the Jews. (The form of the word many indicates the mass of the people.) This is the first thing that characterizes the week; the Jews form an alliance with the head

at that day, of the people who had formerly overthrown their city and their sanctuary. They form an alliance with the head of the Roman empire. But, the half of the week spent, things assume another aspect. This head causes the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and on account of the protection of idols, there is a desolator, and until the consummation that is determined, there shall be poured [judgment] upon the desolate.

That which is here announced then is, that seventy weeks are set apart for the history of the city and people of Daniel. During these seventy weeks, God is in relation with Israel; nevertheless, not immediately so, but in connection with the faith of the believing remnant, of a Daniel, of an intercession which, linking itself with the existence of a remnant, serves as a bond between God and the people. An intercession without which the people would be rejected. It is the same principle as that which governed the relations between God and the people, by means of Moses, after the golden calf-the people being called the people of Daniel; as formerly the people of Moses. This position is remarkable, as taking place after the establishment of the authority of the Gentiles. The Jews are at Jerusalem; but the Gentiles reign, although the empire of Babylon is overthrown. In this anomalous position, prophetic faith seeks the complete re-establishment of the city, the seat of government of God and of His people. It is to this that the answer of God refers. A brief but complete history is given of the period which should elapse until the judgment upon the Jews was accomplished and past. A new element of great importance is also introduced; the Messiah should be cut off. He would have nothing of that which in right belonged to Him. The consequence of this would be the destruction of the city and of the sanctuary, desolation and war. It would be the prince of another empire, not yet in existence, who should thus destroy the city and the sanctuary. The relations between God and the people were now completely broken off for the time-even in the case of a believing remnant. The Faith of Daniel was rejected, in the person of Christ as the Prophet, and in the denial of Christ expressed by the declaration that they would have no king but Caesar; and the people and the city were given up to desolation.

But there remained one week to be accomplished with respect to this faithless and perverse race, before their iniquity should be pardoned, and everlasting righteousness brought in, and the vision and the prophecy closed by their fulfillment. This week should be distinguished by a covenant which the prince or leader would make with the Jewish people (with the exception of the remnant), and then by the compulsory cessation of their worship, through the intervention of this prince. After that, the Jews having placed themselves under the protection of idols-this unclean spirit, long driven out of the people, having again entered into them with seven others worse than himself-the desolator comes, and the final judgments are inflicted on the people. Terrible judgments; but the extent of which is definitely fixed by God, when their measure shall be full. Thus we find a very precise answer is given to the prophet's request; an answer which very distinctly unfolds the consequences of the connection of Daniel's people with the Gentile power. Their position is very clearly set forth, while the relation with God, by means of the prophet's intercession, still exists.

The prophecy announces at the same time the general fact of the people's desolation during the interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, occasioned by their rejection of the Messiah, which took place at the very time when the promise attached to the prophecy should have been on the point of fulfillment; and the rejection of whom (coming in the name of His Father), has led to the long dispersion of the Jews, which will continue until the time of their being gathered, a prey to the iniquity of the head of the Gentiles; the time, in fact, of their falling into the

hands of the one who should Come in his own name. A sorrowful condition, developed during the last week, but to which God has set a limit; and beyond that, no malice of the enemy can reach.

In chap. 10, we return to the East. Chaps. 10, 11, and 12, form but one prophecy; only chap. 11 closes the history of the Gentiles, and chap. 12, as we remarked. at the beginning; is occupied with the condition of the remnant during the last period of the Gentile power, and with their deliverance; concluding thus the revelation of God's mind with respect to the remnant who are preserved in the midst of the Gentiles. Daniel, ever intent on the welfare of and people, made application to God with a renewed and a persevering desire to understand His dealings. After three weeks of fasting and prayer, an angel is sent to him, revealing the opposition of the enemies of God's glory, to the accomplishment of His purposes of favor to His people, and to the communication of these purposes for their encouragement. But if faith is exercised, God is faithful; and the perseverance of Daniel puts him morally in a condition to appreciate the communications of God, being a proof of his fitness to receive them. The angel informs him that the vision has reference to the Jews, and that it belongs to the latter days (10:14). The strength which is given him, enables him to receive the communication. The kings of Persia, under whose reign he received the vision, are enumerated; and the attack on Greece, by one amongst them, is announced. This gives rise to an attack on Persia by Greece; and the Greek empire is established: but it is afterward divided in four. Two of those four monarchies shall be more powerful than the others. They are also, territorially in relation with the Jews. It is on the territory of the latter that their wars were carried on. The history of the kings of these two monarchies thus in conflict on the territory of Israel, is given with considerable detail, under the names of King of the North and King of the South. I do not enter into these details. This history is carried on until the intervention of the Romans, and the attack upon the Jews, and the temple, and the holy covenant. The king allies himself with the apostate he pollutes the sanctuary, and sets up an idol; he takes away, the daily sacrifice; he leads the wicked into apostasy (this is the force of the expression in verse 32). But they who know God -shall be strong, and shall act with energy. They who understand, being taught of God, shall instruct the many. Up to this, we have, after the succession of the first kings, the history of the Maccabees and of Antiochus Epiphanes. The result, onwards to the end, is then given in general terms. This history being a type of that which shall happen in the, last days. The people again fall for a time under the hands of their enemies. They shall be helped a little; some shall cleave to them with flatteries. A few even of those who understand, who might have been expected to be preserved by God, will also fall by violence, to try the faith of all, and purge them, until the time of the end. For this state of things is to continue until the period appointed by God. It is the general condition of the Jews until the last days. Some observations on the details may here be of use to the reader. In chaps. 9:27, 11:33, 12:3, the word translated, "many," has the article in Hebrew, and signifies the mass of the people, which makes the force of these verses much more simple. The reader will also remark in contrast with the masses (11:33), " the Maschilim," a word found in. the titles of many of the Psalms. They that understand,- they that are taught of God, shall instruct the many; there will be the activity of love for the truth, in these times of trial. In chap. 12:3, we have again those that understand, associated with those that instruct the many in righteousness (compare 11:33). They become victims, in verse 35, to violence. This last verse reaches as we have seen, to the end of this people's history, while under the dominion of the Gentiles. But more positive details are given with respect to the end.

The king is introduced-the wicked one-who will exercise power in Judea at the end of the ages; and will prosper until the indignation comes to an end; a period of which we have already spoken. It is a king who acts in the land of Judea; one of an impious character, and who follows his own unbridled will, exalting himself above all, forsaking the religion of his fathers, regarding neither Christ nor any God, blaspheming the God of heaven, and establishing idolatry-but in a way of his own. " He shall cause them to rule over the many, and shall divide the land for a reward." It is rather difficult to say who these are that he will cause to rule; but the general character of this self-willed, impious, and idolatrous king, who magnifies himself above all, is sufficiently plain. We find, as the chapter goes on, that the king of the South pushes at him, and the king of the North comes against him like a whirlwind, overflows and passes over, and enters into the land of delight, Judea. But Edom, Moab, and Ammon, escape his power, being reserved (Isa. 11:14), to be subdued by Israel itself. But he stretches out his hand over these countries and pillages them. Egypt does not escape, and they who dwell in Africa are at his feet. But, disturbed by tidings from the North and East, he sets up his tabernacles between Jerusalem and the sea, and comes to his end, with none to help him. The end of the king is not given here; it is the end of the king of the North; the subject here being the nations and the land of Israel, and that which shall happen to the people of Daniel in the last days. In the land there will be this wicked and impious king, who shall be attacked by the king of the South. The king of the North then pillages all the countries round, with the exception of three. He perishes in the land of Israel.

Chapter 12 gives us more of Israel's own history. In the midst of all these events, Michael the archangel stands up in behalf of the people of Daniel. There is a time of trouble, such as never has been, nor will be. Nevertheless, the people shall be delivered; that is to say, those who are written in the book; the remnant belonging to God. Jeremiah has already spoken to us of this period, and of the deliverance (30:7). The Lord speaks of it also in Matt. 24, drawing the attention of His disciples to the abomination of desolation here mentioned, showing clearly that He speaks of Jerusalem, the Jews, and the last days, when the Jews shall be delivered. He also points out the way in which the faithful are to escape, while the tribulation continues. Taking these passages together, makes it easy to understand them both. The 2nd verse extends beyond the land of Israel. Many of the race of Israel arise from their long abasement; some to everlasting life, but others to everlasting shame. They that understand shall shine as the firmament. They who have instructed the many in righteousness, shall shine as the stars (compare the host of heaven and stars, chap. 8). God will clothe with the brightness of His favor, those who will have been faithful during this period of rebellion and distress.

After this, one of God's messengers inquires of the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, how long it should be to the end of these wonders (i. e. of the tribulation), by the intervention of God in deliverance for Israel. The answer is, three years and a half, or 1260 days; and that when God should have put an end to the dispersion of the holy people, all these things should be finished. Daniel asks for a fuller revelation with respect to the end, but the oracle is sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be tried and purified, and made white, but the wicked shall do wickedly. Alas! this must be expected. None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand these "maschilim," whom the Spirit of God has mentioned.

Now, from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be 1290 days. And the accomplishment of 1335 days has still to be

waited for; there shall be full blessing to him that waits and arrives at their fulfillment. Daniel himself shall have his part in this time of glory.

It is to be observed, that Daniel never describes the period that succeeds to the times of the Gentiles. He gives the history of those monarchies, the oppressors and seducers of the Jews in the latter days, and the deliverance of the people; but there he stops. He is the prophet of the times of the Gentiles until the deliverance.

One thing may here occur to the reader, as desirable for the understanding of the whole; i.e., to combine the agency of those instruments, which the prophecy of Daniel presents as acting in the land of Israel during the latter days, and to identify them-if it may be done-with those that are mentioned by other prophets. But this would be to make a system of prophecy, and not to explain Daniel. The Spirit of God has not done so in this prophet, which is our present subject. I will, therefore only allude to some striking points. Chapter 7 gives the character of the Roman empire, especially under its last head. It is the close of the history of the Gentile power. Chapter 8 (although I have often thought that the king, who is described there, might be the instrument in Israel of the Western empire), yet gives to the horn it speaks of a different character-as it appears to me in carefully weighing the passage--from that which constitutes the Western power, whether as a little horn, or in some local instrument. Nevertheless, his power is derived from another; it is a separate power acting in Syria. In chap. 9, we find the one who acts among the Jews in Jerusalem itself, in connection apparently with the Roman empire, be the instrument employed who he may. Perhaps it is the king of chap. 11, who finds himself between the kings of the South and of the North. It is very possible that the little horn of chap. 7 acts itself; still I have an idea that there is someone else dependent upon it, who at least acts religiously upon the Jews, and leads them into apostasy.

The king of chap. 11 is a king in Judaea, despising the religion of his fathers, and acting in the country morally unbridled, re-establishing idolatry, and dividing the territory among those in favor. The kings of the South and North, are Egypt and Assyria in the latter days, who attack the king who has established himself in the Holy Land.

I apprehend rather, that "the king" answers to the second beast of the Revelation in another aspect, as the first does to the little horn of chap. 7. But I do not pretend to say this as teaching it in a positive manner.

## Extract

---

If God give you Christ, in the same charter all things are yours, "because ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Christ watereth with His blessing all things. If everything that a saint hath be blessed, and everything (to speak so) mercied, and christianed, even "his basket and his dough" (Deut. 28:5), his inheritance must be blessed; much more all Christ's inheritance must be blessed; because he is the end, the spring, and abstract of all blessings. Now Christ "is appointed heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2). Then He is the heir of a draft of water, of brown bread, of a straw bed on the earth, and hard stones to be the pillow. To the saints, to the children of God, hell (so to speak) is heavened, sorrow joyed, poverty riched, death enlivened, dust and the grave animated and quickened with life and the resurrection. God save me from a draft of water without Christ!

## Ezekiel

---

The prophet Ezekiel had been carried into captivity with the king Jehoiakim, at least, he was one of those made captive at that time, and he habitually dates his prophecies from that period; an important thing to remark that we may understand the revelations made to him. For himself, there is no more question either of dates of kings, of Judah or of Israel. The people of God are in captivity among the Gentiles. Israel is looked at as a whole; the interests of the whole nation are before him. At the same time, the capture of Jerusalem under Zedekiah had not yet taken place, which occasions the revelation of his iniquity, the measure of which was filled up by his rebellion. For Nebuchadnezzar attached value to the oath made in the name of the Lord. He counted upon the respect due to that name, and Zedekiah had not respected it.-Thus the first twenty-three chapters contain testimonies from God against Israel in general, and against Jerusalem in particular. After that, the surrounding nations are judged; and then, beginning with chap. 33, the prophet resumes the subject of Israel announcing their restoration as well as their judgment. Finally, from chap. 40 to the end, we have the description of the temple, and of the division of the land.

In chapter 1 we find a date which refers to the year of Josiah's passover, but with what intent I do not know. It has been thought that the thirty years relate to jubilee. On this point I cannot speak with confidence. But other circumstances are very important. The throne of God is not seen in Jerusalem, but unconnected with this city and outside it. God judges the city itself from this throne. The prophecy commences with the description of the throne. We have the attributes of God the supporters of His throne, under the likeness of the four categories of created beings on earth, the four being united in one, at least, the four heads of these categories. These symbols are nearly the same as those used by the pagan inventors of idolatry to represent their gods. Formal idolatry began with a figurative personification of the attributes of God. These attributes became their gods, men being impelled to worship them by demons, who governed them by this means, so that it was these demons whom men worshipped-a worship that soon degenerated so far, that they set up gods wherever there was anything to desire or to fear, or that answered to the lusts which inspired these desires or these fears. Sentiments which the demon cultivated also, in order to appropriate to himself the worship due to God alone. Now, these attributes belonged to the only God, the Creator, and the head of all creation; but whatever their power and glory might be in action, they were but the supporters of the throne on which the God of Truth is seated. Whatever instruments He may employ, it is the mighty energy of God that manifests itself. Intelligence, strength, stability and swiftness in judgment, and, withal, the movement of the whole course of earthly events, depended on the Throne. Majesty, government, and providence, united to form the throne of His glory. But all the instruments of His glory were below the firmament; He whom they glorified was above. It is He whom the heathen knew not. This throne of the supreme and sovereign Lord God is seen in Chaldea-in the place where the prophet then was-among the Gentiles.. But it is no longer seen at Jerusalem in connection with the land, consequently, the voice of God speaks to Ezekiel as to a "son of man"; a title that suited the testimony of a God who

spoke outside of His people, as being no longer in their midst, but, on the contrary, was judging them from the throne of His sovereignty. It is Christ's own title, looked at as rejected and outside of Israel, although He never ceases to think of the blessing of the people in grace. This puts the prophet in connection with the position of Christ Himself. He would not allow them to call Him the Christ (Luke 9), for the Son of Man was to suffer. In testimony and example, as to his prophetic relation, the same thing happens in Ezekiel's case. God is rejected, His prophet takes this place, with the throne, to judge the whole nation, and especially Jerusalem, announcing at the same time (to, faith) their re-establishment in grace. He is sent from the Lord to a rebellious people, to say, The Lord has spoken, whether they would hear or not. The judgment would make it known that a prophet had been among them. His first testimony is composed of lamentations, and mourning and woe; nevertheless, the communication of the word of God is always full of sweetness, looked at as a revelation from Him, and as taking place between God and man.

Some important principles in the relations of God with Israel are developed in chap. 3. But we have yet to notice a feature that characterizes the book of Ezekiel, comparing it with that of Jeremiah. The latter addresses himself immediately to his contemporaries, that is to say, to the people of God, in a testimony which, making its way through the bruised and wounded heart of the prophet, exhibits the marvelous patience of God, who up to the last moment invites His people to repentance. It is not thus with Ezekiel. He announces that which necessitates the judgment. He is sent, indeed, to Israel, but to Israel in a hardened condition. His mouth is shut as to the people; he is not to rebuke them. He may communicate to them certain declarations of, the Lord at a suitable time, when the Lord opens his mouth to make them understand that there is a prophet among them; but he does not address himself directly and morally to the people, as being still the object of God's dealings. The Lord reveals to him the iniquities that oblige Him to cast off His people, and no longer to act towards them on principles of government established by Himself, as with a people whom He acknowledged. It is, on God's part, a setting forth of Israel's conduct as the occasion of the rupture of their relations with Him. At the same time, certain new principles of conduct are revealed. I speak of part of the prophecy which relates to Israel; for there are also sundry judgments upon the Gentiles, and a description of the future state of the land, as well as of the temple—a state which the prophet was to communicate to Israel in case they should repent.

Chapter 3. The Lord testifies that Israel is even more hardened than any of the heathen nations. The people are "impudent and hard-hearted." It needed that Ezekiel should have his forehead made as hard as adamant to speak the word to them which he had to declare, saying, "Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." The prophet is carried away by the power of the Spirit into the midst of the captives at Tel-abib. Although the house of Israel was hardened, God distinguished a remnant • and in this manner. The prophet was to warn individuals: it was to this work he was appointed. If his word was received, he who hearkened should be spared. Ezekiel should be responsible for the fulfillment of this duty, but each one should bear the consequences of his own conduct, after he had heard the word. Thus the people are no longer judged as a whole, as was the case when all depended on the public conduct of the nation or of the king. Israel had revolted, but still, he that hearkened to the word should live. God was acting in accordance with His long-suffering grace. The prophet again sees the glory of the Lord by himself, and the Spirit announces to him that he is not to go out among the people, but that he shall be a prisoner in his house, and that God will make his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth; for they were a

rebellious people, and as a people, the warning was not to be given them. God, when he pleased, would open the mouth of the prophet, and he should speak peremptorily to the people, declaring the word of the Lord. Let him hear that would-the Lord would no longer plead in love, as He had done.

Chapter 4. Besides the general judgment that God pronounced upon the condition of Israel, Jerusalem- on whom lay all the iniquity of the people, now come to its height-appears before God whom she had despised. The prophet in representing the siege of Jerusalem, was also to point out the years of iniquity that had led to this judgment. For Israel in general 390. For Judah 40. It is certain that these dates do not refer to the duration of the kingdom of Israel apart from Judah, nor to that of Judah, because the kingdom of Israel only lasted about 264 years, while that of Judah continued about 134 years after the fall of Samaria. It would appear that the period mentioned is reckoned from the separation of the ten tribes under Rehoboam, counting the years of Israel, because from that moment Israel has a separate existence; while Judah was everything during the reign of Solomon which lasted 40 years. After his reign, Judah would be comprised in the general name of Israel, according to Ezekiel's usual habit; although on certain occasions, he distinguishes them, on account of the position of Zedekiah, and of God's future dealings. The reason for using this name of Israel for the whole, is plain enough, namely, that the captivity had placed the whole nation in the same condition, and under one common judgment. The nation was set aside, and a gentile kingdom established. Judah is sometimes distinguished, because there was still a remnant at Jerusalem, judged indeed yet more severely than the mass, but which nevertheless existed, and which will have distinct circumstances in their history until the last days. The same thing happens in the New Testament. In the language of the apostles, the twelve tribes are blended. Nevertheless, as a matter of history, the Jews-that is to say, those of Judah-are always distinct. In the main, Ezekiel prophesied under the same circumstances. Hence, in part, as we have said, his title of " son of man," given also to Daniel, as well as that of " man greatly beloved." The man of power was Nebuchadnezzar. But he who represented the race before God, was an Ezekiel, as the man of desire was a Daniel, a man beloved of God. With respect to the date, it is certain that the 390 years are almost exactly the time of Israel's duration from the death of Solomon to the destruction of the temple. Some persons have wished to reckon the 40 years of Judah from Josiah's Passover down to the same period, supposing that the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar took place four or five years after the captivity of Zedekiah; but this was not the case-it was a month later in the same year. Jehoiakim was carried into captivity in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:12). Zedekiah reigned eleven years (Jer. 52:12). In the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzar-adan burnt the house of the Lord, and reading from verse 6, we see that it was a month after, in the same year. In taking the 40 years of Judah to be the reign of Solomon, it would be saying that Israel had done nothing but sin ever since the establishment of the kingdom, for it was only in the days of Solomon that there was a peaceful reign. David founded the kingdom. The responsibility of his family began with Solomon-2 Sam. 7.

Jerusalem is taken and its population almost entirely destroyed. The dispersed remnant are pursued by the sword, and a portion only of this remnant is spared. There, would be some even of this portion cast into the fire. And this fire should reach to the whole house of Israel. That is to say, the judgment that should fall upon the remnant who do not perish in the city, should represent the position of all Israel. It is thus that the prophet is constantly led to speak of the whole nation. For as

long as there was a remnant at Jerusalem, the nation had a place on the earth. But when the iniquitous rebellion of Zedekiah had led to the destruction of Jerusalem, this was no longer the case. But this judgment of Jerusalem contains very important elements for the understanding of all this part of the history of the people and of the dealings of God. " This is Jerusalem, saith the Lord God, I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her." And instead of being a testimony in the midst of the nations, so that the house of the Lord should have attracted them, or at least have placed them under responsibility by a true testimony to God who dwelt there; instead of this, her inhabitants had even gone beyond the idolatrous nations in wickedness. Therefore God would execute judgments upon her in the sight of all the nations. A just retribution for her sins. She should also be laid waste and made a reproach among the nations round about her; and (chap. 6), the judgment should not be confined to Jerusalem, it should be executed on all the high places, on all the mountains of Israel. Every city should be desolate, all their idols destroyed, and the people scattered. They should know that the Lord had not threatened them in vain with His judgments. The fire should reach those that were afar off as well as those that were in the land; and the land should be laid waste, and the worshippers of idols slain around their infamous gods. Nevertheless, God would remember mercy in the midst of judgment; He would spare a little remnant of those who were scattered, and those who should escape should loathe themselves for the abominations they had committed. Thus Jerusalem had been judged as well as the mountains of Israel which were but too notorious for their idols and their high places.

Finally (chap. 7), the whole land of Israel is under the sentence of God, " the four corners of the land." Those who escape the general judgment mourn alone upon the mountains, having forsaken all in despair-having no power for resistance. The worst of the heathen should possess the land. And the ornament of the majesty of the Lord, which He had established in glory, having been profaned by their abominations, should be given up into the hands of strangers to be profaned by them. The secret place of his Holiness should be polluted. Mischief should come upon mischief, and there should be no remedy. The Lord would judge the people according to their deserts.

Solemn judgment was thus pronounced on the whole nation. All is desolate, and with respect to the relations of Israel with God-whether on the part of the people themselves, or by means of the house of David which was responsible to maintain these relations-all was finally lost. Grace may act; but the people and the house of David had totally failed. The name of God had been blasphemed through His people, instead of being glorified. The execution of judgment is now the only testimony rendered Him. The judgment is complete, it has fallen on the four corners of the land, and Israel is no longer a nation.

The seventh chapter closes this first prophecy, which is one of vast importance, as declaring the judgment fully executed upon the people of God on earth.

Chapter 8 begins a new prophecy which comprises several distinct revelations, and extends to the close of chapter 19. From the eighth to the end of the eleventh is connected. Judah still existed at Jerusalem, although many of them had already been carried into captivity with Jehoiakim. It was not till five years later that the temple was destroyed. It is the state of things, at Jerusalem which is judged in these chapters. The elders of Judah presented themselves before the prophet, and the Lord took this opportunity to show him all the enormities that would bring down judgment on the people. In the prophecy of the preceding year, God, by the mouth of the prophet, had threatened

Israel with the giving up of His sanctuary to the profane (7:20-22). Here the Lord exhibits in detail the causes of this judgment. If we compare the history of Jeremiah, and the outward profession that was made, the pretension that the law should not perish from the priest, we shall understand the excessive iniquity of the Jews and their hypocrisy.

The glory of the Lord visits the temple. He takes His place on the side that looked towards the city, and, after having shown the prophet the heinous sins committed there, He gives command to execute the deserved" vengeance, and to spare the remnant who mourned over all these abominations. That which declares morally the state of heart of the wicked, and which made them give loose to their iniquity, is that the absence of the Lord's intervention on account of their sins, had so acted on their unbelief as to make them say, " The Lord hath forsaken the earth and the Lord seeth not." This was obduracy of heart.

In chapter 10, the whole city is given up to be consumed. The glory of the Lord presides over the judgment, and commands it. He stands upon the threshold of His house, which He fills with his glory in judgment, as He had formerly done in blessing. The throne of the Lord was apart.

In chapter 11 God judges the leaders of iniquity, who comforted themselves in the thought that the city was impregnable. they should be brought out from the midst thereof and be judged in the border of Israel. One of these wicked men dies in the presence of the prophet, which brings out the sorrow of his heart and his intercession for Israel. In reply, God distinguishes those in Jerusalem from the captives. As to the latter, God had been a sanctuary to them wherever they were. He would restore them and give them back the land. He would purify them and give them, a new heart. They should be His people, and He would be their God. But as for those who walked after their abominations, their ways should be visited upon them in judgment. The remnant are always distinguished, and individual conduct is the condition of blessing, excepting in establishing the faithful as the people of God at the end.

The glory of the Lord then forsakes the city, and stands upon the Mount of Olives, from which Jesus ascended, and to which he will again descend for Israel's glory. This part of the prophecy ends here.

Chapter 12 announces the flight and the capture of Zedekiah. Chapter 13. Judges the prophets who deceived the people in Jerusalem by their pretended visions. In chapter 14 the elders of Israel come and sit before the prophet. Here God sets distinctly before Israel the new principles on which He would govern them. These elders had put their abominations before their eyes. God Himself will judge them according to their transgressions. As a nation they were all alike. The Lord could only say to them, "Repent ye." The prophets and the people should be punished together. Even if the most excellent of the earth should be found in a land which the Lord judged, they would not hinder the execution of the judgment, they would only save their own lives by their righteousness. Now God was bringing all His judgments upon Jerusalem; nevertheless, a remnant should be spared, and the proofs they would give of their abominations would comfort the prophet with respect to the judgments. In fact, the judgment of God who gives His people up to their enemies, is a burden to the heart of one who loves the people. But when the manner in which the name of God has been dishonored is seen, the necessity of the judgment is understood.

Chapter 15 shows that the vine-utterly useless if it bore no fruit-was fit only for fuel, and to be consumed. Thus should it be with the inhabitants of Jerusalem. A striking picture of this destruction, and of the condition of Jerusalem, which was worth nothing more.

In reading chapter 16 it must be remembered that Jerusalem is the subject, and not Israel. Moreover, it is no question of redemption, but of God's dealings. He has caused to live, He has cleansed, ornamented and anointed, that which was in misery and devoid of beauty. But Jerusalem has used all that the Lord had given her in the service of her idols, and also to purchase the succor and the favor of the Egyptians and the Assyrians. She has had no idea of independence and of standing alone, leaning on the Lord. She should be judged as an adulterous woman. The Lord would bring against her those whom she had sought. Nevertheless, filled with pride, she would hear nothing of Samaria or of Sodom, names which the Lord now uses to humble her. She was even more worthless than those whom she must own for her sisters, in spite of her pride. Jerusalem being thus justly condemned and humbled, God will yet act in full grace towards her, and will re-establish her, remembering His love and His covenant. She will never be restored on the former ground, any more than Samaria or Sodom; and the grace that will be exercised towards her, shall suffice to -bring them back also, namely, the sovereign grace of redemption and pardon, which is by no means the covenant of Jerusalem under the law. With Jerusalem the Lord will also establish a special covenant, and her two sisters shall be given her for daughters. Her mouth shall be shut at the thought of all the grace of God who shall have pardoned her. The fifty-fifth verse is absolute and perpetual. The promise in ver. 60 is on entirely new ground.

Chapter 17 presents the judgment of Zedekiah for despising the oath that Nebuchadnezzar made him take in the name of the Lord. Israel not having been able to stand in integrity before God, the Lord had committed the kingdom to the head of the Gentiles, whom He had raised up. This was His determinate purpose; but He had disposed the heart of Nebuchadnezzar to respect the name of the Lord, and Judah might still have remained the center of religious blessing, and the lamp of David might still, have given light there, although the royalty had been subjected to the head of the Gentiles, until the time should come for the result of the judgment and dealings of God. The covenant between Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah was made on this ground, and the name of the Lord was brought in to confirm it. It was not the Gentile who broke the covenant. Zedekiah added to his other sins that of rendering impossible the existence of a people and a kingdom that belonged to God. The name of the Lord was more despised and trampled under foot by him than by the Gentile king. He intrigues with Egypt to escape from the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar, whom God Himself, in judgment, had set up as supreme. This filled up the measure of iniquity, and brought on the final judgment. But it left room for the sovereignty of God, who would bring down the high tree and exalt the low tree, who would dry up the green tree and make the dry tree to flourish. His grace would take the little forgotten branch of the house of David and raise it up in Israel upon the mountain of His power, where he would cause it to become a goodly cedar, bearing fruit, and sheltering all that would seek the protection of its shadow. All the powers of the earth should know the word and the works of the Lord.

Chapter 18 contains an important principle of the dealings of God, unfolded at that period. God would judge the individual according to his own conduct: the wicked nation was judged as such. Neither was it, in fact, judged for the iniquity of the fathers. The present iniquities of the people made the judgment which their fathers had merited, suitable to their own actions. But now with

respect to His land of Israel, the principle of government laid down in Ex. 34:7, was set aside, and souls belonging individually to the Lord would individually bear the judgment of their own sins. God would pardon the repenting sinner, for He has no pleasure in the sinner's death. The government of Israel on earth is still the subject. Every one shall be judged according to his ways.

Chapter 19 describes the captivity of Jehoiakim, afterward that of Jeconiah, and finally the complete decay of the house of David.

Chapter 20 begins a new prophecy, which, with its subdivisions, continues to the end of 23. It will have been remarked that the general divisions are made by years. The twentieth chapter is important. The preceding chapters had spoken of the sin of Jerusalem. Here the Spirit retraces the sin and especially the idolatry of Israel, that is to say, of the people, as a people, from the time of their sojourn in Egypt. For His own name's sake God had brought them up from thence and given them His statutes and His sabbaths, in token of the covenant between God and the people. But Israel had rebelled against God in the wilderness, and even then He had thought to destroy them. But He had spared them, warning at the same time their children also, who nevertheless followed their fathers' ways. Still, for His name's sake, God withdrew His hand, on account of the heathen in whose sight He had brought the people up from. Egypt. But in the wilderness He had already warned them that He would scatter them among the nations (Lev. 26, Deut. 32) and as they had polluted the sabbaths of the Lord and gone after the idols of their fathers, they should be polluted in their own gifts, and be slaves to the idols they had loved, that they might be made desolate by the Lord. For having been brought into the promised land, they had forsaken the Lord for the high places. He would no longer be inquired of by them, but would rule over them with fury and with an out-stretched arm. He had already in the wilderness threatened the people with dispersion among the heathen; and now having brought them into the land for the glory of His great name, Israel had only dishonored Him. He therefore executes the judgment with which He had threatened them. Israel, always ready to forsake the Lord, would have profited by this to become like the heathen. But God comes in at the end. He keeps the people separate in spite of themselves, and He will gather them out from among the nations and bring them into the wilderness, as when He led them out of Egypt, and there He will cut off the rebels, sparing a remnant, who alone shall enter the land. For it is there that the Lord shall be worshipped by His people, when He shall have gathered them out from all the countries where they have been scattered, and the Lord Himself shall be sanctified in Israel before the heathen. Israel shall know that He is the Lord, when He shall have accomplished all these things according to His promises. They shall loathe themselves, and shall understand that the Lord has wrought for the glory of His name, and not according to their wicked ways. We find some principles here that are important to notice. The people are judged in view of their conduct, from the time of their departure from Egypt; their idolatrous spirit was manifested even in Egypt itself (Amos 5, Acts 7:25, 26). The Lord had indeed spared the people for the glory of His name, but the sin was still there. Israel as a nation is therefore scattered, and then placed anew under the rod of the covenant, and God distinguishes the remnant, and acts for the sure accomplishment in sovereign grace of that which the people were incapable of, as placed under their own responsibility. Israel as a whole, as a nation, is distinguished from Judah which continues in a particular position. With regard to the nation, as such, the rebels are cut off and do not enter the land. In the land two-thirds are cut off at the end (Zech. 13:8, 9). But in this latter case, it is the Jews who were guilty of the rejection and death of Jesus who are judged. Here it is

the dealings of God with the nation-guilty from the time of Egypt; there it is the chastisement of the enemies and murderers of Christ. Grace is shown in both cases to the remnant.

From verse 45, it is another prophecy, which contains the application of the threats in the preceding prophecy, to the circumstances through which it will be fulfilled, by the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar as unfolded in chap. 21. The Lord had unsheathed and sharpened his sword to return it no more to its sheath; it was prepared for the slaughter. The prophet sees Nebuchadnezzar at the head of the two roads to Jerusalem and to Ammon. Jerusalem would treat that which he was doing as a false divination, but she would be overtaken by the judgment of the Lord. Their conduct had brought their whole sinful course to mind, and the profane Zedekiah who had filled up the iniquity by despising the oath which he had taken in the Lord's name, should come to his end when the iniquity was judged for he had filled up its measure. Moreover, it was now a definitive judgment, and not a chastisement which would allow the unsheathed sword to return to its scabbard. The Lord overturned everything until He should come, to whom in right it all belonged, and to whom the kingdom should be given; that is to say, until Christ. Ammon likewise should be destroyed.

The more these prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah are considered, the more striking do they appear. First of all in establishing the very important fact with respect to the government of the world, namely, that the throne of God has been removed from the earth, and the government of the world entrusted to man, under the form of an empire among the Gentiles. In the second place, the veil is also withdrawn as to the government of God in Israel. This test, to which man has been subjected, in order to see if he were capable of being blessed, has only proved the entire vanity of his nature, his rebellion, the folly of his will, so that he is radically evil. Even from Egypt, it was a spirit of rebellion, idolatry, and unbelief, which preferred anything in the world, an idol,

Or the Assyrian, to the Lord the true God. Constant in their sin, neither deliverance nor judgment, neither blessing nor experience of their folly, changed the heart of the people or the propensity of their nature. The idolatry that began in Egypt, and their contempt of the word of the Lord, were not altered by their enjoyment of the promises, but characterized this people until their rejection of the Lord. But on God's part we see a patience that never belies itself, the most tender care, the most touching appeals, everything that could tend to bring their hearts back to the Lord. Interventions in grace, to lift them out of their misery, and bless them -when in a state of faithfulness produced by this grace-through the means of such or such a king. Rising up early to send them prophets, until there was no more remedy! But they gave themselves up to evil; and, as shown by Ezekiel and Stephen, the Spirit of God returns to the first manifestations of their heart, of which all that followed was but the proof and the expression. And the judgment is executed on account of that which the people have been from the beginning.

After the full manifestation of that which the people were, God changes His plan of government, and reserves for sovereign grace the re-establishment of Israel according to His promises which He would fulfill by His means who could maintain blessing by His power, and govern the people in peace.

Chapter 22 recapitulates the sin of Jerusalem, of her prophets, her priests, and her princes. The eye of God sought for some one to stand in the gap before and found none. His indignation should consume them. What force the prophecies give to those words of the Lord, " How often would I

have gathered thy children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

In chapter 23 the Lord justifies Himself for judging Jerusalem, by the iniquity and unfaithfulness of her walk. Her whoredom with the Gentiles brought her early course to mind. The same conduct showed the same nature. She has ended as she began, because at heart she was the same. Samaria's lot should be hers.

The latter is called a tent or tabernacle, and Jerusalem " My tabernacle in her."

In chapter 24 definitive judgment is pronounced against Jerusalem, who was not even ashamed of her sins. The day that Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to Jerusalem, the wife of the prophet dies, and although she was the dearest object of his affections, Ezekiel was not to mourn. Under the figure of his wife's death, he is instructed to refrain his heart before the judgment of the Lord. Once executed, the judgment should be as it were openly addressed to the remnant. Jerusalem should be set as a caldron on the fire to melt and consume the whole. God had purged her, but she was not purged, and now He causes His fury to rest upon her.

Chapter 25 has an especial character. The nations that surrounded and that were within the territory of Israel, rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem and of the sanctuary. Therefore God would execute judgment upon them. Ammon, Moab, Edom, and the Philistines, are the objects of this prophecy. The testimony of God against Edom is yet more developed in Obadiah. Thus should these nations know, that although Jerusalem had not been a faithful witness, the Lord alone is God. Chapters 24 and 25 go together. Chapter 25 anticipates (although the date is similar) the events which gave rise to the manifestations of hatred that are the occasion of the judgment pronounced. But this spirit had shown itself from the commencement of the desolations of Judah and Jerusalem. Their introduction here is easily to be understood, for these nations were to share the same fate, and are included in this judgment, because they are all upon Israel's territory. Another remarkable element, found also in other prophecies on Edom, and giving a wider meaning to the one we are considering, is that it declares the judgment which shall fall on Edom in the end, shall be executed by the hand of Israel. Compare Obadiah, 17, 18, with the 14th verse of this chapter.

Although in a certain sense upon Israel's territory, Tire has another character, and is the subject of a separate prophecy (chapters 26-28), because it represents the world and its riches, in contrast with Israel as the people of God; and rejoices-not like the others from personal hatred, but because (having opposite interests) the destruction of that which restrained it, gave free course to its natural selfishness. It is worthy of remark in these prophecies, how God lays open all the thoughts of man with respect to His people and that which they have been towards Him. In chapter 27 Tire is judged for its to the people and the city of God. It is overthrown as a worldly system, and all that formed its glory disappears before the breath of the Lord. In chapter 28 it is the prince and the king of Tire that are judged for their pride. Verses 1-11, set before us the prince of this world's glory as a man, exalting himself and seeking to present himself as a God, having acquired riches and glory by his wisdom. Verses 11-19, while continuing to speak of Tire, go, I think, much farther, and disclose, though darkly, the fall and the ways of Satan, become through our sin the Prince and God of this world. The prince of Tire represents Tire and the spirit of Tire. This is much more personal. I do not doubt that, historically, it is Tire itself; verses 16-19 prove it. But, I repeat, the mind of the Spirit goes much farther. The world and its kings are presented as the garden of the

Lord, on account of the advantages they enjoy. (The outward government of God is in question, which till then had recognized the different nations around Israel.) This however applies more especially to Tiro, which was situated in the territory of Israel, in Emmanuel's land, and which in the person of Hiram had been allied with Solomon, and had even helped to build the temple. Its guilt was proportionate. It is the world in relation with God; and if the Prince of Tiro represents this state of things as being the world, and a world that has been highly exalted in its capabilities by this position -an exaltation of which it boasts in deifying itself-the king represents the position itself in which, under this aspect, the world has been placed, and the forsaking of which gives it the character of apostasy. It is this character which gives occasion for the declaration of the enemy's apostasy, contained in these verses. He had been where the plants of God flourished, he had been covered with precious stones, that is to say, with all the variety of beauty and perfection, in which the light of God is reflected and transformed, when manifested in, and with respect to, creation. Here the varied reflection of these perfections had been in the creature-a creature was the means of their manifestation. It was not light, properly so called. (God is light-Christ is the light here below, and so far as He lives in us, we are light in Him.) It was the effect of light, acting in the creature, like a sun-beam in a prism. It is a development of His beauty which is not its essential perfection, but which proceeds from it.

These are the features of the king of Tiro's character, or that of the enemy of God, the prince of this world. He is the anointed cherub-he is covered with precious stones-he has been in Eden the paradise of God, upon the mountain of God--he walked in the midst of the stones of fire-he was perfect in his ways until iniquity was found in him. He is cast out of the mountain of God on account of his iniquities; his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and he corrupted himself. We find that which as to the creature is the most exalted; he acts in the judicial government of God according to the intelligence of God. (This is the character of the anointed cherub); he is clothed with the moral beauty that reflects the character of God as light. He is recognized among the plants of God, in which God displayed His wisdom and His power in creation, according to His good pleasure, as Creator. He had been there also where the authority of God was exercised-on the mountain of God. He walked where the moral perfections of God were displayed in their glory, a glory before which evil could not stand-" the stones of fire." His ways had been perfect. But all these advantages were the occasion of his fall, and characterized it. For the privileges we enjoy always characterize our fall. Whence have we fallen? is the question; for it is the having failed there, when we possessed it, that degrades our condition. Moreover, it is not an outward temptation, as in man's case; a circumstance which did not take away his guilt, but which modified its character. " Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty." He exalted himself against God, and he was cast out as profane from the mountain of God. His independent spirit in security was humbled when he was cast to the ground; his nakedness is manifested to all. His folly shall in the end be apparent to all.

The judgment of Sidon is added. And then, all hope having been taken from Israel, when the judgment of the nation is accomplished, God gathers them and causes them to dwell in their land in peace forever.

Chapters 29-32 contain the judgment of Egypt. Egypt sought, in the self-will of man, to take the place which God had in fact given to Nebuchadnezzar. All must submit. The mighty empire of Assyria had already fallen. Pharaoh, whatever his pretensions and his ambition might be, was no

better. We see this judgment of the Assyrian, the chief of all the nations as to his power, in chap. 31:10, 11; where the "mighty one of the heathen" is distinctly brought out, falling before this decree of God. Pharaoh would be consoled by seeing all the great ones of the earth overthrown like himself. Already fallen like the uncircumcised, i.e., like people who were not owned of God, nor consequently upheld by Him, all must give place to this new power in the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. That which characterized Egypt was the pride of nature, which would follow its own will and owned no God (chap. 29:9). Such a principle shall no longer be the confidence of God's people (ver. 16). Egypt should have her place, but should no longer rule. The judgment of Egypt should be the occasion of Israel's blessing. This reaches to the end. In the destruction of the Assyrian, God had shown that He would not allow a nation to exalt itself in this manner. The will of man in Pharaoh did not alter his judgment. In Nebuchadnezzar, as we have seen, a new principle was introduced by God himself into the world.

Observe, that in chapter 32:27, Meshech and Tubal are distinguished from the rest of the nations. This prophecy concerning Egypt has particular importance. It is composed of three distinct prophecies. The first (chap. 29 and 30) is subdivided; the second chap. 31; the third chap. 32. But this last extends to the end of chapter 39, and embraces several subjects in connection with the fate of Israel in the last days. Observe that chap. 29:17-21, is a prophecy of a very different date, introduced here on account of its relation to that which precedes it in the same chapter. Chapter 30:20-26, is also a distinct prophecy as to its date.

Until the twenty-fifth chapter, we principally found moral arguments with respect to the state of Israel; from thence to the end of chap. 32 it is rather the execution of the judgment. But the prophecy that announces it is remarkable in more than one respect. Nebuchadnezzar is looked at as executing the judgment of God, whose servant he is for the purpose of executing judgment on Jerusalem, now become pre-eminently the seat of iniquity, although the sanctuary of God. At the same time He sets His land free by these very judgments, from all the nations that wrongfully possessed it. He brings to naught the haughty power of man in which Israel had trusted, i.e. Egypt, which shall never rise again as a ruling nation. But it was the day of all nations. The result of these judgments, whether on rebellious Jerusalem or on the nations, should be at the same time the re-establishment of Israel according to the promise, and by the power of God in grace. The snares which had led them into evil were taken away. See chap. 27:24-26; 24:16-21. Thus, although these events have had their historical accomplishment by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the ways of God in view of the re-establishment of Israel have been manifested, as far as regards the judgments to be executed. Judgments through which all the nations, as well as Israel, which was their center, disappear from the scene, as nations. The Spirit, while recounting the execution of the judgments that were to fall on Asshur, Elam, and Meshech, gives details of those that had invaded the land or been snares to Israel. So that the prophetic recital of these very judgments, contains in itself the assured hope, granted to Israel by the efficacious grace of the Lord. I cannot doubt that all this prophecy of judgment relates - in a perspective brought nigh by the energy of the Spirit - to the events of the last days which will be the complete fulfillment of these purposes and intentions of God.

In chap. 30:3, we see that it is universal.

I have already quoted the passages which show that for Israel it is the deliverance from their former snares. The pretensions of man are overthrown (chap. 29:3-9). The spirit of dominion (chap. 31:10-14). The nothingness of the glory of man is shown at the end of chap. 31, and of each judgment in chap. 32. We have already seen that the fate of Meshech is mentioned separately, perhaps in view of that which will happen to it in the last days, and which is announced further on (chap. 39:5).

It is important to remark one point in this series of prophecies, which commences with the judgment of Jerusalem, the center of the former system of nations. They are executed with the object of making them all know the Lord: only in Israel's case there is besides this, the understanding and the special verification of prophecy. See chap. 24:24-27, Israel; 25:5, 7-11, Ammon and Moab; 17 especial vengeance on the Philistines; 26, Terebinth; 28:22, Zidon; 29:21, Egypt; as also 30:26, and 32:15. With respect to Edom, (chap. 25:14), it is only said that Edom shall know the vengeance of the Lord by means of Israel; a further proof that in certain respects this prophecy extends to the last days. It is, then, in general, the manifestation of the Lord's power, so as to make Him known to all by the judgments which He executed; already partially realized in the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar, but fully accomplished by-and-by in favor of Israel. It will be remarked that in the twelfth verse of chap. 35 when Edom is again judged, it is only said, "Thou shalt know that I the Lord have heard all thy blasphemies." But in verses 4 and 9, it is said of Edom, "Thou shalt know," or, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord." So that this knowledge of the Lord is the result of the judgment itself, for when all the earth shall rejoice, Edom shall be made desolate. It will be through judgment that all the nations shall know that the Lord is God. But when the judgment has been executed, and all the earth shall rejoice in blessing, Edom will only have the judgment. Compare Obadiah. Edom undergoes judgment by means of the mighty among the nations, but Israel himself shall strike the final blow. We may see the two means of making the Lord known, in the case of Israel (chap. 24:24-27; 27:26, 27; 36:11). In the other cases it is by judgment.

We have yet to observe that in the case of Terebinth, commercial glory, and in the case of Egypt, governmental pride founded on power, are absolutely judged, cast down, and destroyed without remedy (chap. 26:21; 27:36; 31:18.) Compare chap. 32:32. This has been literally fulfilled with respect to the continental Terebinth, and the Egypt of the Pharaohs. We have seen a total destruction of Edom announced by the Lord. That which characterized Edom was its implacable hatred to the people of God.

In chap. 33, in view of these judgments, which put His people on entirely new ground (for they were judged as Lo-ammi, with the nations, and this is why the prophecy can look on to the last days, although the judgments had been but partial), in view then of these judgments, God establishes an entirely new principle, namely, individual conduct as the ground of the dealings of God, in contrast with the consequences of national sin (ver. 10, 11). Thus the door was still fully open to individual repentance, the repentance being founded on a testimony that applied individually, whatever the national judgment might be. The end to which the judgment applies is in contrast with the effect to be produced by it, and that in order to confirm the principle. Faith would not be shown now by reckoning on the promises to Israel, or on the intervention of God in behalf of His people as in possession of His promises, for the people were judged; and the very thing that would have been faith, had it been the time of the promises, and that hereafter also will be faith, is

but hardness of heart in the time of judgment (ver. 24). Compare Isa. 51:2 (a passage often entirely misapplied). The little remnant may trust in a God who had called out one man alone and had multiplied him; but such a thought, when God was cutting off the multitude of the people because of their iniquities, would only cause the judgment to be more keenly felt. In this way (and not by a blessing which presumption would snatch from God), they should know that the Lord was God.

The end of Jeremiah has given us an account of the fulfillment of Ezekiel's words; but all these judgments give room for the intervention of God in behalf of His people, by means of sovereign grace accomplished in the Messiah. Still the evil lay in the shepherds, that is, in the kings and princes of Israel, who were not true shepherds; indeed there were none true, and the flock, diseased, scattered and afflicted, and ill-treated, were a prey to their enemies. The shepherds devoured them, and neither protected nor cared for them. But the Lord now points it out in order to say that He himself would seek out His poor sheep, and would judge between sheep and sheep, and would deliver them from the mouth of those that devoured them, and that He would feed them upon the mountains of Israel, and in fat pastures. He would raise up the true and only shepherd, David, i.e., the well-beloved Messiah. The Lord should be their God, and his servant David their prince. The covenant of peace should be re-established; full and secure blessing should be the abiding portion of the people of God, the house of Israel. There should be no more famine in their land, and the nations should no more devour them. Observe here the way in which the Lord Himself delivers His sheep, without calling Himself their shepherd, and then raises up a plant of renown, the true David, as their shepherd.

In chap. 35 God decides the controversy between Edom and Israel, and condemns mount Seir to perpetual desolation, because of the inveterate hatred of that people to Israel; and instead of delivering up Israel to Edom in the day that He chastises His people, it is Edom that shall bear the punishment of this hatred, when the whole earth shall rejoice. When God chastises His people, the world thinks to possess everything, whereas that chastisement is but the precursor of the world's judgment.

Chapter 36 continues the same subject with reference to the blessing of Israel. The nations insulted Israel as a land whose ancient high places were their prey, and -as the spies had said-a land: that devoured its inhabitants. God takes occasion from, this to show that He favors His people, and the Lord declares that He will restore peace and prosperity to the land and take away their reproach. Israel had defiled the land, and profaned the name of the Lord, and the Lord had scattered them among the heathen. And even in this His name would be profaned through their vileness, because the heathen

would say, " These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of His land." But the Lord would intervene, and sanctify His great name before the heathen, by bringing His people back from among them, and cleansing them from all their filthiness; taking away the hardness of their hearts, giving them His Spirit, causing them to walk in His statutes, planting them in the land which He had given to their fathers, owning them as His people, and being Himself their God. The reproach that the land devoured its inhabitants would then be evidently without foundation. God would multiply earthly blessings to His people. The Lord's work should be evident to all men.

It is principally to this passage (although not exclusively) that the Lord Jesus alludes in John 3, telling Nicodemus that He had spoken of earthly things, and that, as a master of Israel, he ought to have understood that this renewing of heart was necessary to the blessing of Israel in the earth. The truth of this, with regard to a Jew, ought not to surprise him, since it was a work of sovereignty in whosoever should be born of God; and if Nicodemus did not understand the declarations of the prophets, with respect to the necessity of regeneration for Israel's enjoyment of earthly things, how could he understand if Jesus spoke to him of heavenly things, for which the death of the Son of Man was absolutely necessary.

We may remark, that this prophet speaks of the dealings of God with respect to Israel as a nation responsible to the Lord, and never says anything of the first coming of Christ, or of Israel's responsibility with regard to Him. This took place under the dominion of the Gentiles. Here Nebuchadnezzar is but a rod in the hand of the Lord, and the times of the Gentiles are not considered. This is the reason why we find the judgment of the nations by Nebuchadnezzar connected with the events of the last days. The rejection of Christ by the Jews is therefore not mentioned here. It is Israel before the Lord. This remark is important, in order to understand Ezekiel (see preceding note).

Chapter 37 reveals the definitive blessing of the people as a fact, without entering into any details of the events that terminate in this blessing. The dry bones of Israel, of the nation as a whole, are gathered together by the power of God. God accomplishes this work by His Spirit; but by His Spirit acting in power on His people to produce certain effects, rather than in giving spiritual life; although it is not to be doubted that those who are blessed among the Jews will be spiritually quickened. The result of this intervention of God is that the dispersed of Israel, hitherto divided into two people, are gathered together in the earth, re-united under of t: Head, as one nation. It is the resurrection of the nation, which was really dead and buried. But God opens their graves, and places them again in their land, restored to life, as a nation. The fact of their division before this operation of God, is recognized. But the result of the operation is Israel in their unity as a people. One king should reign over them. This, under God's hand, is the result of all their iniquity, and of the devices of the enemies who had carried them into captivity. David (i.e. Christ) should be their king. They should be thoroughly cleansed by God Himself. They should walk in His statutes and His judgments, and dwell forever in their land. The sanctuary of God should be in their midst for evermore; His tabernacle, His dwelling-place, should be among them, He their God and they His people. The heathen should know that the Lord sanctified Israel, when His sanctuary should be there forever. It is the full national blessing of Israel from the Lord Jehovah.

Chapter 40. Gog, not fearing the Lord, seeks to take possession of the land. He has no thought that the Lord is there. His pride blinds him. It is very important to remark that Ezekiel speaks neither of the first nor the second coming of Christ, nor of the circumstances of the Jews in connection with the empire of the Gentiles. The latter only appear as instruments performing the will of God. The prophet brings the Lord and Israel into the scene. He presents Christ indeed, but as being there already, and in the character of David. The Lord raises up for them a plant of renown. His coming is not the question. The judgments of the Lord upon the earth make Him known to the nations and to Israel. To the latter, His blessings also. The nations learn through these that Israel went into captivity because of their sins, and not because their God was like the idols of the heathen. But in all the ways of God thus presented, not only is the coming of Christ not

mentioned, but it has even no place. It belongs to another series of thoughts and revelations of the Spirit of God, another order of events. It is well also to observe that the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth chapters, and the two following ones taken together, are not consecutive, but each of the two first by itself, and the two last, taken together as a whole, treat of distinct subjects, each subject is complete, and presenting the introduction of Israel's blessing in connection with the subject treated, and closing with the assurance that it will be final and perpetual. The subject of all these prophecies is the land and the blessings of God upon the land of Israel. This land which belonged to the Lord, He would not have defiled. He drives out Israel from it in judgment, and when He has cleansed the people, He makes the nations, as well as Israel, understand His ways in this respect. He acts in full grace towards His people. He makes it known that they are His people, that He will be sanctified, and that He is sanctified in their midst.

I think then that Gog is the end of all the dealings of God with respect to Israel, and that God brings up this haughty power, in order to manifest on earth by a final judgment, His dealings with Israel and with the Gentiles, and to plant His blessing, His sanctuary, and His glory in the midst of Israel, none of the people being henceforth left in exile afar from their land.

Besides the numerous verses in which it is said "And they shall know that I am the Lord," the following passages may be referred to, which will show the leading thought in those declarations and judgments of God, namely, the manifestation of His government on the earth; a government making manifest the true character of God, and securing its demonstration in the world, in spite of the unfaithfulness of His people; and that, in grace as well as in holiness, 36:19-23, 36; 39:7, 23, 24, 28. With respect to Israel, 34:30; to the enemy, 25:12, 37:28.

That which I have just said of Gog, supposes that all the events which relate to the coming of the Son of Man, are omitted in the writings of this prophet-which I believe to be the case. The book treats only of the governmental ways of God on the earth, of the Lord in Israel. The power designated by "Gog," is that of the north, outside of the territory of the beasts in Dan. I doubt not that the right translation would be "Prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal," as many learned men have remarked. Cush and Phut were on the Euphrates, as well as on the Nile, Persia is known. Togarmah is the north-west of Asia Minor. The audaciousness of this king causes the wrath of the Lord to break forth.

I will add, in order to facilitate the establishment of the connection of this with other passages, that I doubt not Jesus will reign in the character of David, before assuming that of Solomon. He suffered as David driven away by the jealousy of Saul. The remnant will pass through this in principle. This is the key to the book of Psalms. He will reign as David, Israel being blessed and accepted, but all their enemies not yet destroyed. And finally he will reign as Solomon, that is to say, as Prince of Peace. Many passages, such as Mic. 5, several chapters in Zechariah, Jer. 51:20, 21. Ez. 25:14, speak of this time, in which Israel already reconciled and acknowledged and in peace within, shall be the instruments for executing the Lord's judgments without. Compare Isa. 11:10-14.

All then that relates to the destruction of the empires which are the subject of Daniel's prophecies, has no place in the prophecies of Ezekiel; nor that which takes place in order to put Israel again in relation with God; nor the consequences to the Jews of their rejection of Christ. These subjects will be found elsewhere, as in Daniel, Zechariah, and more generally in Isaiah. Here, God makes

Himself known in Israel. Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, falls upon the mountains of Israel, and the Lord makes Himself known in the eyes of many nations, 38:21-23. The judgment shall reach the land of Gog, and the isles (39:6). The name of the Lord shall be known in Israel, and the heathen shall know that the Lord, the Holy One, is in Israel (ver. 7). And the glory of the Lord, being thus manifested in the midst of the nations, Israel from this day forth shall know that it is the Lord Himself who is their God, and the nations shall know that it was the iniquity of Israel that brought judgment upon them, and not that the Lord had failed either in power or in the stability of His counsels (ver. 22, 24). In a word, the Lord and His government should be fully known in Israel and by means of this people in the world, and from that time God would no more hide His face from them, His Spirit should be poured out upon His people. The verses 25-29 recapitulate the dealings of God towards them for the establishment of His government, and to make Himself known among them.

The remaining part of the prophecy is the establishment of His sanctuary in the midst of His people. The reader will perceive that we find in these last chapters a revelation of the same kind as that given to Moses for the tabernacle, and to David for the temple, only that in this case the details are preserved in the writings given to the people by inspiration, as a testimony for the time to come and to conscience in all times. God takes an interest in His people. He will re-establish His sanctuary among men. Meantime, the testimony of this has been given to the people to bring them under the responsibility which this good-will of God towards them involved. For the prophet was commanded to tell the house of Israel all that he had seen; and he did so. When the dimensions of the different parts of the house have been given, the glory of the Lord fills the house, in the vision, as happened historically at the dedication of the tabernacle and of the temple.

Chapter 43:7, proclaims that the house, which is the throne and the footstool of the Lord, should no more be defiled by profane things. The prophet was then to declare that if Israel renounced their unfaithfulness, the Lord would return to dwell there. Thus the people are placed at all times under this responsibility. The prophet was to skew the house to Israel that they might repent, and if they repented he was to explain it to them in detail. And it is this which takes place at the end. The ordinances of the house were to be shown them if they humbled themselves; and in view of this, the prophet announces all that was to be done for the cleansing and the consecration of the altar, in order that the regular service might be performed.

Chapter 44 makes known the fact that the Lord is returned to His house, and the memorial of His having done so is preserved, in that the door by which He entered is to remain forever shut. The prince alone (for God will raise up a prince in Israel), is to enter through it-to sit before the Lord. We have seen that this prophet always contemplates Israel on their own ground, as an earthly people in relation with the throne of God on the earth. Compare Zech. 12.7,8, 10. Finally, God maintains the holiness of His house against all strangers, and even against the Levites who had forsaken it. The family of Zadok is established in the priesthood, and directions are given to keep it from all profanation.

Chapter 45. The portion of the priests in the land is assigned them-close to that of the sanctuary. The portion of the Levites was to adjoin that of the priests, and then came the possession of the city and its suburbs. That which remained of the breadth of the land was for the prince and for the inheritance of his children, in order that the people should no longer be oppressed. All the rest of

the land was for the people. Provision is also made for the daily offerings, and for those of the Sabbath. The other appointed offerings were to be made by the prince.

Some details require one or two remarks. The cleansing of the sanctuary commences the year. It is no longer an atonement at the end of seven months to take away the defilements that have been accumulating. The year opens with an already accomplished cleansing. Afterward, in order that all may have communion with the sufferings of the Paschal Lamb, an offering is made on the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and every one that is simple (ver. 20). During the feast, they offered seven bullocks instead of two. The character of worship will be perfect. The sense of Christ's acceptance as the burnt-offering will be perfect in that day. The feast of Pentecost is omitted—a circumstance of great significance, for this feast characterizes our present position. Not that the Spirit will not be given in the world to come, when Christ shall establish his kingdom. But this gift is not that which characterizes that period as it does the present time. We have observed that the prophet sees everything in a Jewish point of view. Thus the remembrance of redemption, and the enjoyment of rest, celebrated at the feast of the Tabernacles, will characterize the position of the Jews before God. The two feasts are celebrated in the recognition of the full value of the burnt offering presented to God. Another circumstance which distinguishes the worship of this millennial day, is that the two feasts which are types of that period are marked out in the worship, the Sabbath and the new moon-restand re-establishment! Israel appearing anew in the world. The inner gate on the side of the east was open on that day, and the prince worshipped at the very threshold of the gate, and the people before the gate. The other days it was shut. They stood thus before the Lord, in the consciousness of the rest which God had given to Israel and of His grace in again manifesting His people in the light. Nevertheless, it still remains true that neither the people nor the prince entered within. Those who are the most blessed on the earth in that day of blessing will never have that access into the Lord's presence which we have by the Spirit, through the vail. Pentecost belongs to, and links itself with, the rending of the vail; and gives us to walk in all liberty in the light, as God Himself is in the light, having entered into the holy place by the new and living way which He has consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, His flesh.

The prince entered by the outer-door on the side of the east, and he went out by the same door. In the solemn feasts, the people went in by the north gate and came out by the south gate, and the prince in their midst. When he went in alone, as a voluntary worshipper, he entered and retired again by the eastern gate. These ordinances, while giving remarkable honor to the prince, in connection with the glory of God who gave him his place among the people, equally secured that which follows (ver. 16-18), of the brotherly and benevolent relations between him and the people of God, and took away all opportunity of oppression.

The two last chapters do not require any lengthened remarks. The waters that issue from the sanctuary represent the life-giving power that proceeds from the throne of God, flowing through His temple, and healing the Dead Sea, the abiding token of judgment. The waters abound in fish, the trees that grow beside them are filled with fruit, the marshes alone remain under the curse, they are "given to salt." The blessing of that day is real and abundant, but not complete. The land is divided between the tribes in a new manner, by straight lines drawn from east to west. The portion for the sanctuary and for the city, or the 25,000 square reeds are situated next to the seventh tribe, beginning from the north. The name of the city thenceforth shall be, "The Lord is

there." Compare, for the waters that flow from the temple, Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:8; passages that refer to the same period.

It appears that the two places pointed out to the fishermen as a boundary, were the two extremities of the Dead Sea. (We may compare Gen. 14:8; 2 Chron. 20 and Isa. 15:8). The main features in the whole passage are the re-establishment of Israel, but on new grounds, and blessing, analogous to that of paradise (an image borrowed from this prophecy in the Apocalypse); but, after all, with the reserve that this blessing did not absolutely remove all evil, as will be the case in the eternal ages.

There is a powerful and abiding source of blessing which greatly surmounts the evil, and almost effaces it; nevertheless, it is not entirely taken away. Still the name of the city, of the seat of power, that which characterizes it, is "The Lord is there!" The Lord, that great King, the Creator of all things, and the Head of His people Israel.

The question of old was, Which is thy God? Now it is the question, Is the Holy Ghost really among you ?

## Faith: Its Traits and Difficulties

---

When we weigh the importance of the words-" Whatever is not of faith is sin," it becomes a matter of deep anxiety how, ever and anon, we may walk simply under the action of that principle.

"The fall" was perpetrated when Adam ceased to have faith in God. When he surrendered faith he resigned the key-stone to the vast arch of all his blessings. To abstract it from man was Satan's great aim. When once unbelief in God was engendered, all other sentiments were qualified and deteriorated. What sentiment could you value from one in whom you had lost confidence? Adam lost confidence in God; and this poison, with electric precision, has reached every sentiment of the soul. Man is fallen, and his nature is the impregnation of unbelief. Be under the guidance of nature, and you must be at a distance from God. Be led by faith, that is, simple confidence in God, and you must be antagonistic to the natural mind. Faith is founded on a right estimate of God. The highest conceptions of nature are imperfect, because they are formed in ignorance and distrust of God. There could be no restoration of man to God without faith. Works and sentiments offered with distrust, however great and distinguished, must ever be questionable and inappreciable. To argue this seems superfluous; for if a position is lost by the surrender of any quality, how can. that position (not to speak of a higher), be regained without it, unless one would have a position with an inferior capacity for enjoying it, which, in this instance, would be monstrous to suppose, because it would be asserting that man could endure nearness to God without confidence in Him, and nothing could be more miserable. Consequently, the first breathing of regeneration is faith, and where faith is, there regeneration and new birth must be, for it is not in the nature of man -it is fallen! it is the repository of unbelief! When faith in a new power is at work, Jesus is the beginner as well as finisher of faith. If you will act, then, in the power of the new life, act in faith; for whatever is not of faith is sin, that is, it is the product of the flesh.

With these preliminary remarks, let us consider some of "the traits and difficulties of faith;" for it is plain, if we, who have been accustomed to walk according to the dictates of one principle, and that a natural one, are now called to adhere to a totally opposite one, and not natural to us-it is plain, I repeat, that we not only require uncommon shrewdness to apprehend the traits of the new, but also great prowess and steadiness in combating the difficulties which this new course must expose us to. Let us first inquire-To what limit faith can be reckoned on? It is always offered adequate to the revelation, that is, it is sufficient to sustain the servant of God: conformable to the nature of the dispensation, whatever it may be. This, I judge, should be a trait of the last importance, so that wherever. I saw an assertion of faith not warranted by the dispensation, I should then hesitate to approve. I think it will be granted that we have not faith, nor is faith offered to us, such as the millennial saints shall enjoy, that is, their faith will be applicable (though all of God) to a different state of things from that with us: for instance, we could not believe that Satan is bound; they will, and act accordingly. Again, I should take exception on this ground to those who profess to carry on war in the name of the Lord. I cannot see such faith applicable to this dispensation, the revelation is against it; and they who argue for it have to refer to the dispensation under the law, which has been superseded by the dispensation under grace, in which we now are.

Hence they are deceived, because they are unmindful that faith is only in conformity to the dispensation. I believe also benevolent associations, as well as any philanthropy which meets with public sanction and countenance, being of earthly recognition, is not consonant with the faith of this dispensation, which is heavenly, and therefore secretly and unseemly diffusing its influence and services. Though it would be possible to dwell longer on this trait, yet enough is said to convince us, that if this is not observed in limine, all our course may be outside the path of faith, even though to men it may have a better appearance.

Faith is confined within the limits of the dispensation, for faith is confiding in God as He reveals Himself, and the dispensation is the manner of the revelation. We now pass on to consider whether faith is so supplied as to be applicable to every contingency. We must acknowledge that it is offered to the limit of the dispensation, but how is it offered? Is it offered as the abilities of life, or as the chain of powers which are not co-existent, but may be independent of one another,-or in other words that because a person has a certain power of faith (I speak not now of gifts, as such, but faith in practice), which suits him in a certain contingency that does not prove that he may reckon on another power of faith, when in a new and another contingency-or again more simply-is faith the action of life, or is it a special creation for special circumstances? If faith is the action of life, that is, the principle on which it acts, it is evident that, no matter what the circumstance that may arise, if life acts, it acts conformably to the dispensation, manifesting confidence of God, and giving testimony to Him therein, though never called on in a like manner before; and the soul having this conviction moves onward placidly because the resources are sufficient and they are vested. If, on the other hand, faith is to be specially created or bestowed as special need arises, then the soul is not without anxiety as to whether the power will be given or not, confidence is disturbed, uncertainty is damaging us at the moment when immovable reliance in possession of necessary power is of all importance; and makes the decree that " whatever is not of faith is sin," not to rest on our responsibility to use a power committed to us, but on divine favor, irrespective of our responsibility, which, to say the least, is not the way of God's dealing with us in grace. But what is the Apostle's argument to the Hebrews? Is it not that they ought to endure; that they are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of faith (see Greek) unto the saving of the soul-that is, they have a fund of faith which is able to supply them with strength in any emergency-and hence he enumerates many of the qualities of faith, component parts of the faith of which we are partakers, and then sums up (since the time would fail him to trace all its powers) with this exhortation: " Let us cast aside every weight and the sin which cloth so easily beset us [unbelief], and run with patience the race set before us [that is conformable to the dispensation] looking unto Jesus the beginner and finisher of faith"-not our faith, but faith in the abstract. Now the answer to this question is by no means immaterial. I fully admit faith is the gift of God, but it greatly concerns me whether the life I am sustained in by the Holy Ghost is one, which as flowing from Jesus Christ risen, has in itself inherently all the necessary abilities of faith for me in my race: if it has, I feel bound to acknowledge that God has not left me without resource, and that I have no right when difficulty arises, when my dispensational position, that is, my testimony, is challenged, to say, " I can't proceed, I have not faith." Could I say I had not life-if I act in life it is faith-if I act without life it is sin. I may not, I admit, be in the energy of faith, but then I ought not to act denying it, as is generally the case when we use the plea of not having faith-in fact I am in nature; and in running the race set before me, I am not able (as exhorted) to cast aside unbelief. The Lord says He prayed that Peter's faith might not fail; that the energy of new life might triumph in his soul; not that

a special power should be administered at the moment, but a true exertion of that already existing.

This is a great comfort to know that there is vested in me, through Christ, a power to meet every shade of circumstance which affects my race here. I am not looking out for it, I am depending on that within, which is of Christ; and here a grievous difficulty arises to the action of faith. If I am not clear as to my vested resources, through the life of Christ, I am looking for some manifestation on which to depend. It is not God simply that is my dependance, which the life of Christ in the Spirit leads to, it is the cry of unbelief-" Let us see a sign." When our confidence in God rests on anything but Christ, who reveals God, there is no permanency. It may serve for an occasion for God meeting our weakness, but it is not power in life. Whenever faith falls short of reckoning on God, because from knowledge of Him, then faith has lost virtue or energy, which the apostle lays down as the addition to faith. When we seek a sign, or judge by appearances, it is not a knowledge of God sustains us, but an evidence of His power controlling our senses and helping us to conviction. I doubt much if the faith so formed is attended with much vigor to ourselves; certain it is, that it does not seal strength to our souls. Jonathan, confirmed by a sign, successfully assaults the Philistines. It served him for the occasion, God meeting him in his weakness; but when, a little after, called upon to assert the honor of Israel against the proud defier of their armies and their God, he is not to be had, not from indifference, for we find none owned more largely or eagerly the victor and the victor's deeds. He was not confirmed in God as David, who could say" My God, who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and the bear, will deliver me out of thine hand." Faith can speak of God when there are no signs, and signs neither deter nor are regarded. Faith does honor unto God: it says," All my springs are in Thee." Thus the Lord Jesus glorified the Father. In the wilderness and on the cross He judged not God by the circumstances around- not by what He saw, but by what He knew of God. All earthly blessings- God's witnesses of Himself to man-were overlooked by Adam in the hour of his unbelief. The blessed Son had not even one, but a terrible reverse, in the great declaration of His faith. He judged God' by Himself intrinsically, and not by aught else; and this was Job's lesson. -Satan thought, and well he might, that Job's judgment of God was founded on the memorials of His kindness and mercy which surrounded him. Surely we may see, then, the slow and painful process by which the soul arrives to count God above every gift, and is established in Him and naught else; for this the sequel of Job's history teaches. When God fills his soul he rises above personal considerations, and prays for his friends. So Satan's accusation is proved false; for Job, in the most abject condition, is cast upon God, and so cast that his own miseries are lost sight of in his interest for others, and then his captivity in essence, as, in fact, ends. When we wear the yoke of Jesus and learn of Him, we find rest unto our souls.

It is one of the greatest practical difficulties that we have to contend with-seeking a sign. It is saving the soul the deep and holy exercise of faith, which is repugnant to nature; and the more dangerous, because it works in the mind of the awakened, and may, therefore, be often mistaken for true zeal. It is superstition which is the action of fear; faith, on the other hand, is confidence, and, in a word, without it, " it is impossible to please God." Every sentiment, however commendable, consequently falls behind faith, and how much more any which would pre-occupy its place. But I may be told, evidences are not against faith, they are only sought for to confirm faith, The answer is simple-Faith wants no evidence. It is itself an evidence. Faith rests on the word of God. I cannot ask your faith for aught else; but if you have faith in God, the moment His word is brought before you, you can accept it and start from it, because it is God's, in whom you

believe. But the fact is an evidence or sign is generally to confirm one in an opinion which is asserted to be founded on the word of God, and which to convince me of, something additional is required. This will not be allowed; but is it not so? Take the case of Irvingism. The originators of that heresy did not doubt as they asserted the truth of their propositions, for they said, " Scripture was on their side"; but scripture was not deemed sufficient to convince me, and therefore they pretended that God would corroborate them by miraculous signs. This was plainly saying that miraculous signs would have greater weight with me than the word of God, in whom my soul was resting with confidence, Was it not, in fact, making the word of God of none effect? No miracle yet had the power of the word of God. Nothing, in my mind, is a greater proof of the soul's dubitancy of the word of God than the impatience we sometimes feel to see it verified:-and here

I come to a very interesting trait of faith. If I have faith in God touching any particular fact or hope, the more my faith is, the more patient am I, because the more I am convinced of the certainty, the more present comfort have I from it, because I am as sure of it as if I possessed it. "He that believeth shall not make haste."

When a promise engages the soul more than the Lord, the eagerness to obtain its benefits is sure to be a snare. The promise becomes thus, not as it should be, an exposition of the love of God, but a guarantee for a certain benefit-all the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, and faith finds them in Him and never separates them from Him, because He is the fountain of faith. The moment the promise (though it declares the goodness of God to me) is my hope, I am dwelling more on its fulfillment than on the Lord. Is the Lord all my expectation and hope without it? Would the fulfillment of the promise glorify Him, or is it to satisfy a want in my own soul? If it is the latter, that, which should have linked my soul with God and counted (because trusting in Him) "things that are not as though they be" is taken up by nature, and while believing in the promise I have not faith in God, and my haste will, to my confusion, reveal it. Thus Eve called her first-born Cain, as the man gotten from the Lord, in allusion to the promise that her seed should bruise the serpent's head; and, as if filled with the hope, Cain undertakes the task in which he so fatally and signally failed. If Eve trusted in God while she rejoiced in the promise, she would have interpreted events with divine accuracy-the son of the fallen could not repair what the innocent could not retain. The holiness of God would have rejected such a thought, and if she believed God and not the promise apart from God, she had not made haste. Abraham believed the promise of God because he believed in God, and that though great was the promise, he knew God was able to fulfill it. The belief of the promise only vouched his belief in God. Esteem the promise above God, and you are sure to be in error respecting it, for God alone can guide you in discovering and ascertaining that which is of Him. Let the mind swerve from Him and there is nothing to check its folly and wandering. Abraham, for a moment, was engrossed with the promise which he believed in because he believed in God, and so was the proof of his confidence in God, but when anxious for its fulfillment, he cried "O, that Ishmael might live before thee!" it is evident he lost both promise and faith. This error is very common and fatal in its effects, a great difficulty to faith-we are in trouble of some kind or other-the Lord is our comforter, and instructs us by his unchanging purposes (as revealed in His word), how we may escape. A promise is laid hold of. I don't say always, for the soul abiding in the Lord and guided by His eye will discover the way to escape without searching for a distinct promise to rest on: yet the promises are given to assure the soul and guide it to a happy issue from all its afflictions, only let the soul not regard it more than

elucidating the love of God, and therefore but the handmaid to it; for thus the promises will be a snare to expose the selfishness of our hearts. For instance, if one comforts himself that he will not suffer from poverty and want because it is written, "He who gave His Son will He not with Him freely give us all things?" and because of this promise, is idle and improvident, it is evident that he is dwelling more on the benefits accruing to him from the promise than on God, whom such a promise ought to have magnified in his soul, and if so would have instructed him in the ways of God, would have taught him the righteous judgment of God upon man on this earth, that by the "sweat of his brow he should eat bread," and this, the hourly expectation of the coming of Christ was neither to interrupt nor mitigate, as we read in second of Thessalonians. We are not to content ourselves with believing the promises. Faith and hope must be in God. If we believe in God we shall believe in the promise. "He being not weak in faith" was the secret of Abraham's power to confidently lay hold on the mighty promise. Jesus Christ ought to be to my soul the guarantee and accomplishment of every promise of God. If faith rests in Him, the promise is but an exponent, and never valued apart from Him. This error

as to promises is constantly committed respecting precepts. If we are acting from faith in God touching a precept, we should always maintain God supremely to the precept. There would be no apparent upholding of the latter, for a precept is only a divine mode for the soul to increase in the knowledge and service of God. God is paramount, and this always faith asserts. The closest following of precepts is not faith-faith always reaches unto God and we may rest satisfied when we find a man arguing for the maintenance of a precept more than for the honor of God, that faith is not lively then, nor the soul looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. Faith has to do with God, and reckons assuredly that He will give grace and faithfulness to adhere to His precepts, but the eye must be on Him seeking His glory, and not even the strictest obedience of a precept.

Like a promise, a precept may be observed apart from God, and then it is a snare to me. "Obey the powers that be," but if not held in faith that is acknowledging God, Peter would never have said, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to obey God rather than man, judge ye." Again, "We ought to give our lives for the brethren," and yet it is enjoined, "If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maranatha." Finally, if faith leads us, we are drawing it from Christ the author of it. We hold neither promise nor precept apart from Him, we know Him, we can touch Him, and the promise and the precept we are assured He will fulfill and confirm in His own time, and we do not make haste," we are not uncertain, and consequently not nervously anxious to see the issue. Faith appropriates to us the fruition of each, and so we are patient as if in full possession.

But to the man of faith perhaps no difficulty is so great as the proper use of means, and it is the resolving practically this difficulty that an important trait of genuine faith is best seen. Faith always recognizes God-Jesus is the author of it, for He only has done so--we draw from Him. And in Him we learn that in all his course down here, He always found God's creational or political, arrangements suited to Him-if not apparently so, faith declared them so. A fig-tree with only leaves on it, affords no hospitality to the hungry Lord of glory, and yet it was a needed symbol to disclose to his disciples the condition of Israel, and his faith accepted it and pronounced its destruction. The persecution of the storm on the sea-the clamor of devils-no boat to cross the lake, etc., these and so many more were all, though apparently antagonistic to the author of faith, but right and useful. He knew God was equal to any emergency, and only seeking his glory in it, He must find God's succor therein, for God is ever true to His glory. No circumstance-no appearance to the contrary

could alter his full repose and confidence in God; but this was not all. Every circumstance he encountered in his path suited him. The thought was never admitted, much less acted on, that the present means were inadequate to the exigency, whatever it might be. They were reckoned as of God, and faith made them sufficient. Faith never overlooks any-the least of God's arrangements. It does not disparage his arrangements, but so rests on Him, that through Him they are found full and abundant for our need.

Faith so finds its region with God that demonstration is not of its seeking, though perception of its power is. It can connect itself with the smallest gift of God, and recognizing God there, find it equal to any demand. Christ fed the five thousand by five loaves. Philip considered that it would require "two hundred pennyworth, that every one might take a little"-human calculation! Another communicates all the provision God had supplied them with. He who trusted in God at all times accepts with thankfulness the mercies provided, proves that God is able to make them sufficient for all their need, and more, for there remained twelve baskets full. This is a remarkable trait of faith, but surrounded with many difficulties. Nature is always, like Philip, calculating the means required, and despising the present as inadequate - silently reproaching God for not providing more. Faith is required to assert, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me;" and therefore we are to be content with such things as we have. When the widow cried unto the prophet, "The creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen;" what answers Elisha? At first, as if embarrassed by this touching appeal, he replies, "What can I do for thee? Tell me" (he continues as if he had discovered the mode of relief), "what hast thou in the house?" God does not allow us to be placed in circumstances which bear no evidence of His providing mercies. They may be very small and scanty, yet faith appropriates them, and encouraging the soul in God, proclaims, "the Lord is my helper," not outside His own mercies, but through them. The widow here borrows from abroad from her neighbors empty vessels. The testimony in asking the loan of an empty vessel was that she who was known to be in such abject circumstances had something to put into them. She might doubtless have been taunted that her poverty was notorious, and that it was folly to borrow empty vessels. She had only boldly to say, "The Lord is my helper!" Now this is an example of the simple action of faith in the use of means. Nature would have despised the "pot of oil," and sought unto the king and those in high estate, or to the lender for relief; but this is not God's way. God only wants to bring Himself into the scene, for He can touchingly appeal to His people, "What could have been done for my vineyard which I have not done for it?" Clearer still we see this trait and its difficulties in the case of David, when preparing to encounter the Philistine. Saul's armor was offered him (he even had not sought it), it was legitimate for him to accept. He did accept-was accoutred with it, and then renounced it, for he had not proved it. Now nature would loudly demand of him to retain it; how many arguments could be used for the prudence of doing so. The man of faith does not trust in means, and yet he does not despise means; and this is just his difficulty as it was here to David. He had not proved the armor; it is renounced, but the stones of the brook, yea the smooth ones, too, with a sling are assumed in its place. These latter were the means naturally at his disposal. They were what a youthful shepherd had easily within his reach, and he knew God did not require to alter his position and circumstances to vanquish Goliath. As he was, God would use him, and not as the world might make him. He despised none of the mercies of God distinctly vouchsafed to him. The occurrence of trial did not require new and greater circumstances. God was with him in his own, and this faith could reckon on and know His succor through them. To require a new position because of the

presence of a trial is but to say that God is not equal to it in my present one. If I am trusting in God in my present one, and know Him, He is able to use it for my deliverance. It is not position or circumstances-it is God; but I don't improve my position or means because simply I am there of God's providence, and through them God will deliver me if faithful to Him.

Another important trait of faith, and very valuable in our course, is that it does not forecast the mode or manner of God's succor and deliverance. Human reasoning said, " Let him now come down from the cross and we will believe." He who trusted, though forsaken, waited till the angel rolled away the stone from the sepulcher. When the soul reposes in God-for this is faith, the faith of the Son of God-the mode and manner of the succor or deliverance, is not our object. We do not want to be distinguished by it. We want to know and feel that it is God's act, and how it is to be effected is not the subject of faith. When we prescribe a plan to God, faith is forfeited and our wanderings are manifold. We read of one who "went away in a rage," because the mode did not suit his ideas. Faith places us at the disposal of God, not God at ours. Faith says -" Here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him." God achieves for us as it pleaseth Him. If I prescribe a certain mode I am not waiting upon God. I want something to signalize myself, as the sons of Zebedee asking the Lord to command fire from heaven.

Faith leaves the mode of succor or deliverance to God. It varies according to the claim of God's glory at the time. Thus God succored Israel at Jericho and also at Ai, and yet how differently at each! The man of faith gloried in God in one as much as in the other, though, to human judgment, one only was a magnificent display of God's intervention in their behalf. The failure of Israel demanded this, but faith rejoiced in God, though an ambush was the means. If we recognized and felt our failure personally and corporately, we should neither presume nor expect very open manifestations of God's favor in our behalf. But these manifestations are not the objects of faith; God only is; and the manifestations neither add to nor detract from the strength and enjoyment faith always has in God; for Jesus, we do well to remind our souls, is the beginner and finishes of it, and hence by it we can reckon (however great has been our failure) on Him to sustain us in the race set before us. Faith assures us that He will sustain us; the plan and the way we happily leave to Himself. Gideon was as contented, through faith, with three hundred as with thirty-two thousand. Deborah sang as sweetly at the subdual of Israel's foes by the hand of Jael the Kenite, as if the armies of Israel had achieved it. The fact, and that it is of God, satisfies faith.

The man who was a welcome guest in the third heaven was here let down by the wall in a basket, and escaped his enemies' hands. Did this mode of deliverance shake his faith in God? See this faithful servant combating all the reasonings of unbelief in Acts 27. At first his advice is disregarded; the word of the man of God is set aside, because the owner and master (who, from interested motives, was not likely to give a deceitful opinion) did not agree with him. Nor did the majority. Nay more, the south wind and providential circumstances, corroborate their opinion; but the man of faith can afford to be patient: and when the south wind changes to Euroclydon, and all hope that they should be saved was taken away, he stands forth, increasing in confidence in God. As human resources fail, he openly and largely draws upon God; and yet there was nothing magnificent in the mode of deliverance. It is commanded " that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." Faith proclaimed that there should be no loss of any man's life among them: the mode of safety remained with God,

and the believing soul honored God for it, while the unbeliever had nothing to glory in. Nay a little after, a viper fastens on the hand of God's instrument in this deliverance, and he is stigmatized as a murderer; but he confided in God, and shook off the venomous reptile into the fire and felt no harm. Time and patience in well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; but Paul knew the hand of God, though man did not see it. We are constantly wanting man should see that God is on our behalf, and this is to magnify ourselves and not God. If we really desired our faith to increase, it is in circumstances when sight could glean nothing that it would best do so: he who trusts in God only wants Him, and counts it all joy when he falls into divers trials. To human judgment, trials indicate the desertion of God. If everything here was right there would be no trials, for every one would yield easily to the will of God; nothing or no one would prevent us. And if the world was of God, and not lying in the wicked one, His people might expect to be set up and gifted with it; and, moreover, it is no uncommon snare nor a new one to suppose that gain is Godliness, and, therefore, to measure God's favor by temporal mercies.

Perhaps no thought has tended more to displace the church from the humble sorrowing path which the disciples of Christ must ever traverse. If earthly acquisitions are an evidence to me of God's love, surely I must desire apart from human ambition to secure them. But the world lieth in the wicked one, and the Spirit of Christ in His disciple is struggling not only against it and its course and the power which influences it, but also against a disposition kindred to it in himself-yet we have not to conquer an unconquered foe, but we have to encounter that we may know the nature and the power of the victory. The ways of God are a trial to nature; but trial affords an opportunity to the Spirit of Christ to make known to us the strength of Christ; and therefore, we can take pleasure in infirmities, etc. We do not immediately see how this is. When Paul suffered from a thorn in the flesh and contrasted this with the elevation of glory to which grace had raised him, he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. Though he had learned glory and the wondrous things there, too wondrous for man, yet he had not learned as soon to take pleasure in infirmities, etc. In fact it is here that discipleship is perfected-taking up the cross daily is requisite, though every visible affection and interest has already been surrendered, and here faith alone can sustain. For patience we always want faith. We cannot endure but as we are cast on God, and this the Apostle argues at such length and power in Heb. 10 to 12. After we have done the will of God we have need of patience, but who are they who do not draw back? Those who have faith to the saving of the soul; and hence we, when instructed in the qualities comprehended in faith, are exhorted to cast aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the beginner and the finisher of faith. The leaven of Herod and the Pharisees is not to trust God when there is no visible indication of His succor. Of this the Lord warned His disciples when they had not in the ship more than one loaf; they blame themselves for their thoughtlessness and imprudence. He only chides them for want of faith. This want is always at the root of our difficulties. It is the sin which doth so easily beset us, and from it how often are our prayers unanswered. Unless we ask in faith we waver, and we are double-minded; and let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord. The prayer of faith is not a mere expression of our necessities unto God. In a moment we may have faith, but generally there is so much self-confidence and dependence in other resources that until we see an end to these barriers faith has not scope, and there is no answer. We are taught this in the example of the man who goes unto his friend at midnight saying, " Lend me three loaves." The friend at first refuses because of all the inconvenience it would entail; but he yields to importunity

what he does not to mere friendship. He rises and gives him as many as he needs. The moral of this is not that the Lord answers and succors because of our importunity. But importunity discloses not only to God but to ourselves, that we have no other resource but Him, or we should not continue importuning. We very often mention in our prayers matters which we scarcely remember having alluded to; and if our desires are granted we are distressed at the small conviction we have that it is in answer to our prayers. Hence how necessary is the exercise this importunity expresses! In fact, we shall not go on praying earnestly and continuously for anything unless the soul has got some confidence in God respecting it. There may be a superstitious recital of our necessities and desires before God; but this seldom lasts, and is not evidently of faith. If the soul is growing in confidence in God respecting anything, or has confidence-if it can ask in faith and reckon on His succor-I assuredly believe that except in communion with Him, this confidence is not retained; and to express it when out of communion and in the flesh is but revealing the riddle to the Philistines to their own destruction and our confusion. God's dealings with us are not communicable. There are some things impossible for a man to utter; and the really believing soul that has known what it is to trust God, magnifies Him and not His gifts to it.

## The Feast of Tabernacles

---

Distinctive is it to this feast, that it has no antitype. There were three great feasts-the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; in each of these all the males were to present themselves at Jerusalem. Christ is our Passover; the Holy Ghost is our Pentecost; the feast of Tabernacles is not yet come, and nothing in the history of the people of God as yet answers to it. This feast occurred after the harvest and the vintage: The harvest is the end of the age, the ingathering and judgments of God which distinguish and sever; the vintage is the vintage of the wrath of God on the vine of the earth, whose grapes are ripe for the treading in the winepress of the wrath of God.

The feast of Tabernacles cannot be kept save when Israel, after having traversed the desert, is in the land, in commemoration of which they were wont to pass seven days in tabernacles. Herein we have the joy of the people of God.; it is not merely the joy in our hearts of salvation. but God, whose will it is to have His people around Him, attracts them by the love of Christ (the Passover), gathers them by the Spirit (Pentecost), judges the evil and delivers His people, in order to put them into possession of the joy of that promise (Tabernacles). Deut. 16 gives us these three great feasts, with a difference, however, as to their moral object.

There is, in a certain sense, joy in not being a slave in the land Of Egypt; but then there is, at the same time, the bread of affliction. Precious is it when the means by which God will deliver us are before us; but inseparable therefrom is the thought, that we have been slaves in the land of Egypt. The leavened bread, which has to be put aside, recalls the prohibition; we are in haste; there is deliverance, but after partaking we need to hasten home. The Pentecost goes a little further.

The leading thought in it is joy and grace due to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow; and the name of the Lord is the center of the joy of the people who surround Him. By their very joy, the people are seen to be no longer slaves; this answers to that which is said to us about walking in the Spirit.

In the feast of Tabernacles there is no longer need even to be on one's guard. 'Tis pure joy, and the commandment is "to rejoice." When God has done all for the gathering of His people-when the people are in the enjoyment of all-when Satan, bound, can no longer hinder our joy-the joy will be without mixture, without fear, and without end.

At the Passover there is the bread of affliction; at the Pentecost there is still need to be on one's guard in this world of sin, to observe the commandments; but when we shall be gathered to God we shall be in possession of the promises, and the only commandment is to rejoice.

The child of God is still in the position to remember the bondage of Egypt, and to watch that he may walk in the Spirit. He sighs for the time of the full blessing, and that so much the more, because we more fully understand the things which God has prepared for those that love Him.

When changed, or raised from the dead, the more completely our hearts range abroad, the more will God be glorified. Now joy exposes us to the danger of a fall, if we do not remember our

deliverance from Egypt, and if we are not watchful to walk in the Spirit, whilst we are still in the flesh. Rev. 14:15-20 speaks of the harvest and of the vintage of the earth; Isa. 63 speaks of the wine-press of the wrath of God; Matt. 13 shows that the harvest is the end of the age: there is not merely judgment but gathering, separation of the tares from the good grain. The vintage takes place when that which remains is decidedly bad, and is trodden in the press of the wrath and indignation of God. It is after this that the fullness of the joy of the people of God takes place, when the evil which prevents us enjoying the goodness of God has been destroyed. Music and singing come after the judgments, and the deliverance of the earth laid waste by sin.

The trumpets in the Apocalypse are the trumpets of woe; the seventh in the Apocalypse is followed by songs of triumph. The feast of Tabernacles is divided into two parts-glory terrestrial, and glory celestial. It will become Israel to remember that it has been in the desert. As for us, it is not sin which keeps us in the wilderness, it is Christ-it is our portion as being partakers of the sufferings and of the death of Christ. If death comes there will be naught but joy, if we walk faithfully in the wilderness. Such is our position. And it is on this account that there is added to the feast of Tabernacles an eighth day, commencement of a new week, into which we must enter by resurrection. The joy was obligatory; the great day of the feast all were there. It is something over and above the seven days which God gives to the earth, and it enters into a state of things into which resurrection alone introduces. John gives us a commentary on this. It was not yet time for Christ to show Himself to the world; that will take place when He shall appear at the true feast of Tabernacles. His brethren represent the unbelieving Jews. Later He goes up to the feast privately; but the great day, the eighth day, He shows Himself openly, figure of what was to take place by means of His death and resurrection.

He proclaims the river of living water for those who shall believe-He proclaims grace to whosoever thirsts. It was concerning the reception of the Holy Ghost, who is the earnest of that heavenly glory into which Jesus was about to enter, of which He spake.

The Holy Spirit is the witness in our hearts of that glory of man-of the Son of Man-seal in our souls, earnest of the inheritance which is given to us while waiting for the full manifestation of the glory. It is not merely the Holy Spirit as the principle of Life that is given in John 3, but a river which overflows on every side of us, because we have the knowledge of that joy and of that glory which belongs to us. This it is which makes us sigh after the time when such things shall be ours, and when we shall enjoy, in liberty, all the fruits of grace.

To the Christian, death is ceasing from death, dying is ceasing to die. Here death surrounds me on every side, in every form, and I am dying daily; but this ceases to me at death. Then I leave all that into which death and dying can enter, and I go there, where all is life. True, I shall not have my resurrection-body then, but absent from the body and present with the Lord, I shall be there where life is, and where life fills all according to its measure.

## Fragment: Love of the Brethren

---

The saints in the old dispensation were not knit together into a body: there might be 7,000 hidden ones thus: now, though there may be a hidden number, yet the proper characteristic of a Christian is, love of the brethren.

## Fragment: Perfected Then

---

All the spiritual feelings which we now have will find their satisfactory answer in that day. Everything begun by the Spirit here will be perfected then. Our blessed Master shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied; and then will our desires meet their end.

## **Fragment: the Grace of God Sustaining Our Walk**

---

It is not to be expected, that those who have not faith to follow them, should adopt principles which are those of faith. Neither can it be expected at the present time that controversy will be the means of forcing souls to enter upon the path of faith. It is the time now, by the grace of God, to walk in the narrow way and not to talk about it. The circumstances which surround us, and the progress of evil, demand, what God alone can give, a firm and active walk in that path in which faith alone will find the means of abiding; for events press in upon us every day more and more closely.

## Fragment: Two Aspects of the Lord's Coming

---

There are two great aspects of the Lord's coming, one as to blessing to the church, the other as to judgment on the ungodly; this, in principle, answers to the resurrection-the saints are led to a thing of hope to them, not the alarm of judgment. The Lord is coming to gather the saints-and this in the first resurrection. He is also coming to judge the quick and the dead-this is alarming; this is not the hope of the saint; this is distinct; the quick will be judged consequent on the revelation of the man of sin; this settles for the saint's relief. He will first be with the gathered ones; the dead will be judged consequent on the 1000 years; this then he is not looking for. When the virgins went out, it was to get blessing; it was to meet the bridegroom-this was their hope; nothing is said as to coming judgment as to immediate expectation; the church will see the Lord in glory, and be with Him, they know not when; the world will be judged, it knows not when-because it has no knowledge as to the man of sin, which would be its intelligence that the day could not be until his revelation, for the world will be deceived by him. This appears to be the character of teaching in 2 Thess. 2. "We beseech you, brethren, by the coming (παρουσιας) of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him (this the great hope of the church), that ye be not soon shaken (απο του νοους), from this mind (i.e., from the immediate hope of positive blessing) or be troubled... as that the day of Christ is present;" that is, neither be shaken from the hope of being gathered, or be troubled, as to the judgment of the day; because there must be the apostasy before the judgment of the day. Thus, as it would hinder the hope, and trouble the saints, to have confused notions of the resurrection, so would it as to the Lord's coming. The Lord will not be revealed in judgment until the revelation of the man of sin. The mystery of this is working now; but the revelation is hindered by a hindering thing, to be taken out of the way in the Lord's time. When this is taken out of the way, then the man of sin will be revealed; and when he has run his course, then the Lord will come and judge him; therefore, let no one trouble you as to the day of the Lord being present now; it cannot be, because this apostasy has not been exhibited, but let no one shake you from the presence of the Lord, and our gathering together unto Him. Hold, and look for this: thus they would be wrong to disconnect (ταχεως) the notions of that time with their gathering together; or to introduce immediate expectation (ενεστηκεν) with reference to manifestation for judgment.-From the MSS. of T. T. Ed.

## Fragments

---

The Holy Ghost does not put an adjective before the name of Jesus. We say amongst ourselves, and rightly enough, blessed Jesus! precious Jesus! but the Holy Ghost never. Thus stands the name; and there is a dignity, A fullness, which commands silence. God only can span its preciousness.

Passing from death unto life is the beginning of all holy affections. A child does not love its parents before it is born; but it does love long before it can express it.

The simple history of a Christian is-He was once in death, judgment hanging over him, but not yet executed; but he has heard Christ's voice, 'has owned the Father as sending Him, and is passed from death unto life.

The believer is never brought into question about salvation, for the person who would have to judge him is the very one who has given him eternal life. He cannot call His own work into question.

The resurrection of damnation is in order that the Son, who has been dishonored, may be honored-every knee shall bow to Him-but we do not need judgment to honor Him.

The ground of settled peace for the soul in the midst of a world of sin and sorrow, is to say to my soul that God is true, when He says that He so loved the world, etc.,

### Fragments

The definition of a Christian is-We have known and believed the love which God has to us.

Satan will tell a great deal of truth (not the truth-that is sufficient for me), provided he can deceive by it.

The nearer a man is to God externally, if his soul has not living fellowship with Him the worse he is. Judas is worse than the Pharisees-the Pharisees than the Samaritans. Hence the profession of Christianity, where there is not its living power, is the very place where the most terrible evil is to be looked for.

The flesh never can trust God for eternal life-it may take up any form of godliness.

The history of Judas is first that he was a prudent man, loved money-carried the bag. Then Satan suggests to him a way of gratifying his lusts-now hypocrisy comes in-he goes on with his religion after he has concluded to betray Christ, and with the sop Satan enters into him; now he is hardened even against the relentings of nature.

### Fragments

Till the righteousness was accomplished in Christ, it could not be declared -." life and incorruption were brought to light through the gospel"-and this because the question of responsibility is settled

in Christ. First, the atonement made: then, He becomes the source of life. In this He acts by the Spirit. The whole source of life of the saints, is now to be based upon the knowledge of God's righteousness thus declared-hence, of old, they went on their way rejoicing immediately on conversion. Here also is our standard of conduct and fruits.

The counsels of God about Christ, were not merely that he should be the Head of creation, and that the tabernacle of God should be with men, but to set Him up as the glorified man: and the bride with him. Thus Christ brings glory to God, even out of man's sin. Souls are now associated with Him, on the basis of the glory according to which he was raised from the dead: all this in the midst of a sinful world: and in bodies in which the spirit of God in us can sympathize with the groaning through sin. Our very weakness thus being made, in one sense, an advantage. And this is the Church.

#### Fragments

Providence does not guide us-it guides things, and thereby controls us: very precious as regards the hand of God over us; but this is not the guidance of the Spirit.

The white stone and the name written on it, serve to point to a secret communion with Christ, in which none other partakes. Christ knows all His sheep by name, though He makes a flock of sheep.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD AND CO-OPERATION. When a man's own will is at work, it leads to diversity: when the Holy Ghost is at work, He leads, it may be, different individuals in very diverse ways, yet all in harmony; and the glory of Christ is the object.

The great secret of guidance is to have the eye really to God.

Protestantism has made no advance beyond the Council of Trent, as concerns the person, and presence, and work of the Holy Ghost.

RECEIVING BLESSING FROM ABOVE, THROUGH EACH OTHER. Thus the dew of Hermon might hang on each leaf, thereby ministering to the refreshment of the whole tree, whilst the sap was circulating within the branches.

Christ is not only the root and offspring of David, the source and the fulfiller of all promises in connection with the earth; He is also the bright and morning star; giving us the dawn. of the heavenly day.

#### Fragments

We all have characters: Christ had none: every single faculty in Him was a perfect model, demonstrating God in everything. We may find a display of character in Paul. He repented of having written an inspired epistle. God took care to use him, but he had the sympathies and failings of a fallen man. Hence the need of a "thorn in the flesh"

Perhaps the highest character of spiritual guidance, is not such as "do not go into Bithynia," but by communion with the intelligence of God (see Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9). Much of the guidance of the Divine life is like this:-If a person has been much in communion with God in prayer, previously, he would often be able to decide upon a matter instantly, by a sort of spiritual intelligence; whereas, if

this had not been the case, he might be greatly at a loss, and have to pray much about it before he got light upon his path.

A person walking with God, and self dead, would be positively guided-but motives often bias us unconsciously.

#### Fragments

It is so far as we are made sensible of our own nothingness that we shall be fitted to be vessels of power. Christ had all power given when he had gone down to death. Divine life is death to the creature. It is only when having passed through death that the Church can be the depository of power-morally so now-fully hereafter.

The first thing which I find in conversion is that God is love, and this is the highest thing of all.

In John 17 the Church is brought near enough to hear what the Son is saying to the Father.

#### Fragments

I reject all inference from Scripture as authoritative. It may be true, may lead to something else; but I cannot believe it. I can only believe what is revealed: not what is deduced from that revelation.

When the Holy Ghost comes, he breaks off ' everything of nature, and gives altogether another set of associations.

Eating of the "hidden manna." The omer of Manna has been laid up before God, a memorial of all that He, the bread of life, has been to us in this way of grace: our food here in the wilderness: and God has kept a portion of this, never to be lost, for our food there.

#### Fragments

Cain's sin is not only against God, whom he had not seen, but also against his brother whom he had seen.

There is a thread of promise running through all God's dealings with man, to uphold the faith of those who were mourning under man's failure.

The terrible condition of the world is, that it "seeth no more" Him in whom was the acting out of all the promises.

#### Fragments

The food which hope gets from the Scriptures is not of the kind which it would have been had we been the authors of the book. We should have stuffed it out with bloated descriptions of the glory. On the contrary, the Scriptures lead us to the knowledge of what God is in Himself, and then to trust Him, with just a few hints and glimpses of what He will do.

Jesus is Lord for us, and over us. He is Lord over all for us; all the keys are laid upon him, and we are practically to know Him as our Lord.

In the 22nd of Revelations we find a connection between the glory of God and the things standing in the light of it. The Bride having the glory of God, the whole scene savors of a glory not poured

out from God, but the glory of God Himself. God only knows the glory or the love of God, but the Spirit teaches us to understand something of it.

In our Lord's description of His Father's house, there is no word about glory-nothing of jasper and sardine stone-but just that there is room there, and His personal desire to have us there with Him. It will be His Father's house-our Father's house-and we, brought as adopted sons into the enjoyment of all the affections of God towards His Son.

### Fragments

The Epistle of Jude intimates the denial of the holiness of grace; Galatians the denial of the sufficiency of faith.

In the details of life, the troubles may be between us and God, or God between us and the troubles. In the one case, we break down like Job; in the other, we endure afflictions according to the power of God.

The question of old was, Where is thy God? Now it is the question, Is the Holy Ghost really among you?

The Church came down plump when once the Apostles were gone. Witness the nonsense of the fathers. God permitted a marked line of distinction between the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all man's thoughts about them.

The great question for which Israel was the witness upon earth, was the unity of God; but the Church is let into all the relationships of the Trinity. It would have been quite impossible for a Jew to understand " the Father loveth the Son." It is because the Holy Ghost, as a divine Person, was personally in the Church, that there could be fellowship with the Father and the Son.

"The Change Of The Heavens And Of The Earth Which Now Are."

The following remarks are intended as a reply to the questions put under the above title at page 350 of the fourth volume of "The Present Testimony"; and my object in communicating them is not merely to respond to the call of a brother, as the Lord may enable me, but also in the hope that the important and interesting subject thus opened by him may receive additions from that which the Lord has taught to others of His children, if so be that He in His grace may lead them to minister to their brethren of that which they have received of Him.

The principal query of the writer of the above-named article seems to be, " Is the change of the heavens not synchronous with that of the earth; or is the new Jerusalem let down into the present heavens-Satan and his powers being chased first out of them, and then out of the earth?" My answer would be in the affirmative to both parts of this question; but, as a mere answer would be of little value, unless established by appeal to the word of God, I desire, in dependance on the Holy Spirit's teaching, to give a reason for that which I may advance. In thus presenting the grounds of my own views in reference to this subject, I propose to consider somewhat in detail Rev. xxi. 1, to xxii. 5, and observe, that though I have confidence that the Lord has taught me, I would nevertheless walk humbly before Him, and wait upon Him for grace, that, if mistaken on any point, I may judge aright the statements of those whom he may make use of to correct my wanderings and lead me into His truth. Well has your correspondent said, " It is better to be an

enquirer, than hastily or wrongly to decide, without the full support of the word of the Lord."

Commencing with Rev. 21:9, to 22:5, the description of the HOLY JERUSALEM, as being first in order of fulfillment, we have, in verses 24 to 27 (chap. 21), a glimpse, as it were, of the earth when it will stand in connection with this holy city: "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it; and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there; and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it; and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Having thus glanced at the condition of the earth, let us consider the Holy Jerusalem. After the statement, "having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (21:11), the first thing described is THE "WALL." "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (ver. 12); "and the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (v. 14). Further particulars are given as to the position of the gates, and of the street, by which I understand the interior of the city. "The street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (ver. 21), whilst the "Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are declared to be the Temple of it" (ver. 22). Of the glorious things here spoken of this City of God, I can say but little, feeling my own ignorance; but on the face of this description is stamped stability,-purity,-preciousness. In the wall, and the gates of it, I see the antitype of the Aaronic priesthood, connected as it was, dispensationally, with the ministry of angels (see Heb. 2; Acts 7:53). The Aaronic priesthood, for the time when it was exercised, constituted the way to God; and the ministry of angels in connection with it, the medium both of blessing and judgment, as proceeding from God to man. The wall set forth in vision that which in the millennial period of the earth's history will take the place of the latter; whilst the gates set forth that which will take the place of the former. The wall of a city excludes evil, that is, evil from without (earthly cities have evil within; but in the Holy Jerusalem there will be none). The gates of a city also exclude evil; but, in addition, admit that which has "right to enter;"-the office of the sons of Aaron, in their dispensation, like the gates of a city, met both these requirements, they stood between the worshipper and God; they were to preserve the sanctity of the tabernacle and of the holy things-the "patterns of the things in the heavens," by excluding all that was unfit to approach-all that was unclean: it was by them that the offerings of the worshippers were offered, and except through them there was no approach to God; thus, as regarded the patterns of the things in the heavens, they were the gates. In the announcement that the city "had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (ver. 12), I see the future position of the nation of Israel (the twelve tribes) when they shall become a kingdom of priests during the Lord's millennial reign (Deut. 19:6; Isa. 61.6); and in that of verse 14, "The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," the result of the labors of the twelve apostles, or a portion of it, manifested in the millennial state. It should be borne in mind, that the mission of the twelve apostles was strictly to Israel, though afterward extended, by special revelation, to the gentiles (Acts 10); and that, shortly after it was so extended, it gave place to that dispensation which was committed to the apostle Paul; and that committed to the twelve being thus interrupted,

still remains so, and will not be resumed until the present work of the Lord is completed; and when this is accomplished, the Lord's dealings in grace with Israel nationally will again proceed.. It follows, that, at the commencement of the millennium, the fruits of the dispensation committed to the twelve apostles, to say the least, may, and I believe will, consist of two classes, i.e., those who shall have passed through death and have become partakers of resurrection, and those who, having " endured to the end" of the great tribulation, shall be saved, and become partakers of earthly blessing. To the minds of some, it may appear inconsistent to suppose that the nation of Israel, in blessing on the earth, will be the gates; and the fruits of the dispensation of the twelve apostles in resurrection glory, and blessing, will form the wall of the city, or a part of it: to me, however, it does not appear so, inasmuch as I conceive that office is that which is more especially pointed at here-the ministry of each when happily the heavens and the earth shall be thus connected together. But this may appear more clear presently.

In the passage under consideration, there seems to be maintained a marked distinction between the city and the wall. Compare ver. 10 with ver. 12, and see ver. 15, etc. A disregard of this distinction has led some to think that the city, the "bride" (Rev. 21), has an Israelitish character -in fact, to doubt whether it is the Church in glory. A more scrupulous regard to the letter of the word would show that it is the wall alone, and not the city, which has this Israelitish character; and the undoubted future position of the nation of Israel, as a kingdom of priests, seems to confirm this view of the matter. This difference between the city and the wall will be found worthy of prayerful attention.

But to return. It has already been said that it is one property of the wall of a city to exclude evil; and that this was effected of old by the ministry of angels: " The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psa. 34:7). "God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it" (1 Chron. 21:15). (Read the remaining context.) "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word" (Psa. 103:20; see also Acts 7:53, compared with Heb. 2:2). Other scriptures might be added; but these are sufficient to show the character of the ministry of angels as connected with the Mosaic dispensation; and probably also in a somewhat similar way with the present. But from Heb. 2:5, we learn, that, "unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come." This marks a difference between the past and the future dispensations; and the passage goes on to teach, that the "world to come" is to be in subjection to man, - i.e., to the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ; and other scriptures reveal, that a portion of the redeemed will be associated with him in this reign. This indeed seems involved in the second of Hebrews; but elsewhere it is clear (Zech. 14:5; Jude 15,16 Rev. 2:26,27). It does not appear necessary to prove this to those most likely to read this paper. It may be said that the wall of a city does but exclude the evil, that is, the evil without; but much more was of old effected by the ministry of angels during the old dispensation, and will also be by the redeemed associated with the Lord in his reign; this is true; but in the wall we see only a portion of the redeemed in action, and this their office. Others will be spoken of in the course of the subject.

From the city of Rev. 21:10, etc., let us now turn to the city of Isa. 60,-" The city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (ver. 14). This chapter describes the future blessed position of the nation of Israel in the earth. It there appears as a city (and a city doubtless Israel will have, and a temple too: to bear this in mind may assist us). Comparing this city with the holy Jerusalem of Rev.

21:10, etc., it appears to correspond with the wall and gates only of the latter,-we seem to be led no farther; if so, then Israel is, in the one scripture, figured, so to speak, as a city; and in the other, which more fully develops the purpose of God, as a wall. From the one the Israelite in old time might have learned the future blessed position of his nation in the earth; and from the other we may learn that the nation of Israel, thus blessed, will form but a part of that wonderful redemption and medium of blessing between God and the earth which God himself will establish. The following portions are striking as compared with Rev. 21 " Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee; and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls," etc.; vers. 9, 10,-" Thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought"; ver. 11,-" I will make the place of my feet glorious," etc.; read ver. 13 to 21; comp. Isa. 66:1, with the latter part of chap. lx. ver. 13. Let it be observed of this city, that it is described as receiving, not communicating, it will be the way of approach to God for the nations, and not the medium of communicating blessing to the nations. That the means of communicating blessing will also be through another portion of the redeemed, I trust we shall learn in considering,-

The CITY-the Bride-the Lamb's wife. " That great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (Rev. 21:10,11). " And the city lieth foursquare; the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with a reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal" (ver. 16). "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (ver. 21). The description is continued to the end of ver. 5 of chapter 22. Much of this description is rather of the circumstances of the city than, of the city itself: circumstances of blessing even beyond conception; as it is written, " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9,10). Still " we see through a glass darkly." Whether Jerusalem, blessed in the earth, be the wall of this city or not, it will have its temple; but the beloved apostle " saw no temple" in the holy Jerusalem-for " the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it; and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof; and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory- and honor into it; and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there; and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it"(ver. 22-26). The approach of the worshipping nations will be through the priesthood of Israel; hence the gates are again mentioned as the way of approach, and evil will be utterly excluded (ver. 27). In that which follows, we see displayed that which we failed to find in the wall or gates, namely, a stream of blessing flowing from God to man-" A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits,....and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light:

and they shall reign forever and ever" (22:1-5). And we learn that the servants of God here mentioned, shall " see his face, and shall reign forever and ever." We shall, I think, not hesitate to conclude that they are the most favored portion of the redeemed; that blessed company redeemed " out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," mentioned in chap. v.; and comprising the four living ones, and four and twenty elders (chap. 5:8-10). This, connected with what we are taught by various scriptures, shows that they will thus be connected with the earth, and I believe, will in some way be the means of communicating blessing to it: thus, the promise in Psa. 110 will be fulfilled; " The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent; Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Such will be our blessed Lord; and the Church will be united with him in the blessing.

A few words here on the Melchizedek priesthood may not be out of place; the character of the Aaronic priesthood has already been spoken of as constituting a way to God, but the Melchizedek, or everlasting priesthood, has a much more extended character; it not only receives from man, but communicates to him, and even judgment inflicted is placed in close connection with it.-Observe its character; " And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God; and he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand; and he gave him tithes of all" (Gen. 14:18-20). The truth contained in this short scripture is unfolded to us in the epistle to the Heb. 5:10,11; 7:1, etc. The Melchizedek priesthood, is perfect and unchangeable, comprehending all that the will of God has ordained to stand between Himself and the earth. That judgment forms part of the exercise of the Melchizedek priesthood, or is at least closely connected with it, may be gathered, in addition to the scriptures which directly speak of it, from the analysis given of the words " Melchizedek king of Salem. "First being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace" (Heb. 7:2). As to the union of a portion of the redeemed with the Lord in his peaceful reign, scripture need hardly be referred to to prove it; but it should also be remembered that they will act with Him in His righteous reign (Rev. 2:26 to 29, etc.) That God formerly used the ministry of angels to work out His own purposes (usually designated Providence) toward man and probably still does so, has already been said, and I believe that the Cherubim (Ezek. 1) are generally understood to set forth that ministry; with this I agree, and believe also that in the book of Revelations, in the vision of the four living creatures, John saw a portion of the redeemed exercising similar ministry. This vision I understand will not be fulfilled until after the resurrection spoken of in 1 Thess. 4:16,17, has taken place, which being after the Lord has left His Father's throne his enemies will be made His footstool; and whatever may then be the actings of His grace, or to whatsoever extent they may reach, it will nevertheless be the day of His wrath (Psa. 110:5;102) When these things shall come to pass the world will no longer be in subjection to angels but to man-to Jesus Christ-to the second Adam, and in concert with Him the four living ones are presented in the book of Revelations as acting, and we no longer read of the cherubim as in. Ezek. 1 These things will commence the period of judgment which must precede the millennial reign. " Melchizedek Melchi-Salem " comprehends both; first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace.

As to the NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH, and the time of the change taking place, I agree with that which our brother has expressed, in respect to Rev. 20:11, etc., being after the close of

the millennium, and that chap. 21:1-5, is descriptive of the blessing which will succeed the judgment of the great white throne; that is, it is descriptive of the new heavens and the new earth-the post-millennial state. The expression "no more sea," I have been accustomed to regard as literal: I do not feel that we can consistently do otherwise, at least, if we receive the words "heaven" and "earth" in the same verse in a literal sense; and 2 Peter 3:7-13, shows that we ought so to receive them. It is true that in chap. 17:15, "the waters" that the apostle saw are explained to be "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues"; but, in addition to waters not necessarily being the sea, I do, not see how that explanation can be made to apply here, especially as in Isa. 60:6, the word is used in a happy sense of those to whom it is applied "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee," and if figurative of the Gentiles in Rev. 21, would leave no sea to be converted.

I would now consider the first part of our brother's query-"Is the change of the heavens not synchronous with that of the earth?" the remaining part of it having been already met. His thought seems to be, that during the millennium the holy city, having descended out of heaven from God, will remain in the present heavenlies (this may be so; but if what has been advanced be correct; a portion of it, if we include the wall and gates, and he appears not to have excepted them, will be upon the earth). I would again refer him to 2 Peter 3 "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (ver. 7). "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (ver. 10). "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (ver. 12). These scriptures seem to me decisive on the point, and to leave no room to doubt that the change of both will be at the same time. Probably a part of our brother's difficulty may consist in the question-"If the holy Jerusalem descends into the heavens that are, before the change referred to, how can, they afterward be burned up?" It may be as well to meet this, whether we have sufficient light to solve it or not. My own feeling is, that it may be removed to safety, or otherwise preserved by the power of God. Now without pretending to decide, the former seems probable, inasmuch as the apostle appears to have witnessed two descents, namely, that in Rev. 21:2, and that in ver. 10, and the latter the first to be fulfilled. The same difficulty arises as to the inhabitants of the earth; but in this case we have not any revelation that I know of; though we know that God will preserve His own redeemed, and there we may well leave it, not seeking to be wise above that which is written, but using diligence to become acquainted with all that is revealed:

In comparing the two visions, which we may call that of the new Jerusalem (ver. 2), and that of the holy Jerusalem (ver. 10), the differences between them should be noticed; such, for instance, as the following: "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," "the bride, the Lamb's wife"; and our brother has remarked of the latter that it is a walled city, but this is not said of the former. I merely suggest this for the consideration of others.

Ver. 3 and 4 seem to indicate that there will be an everlasting distinction between the heavens and the earth; and that, even when the whole work of redemption is accomplished, when our blessed Redeemer "shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied," there will still be the heavenly and earthly portions of the redeemed family, making one glorious creation, in which God's "dear

Son" will have the pre-eminence: " For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers, all things were created by Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16).

In conclusion, if anything need be said upon the importance of this subject, I would add, that I believe it is of vast importance, not only in point of knowledge,-as such it ought to have a practical effect on our souls,-but being " written for our learning," it is our duty to study it with prayer for the Holy Spirit's teaching. Nor is this all; for how often do we find that it is in man's ignorance of such scriptures as these that error has established its strongholds, by giving forth a pretended explanation, and finds its security from contradiction in the fact, that there are few or none able to resist the evil by an appeal to the truth. I desire, however, to guard my brethren against the thought that what I have said is dogmatically asserted; but as an enquirer in the prophetic field, I have endeavored to state the convictions and thoughts of my own mind, and to those who may read I would say, " Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

E. B.

[The Editor does not put his sanction on the above paper, by inserting it in " THE PRESENT TESTIMONY." There are many points in it which, as matters of interpretation, are more than questionable; but as nothing on the face of it affects fundamental truth, and as it is presented in avowed subjection to Scripture, it is left to the judgment of the reader.-Ed.]

Fragments

" If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father"-here the Lord counts upon the highest tone of feeling, the unselfishness which He only can give.

The question of sin was settled at the first coming of Christ the question of blessedness will be settled when He comes again.

Fragments

Cain, Balaam, Corah-the genealogy of the spirit of apostasy.

In Revelation, when all the testimony is gone through, the heart of the Church is turned from the testimony to Him that testifieth, with the promise, " Surely I come quickly"-and she answers, " Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Blessed things are promised, but He Himself is the object of her desires.

Fragments

The Christian may say, I want nothing before God, I have Christ there; and God would repudiate anything more. I know that God has accepted the person and blood of His Son. God rests there, and there I rest, and have nothing now to do but to seek to glorify Him by my life down here.

In Rev. 22 the Church is taught to say, "Let him that is athirst come." She is brought into the place of Christ in this (for it was He who first said, "Let him that is athirst come"), and speaks in His name, because the Spirit is there.

There is no difference, as regards acceptance, between Paul and us, but a great difference as to reward of service.

## Fragments

In the grand day, when all give honor, etc., to the Lamb, if a heart be true to the glory of Christ, what will be the intrinsic happiness of having all glory given to Him who has loved us.

We know Christ is dishonored here, and therefore long for the time when He shall be thoroughly honored here.

In that coming day-others--all nations of the earth--will know, by the visible demonstration of the glory displayed in us, the truth of the confession of the Church, which now seems fanatical to the world, that the Father hath loved us as He hath loved Him.

## Fragments

"All fullness" is not in Christ, as a stranger at an inn, coming in and going out; but it pleased the Father that it should dwell and remain in Him.

When they were crying Hosanna to Christ, and occasion of joy furnished to Him, yet he wept over the city, and spoke words of compassion, but broken and imprisoned with sighing and sorrow, "Oh if thou knew, even thou!" Now what compassion must be in Him, when his compassion had such an edge! Joseph's compassion is nothing to His, He having taken a man's heart to go along with the saints to heaven, sighing, weeping, mourning, "tempted in all these as we are, but without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

## Fragments

He that believeth, hath the Son: grace and Christ cannot be separated.

"Honor me before the people," was cold comfort to Saul, when the prophet told him God had rejected him.

Joseph's bowels were upon action, and busy, when his brethren saw no such thing, even when he was accusing them as spies, and dealing roughly with them.

"The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, they were afraid " (Psa. 77:16). So saith he "Winds, blow not; seas, rage not; fire, burn not; lions, devour not; sun, move not; clouds, rain not; devils, hurt not; waters, overwhelm not; sword, destroy not;" and they all obey.

## Fragments

There is this difference--If I deal much with duties, and urge them on the conscience, I shall, if that be all, insensibly reduce the standard. If I present Christ to the soul, and plead His claims with the heart, I shall raise the standard.

The first of these different methods will, I believe, be made apparent in lower and higher measures of devotedness and service.

Besides, the mind, generated by the first, will be an inferior material to that produced by the second; it will not be the seat of the same light, freedom, and affection.

God will stand justified in the conscience of every single individual on the face of the earth, just as He did in the conscience of Adam in Gen. 3.

All may charge and accuse Him, and lay the fault and the blame at His door, as Adam did; but not one, any more than Adam, can have courage in the conscience to come out and boldly -without hesitation, to His face, tell Him so. All these bear witness, against themselves, and for God; for this cowardice in the conscience bespeaks the common universal guilt.

## Freedom According to Man and Liberty According to Christ

---

(Translated from the French of G. W-k.)

WE might be astonished to find the name of the Lord Jesus so often mixed up with certain movements of the day, if the Bible had not itself given to us the answer to the riddle-by teaching us that one of the constant wiles of the enemy consists in seducing man by means of the very words of God.

For what do we read in the early pages of the Bible. " And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:15-17). " Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And He said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not at of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:1-6). And thus it is that sin came into the world, and death by sin.

There is a remarkable passage found also in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 4:16-20, which has furnished the adversary with the means of practicing the same pass as that by which he was in Eden but too successful. " And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the hook, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him" (Luke 4:16-20).

Just as the serpent formerly used the word of the Creator to ruin man and to estrange him from God, so has Satan availed himself of and still does, in our times, avail himself of the words just cited, relative to the mission of Jesus, in order to mislead into error and to draw aside into evil. He does so by a gloss which substitutes a meaning altogether different from the true one. By this means, which is his common practice, he avails himself of these declarations of scripture to give a coloring to the thought that Jesus is the patron of certain attempts at emancipation, and thus he seeks to give the sanction of the adorable name of Jesus to overt rebellion. is not the name of

Jesus very convenient for many of those (whether in their speeches or their writings) who, while still the servants of sin, delude themselves with the fantasy that they are subject to no one; yet they resemble those Jews who pretended that they had never been in bondage, and sought to kill Jesus because He told them that the truth would make them free, and who were so little of one mind with Jesus that they said He had a devil.

The aim of Satan, I repeat, is to mislead men into error as to the true meaning of the liberty which Christ came to announce to the captive..I believe that the efforts of the enemy constantly tend to the confounding between that liberty and quite another thing, which the word of God calls lawlessness: in Greek the word is anomia, a word which describes " the state of him who has no law, who knows no law; licentiousness; independence of all authority"; it is often rendered by iniquity. This state of independence, this anomia, or lawlessness, is the sad spurious imitation of the liberty of the Gospel.

The mystery of iniquity was, even in the times of Paul, beginning to show its power, as he says in the second of his epistles to the Thessalonians, chapter 2 ver. 7. In other words, there are eighteen hundred years that, in mystery, iniquity has now been actively at work, and not without too sad success. This lawlessness will end in the manifestation of the wicked one, the man of sin or lawless one, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, as object of worship, so far as to take his place as God in the temple of God, exalting himself, and saying that he is God. Nevertheless God will again interpose, for the man of sin will be destroyed by the breath of His mouth, and be rendered impotent by the manifestation of the arrival or presence of the Lord.

The man of sin, who will pass himself off for God, will be destroyed by the presence of God, whose will it was to become man; the perfect expression of human pride will meet its defeat from the perfect expression of Divine condescension.

The coming or presence of the man of sin "is according to the working of Satan (or adversary) with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they may believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Multitudinous in number, and various in nature, are the results of this lawlessness. Let us endeavor first to see, in some small degree, what it has wrought in that domain of things which pertain to religion; here, especially, has it produced its most subtle and sad fruits. Yet, however specious the form under which they meet us, they cannot remain altogether undiscovered as fruits of lawlessness, at least where there is a spiritual perception, however little it may be in exercise.

The word states that "the true light" has given to all that receive Him, that is, to all that believe in His name, the power to become sons of God. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:9-13). Many denominations of professing Christians hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

The word speaks of a worship in spirit and in truth, (see John 4:24). Many denominations- of professing Christians have liturgies and printed prayers.

The word states that the spirit distributes his gifts to every one severally as he will (see 1 Cor. 12:2). Almost all denominations of professing Christians make the exercise of these gifts in their midst to depend upon certain conditions, e.g. on a presupposed university education, and they, in their wisdom, predestinate such and such individuals to the ministry.

The word considers the saints and faithful in Christ (Eph. 1:1) as having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Professing Christians speak of building churches, substituting the shell for the kernel or lifeless stones for living stones (1 Peter 3:5); of making churches,-now the Greek word *ekklesia* (church) means assembly - and the assembly of God (1 Thessalonians 3:15), it is for God to form, and connected with this is one of the most characteristic marks of the lawlessness of which we speak, viz., professing Christians have carried their independency of God so far as to fix the age at which children may be admitted into communion with Jesus and the saints.

The effects of this lawlessness show themselves also as to temporal powers. Thus, for instance, there is no power but what is of God, as say the scriptures (see Rom. 13:1). But do those who exercise that power always do so as holding it from God and for His glory; and are they always a terror to bad works.

The disciple of Jesus, though indeed in the world is not of the world (see John 17:14), consequently he belongs to no party in the politics of this world. While waiting for the kingdom of Christ, he is subject to the power that is, where he is, be it what it may; he honors and will always show respect to it; and he will also always yield it obedience, at least unless things contrary to his conscience and to his duty towards God be in question. On this account it was that when the authorities, temporal and ecclesiastical, at Jerusalem, had enjoined on the apostles, Peter and John, by no means to speak of or to teach in the name of Jesus, that Peter and John replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done" (Acts 4.19-21).

Having noticed some of the traits of lawlessness, let us now turn to the spurious imitation of true liberty.

In the sixth chapter of the Epistle of Paul. to the Romans, we read, " For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." What is the lesson which Paul here teaches us? Simply that we find ourselves in one of two conditions; each of which has an end proper to it. We may be in the bondage of sin and free from righteousness, with death before us at the end; or, we may be servants of God and free from sin, with eternal life in prospect.

In both of these conditions there is supposed a liberty; in one case 'tis a freedom which leads unto death; in the other, a freedom which leads unto eternal life. That which leads unto eternal life, is the true liberty which the Son gives us, Jesus said to the Jews, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house forever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8.34-36). The Lord spake to Jews, but what He said is, without controversy, applicable to Gentiles, "for," as Paul reasons, "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference" (Rom. 3:22).

It is then to the Son that we must apply, in order to be set free, in order to be in truth free men; -free from the law, free from the curse from which Christ redeemed us, when He was made a curse for us; in Him, we died indeed to the law, in order that we might belong unto another, even unto Him who is risen from the dead, in order that we might bring forth fruit unto God; -free from the affections and lusts of the flesh, " For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." And, remark, by the way, that it is the consciousness that it is so, which, by the grace of God, gives to us, who are Christ's, the power to contend against the flesh with its affections and lusts.

To speak as a man, what is it which withholds the man of honor from doing such or such a thing; is it not the thought of what might be said about him: it becomes my family, my rank, my position to abstain from this or that. Well, in like manner it is the position which Christ has won for us, which gives the Christian liberty from, and strength against, sin and lust.

In Jesus the Christian is already set free from the elements of this world; he does not receive, as though he were living in this world, ordinances according to the commandments and doctrines of man, "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using); after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col. 2:20-23).

In saying this, I do not mean to suggest that such or such an act, as fasting, for example, is to be absolutely rejected, evidently this is not the case. It is but a foolish formality if it be done by reason of a human appointment, but if it is a fruit of the spirit of life, it is acceptable to God. There are children and there are full grown men in the faith. Their rule is, " Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Rom. 14:3,4). The same may be said as to marriage (compare 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 1 Cor. 7:1; and Heb. 13:4).

The Christian is not under the law, but he is subject to the law of the liberty which is in Christ, and he is deeply responsible to adhere to it (see Gal. 5:1). In Christ everything resolves itself into liberty.

Another sort of liberty, which Jesus gives, is freedom from the wrath to come. "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised

from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come."

Christ, again, delivers us from the second death. "Blessed and holy," says the Book of the Revelation, 20:6, "is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." The second death will take effect on all whose names are not found written in the book of life (ver. 15), and consists in being cast into the lake of fire.

Lastly, as our last instruction, in connection with the liberty of the children of God, what further does the word of God teach us? "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:20-23).

The whole of the creation which now is groans under a state of things, which is the result of the first Adam's disobedience. A new creation will enjoy a state which will be the result of the obedience of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. They who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, enjoy, but only in hope, that other state of things, that liberty in Jesus Christ, which will be revealed in His glory, when they who have the first-fruits of the Spirit will come with Jesus (1 Thess. 4:13); for they will previously have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air (ver. 17), those of them that slept having been raised, and those that are still alive transmuted (1 Cor. 15:52).

Regenerated in spirit and soul, the Christian waits for the deliverance of the body. He waits for an actual entrance into heaven, where already his citizenship is (Phil. 3:20), where, by faith, he is already sat down, in Christ Jesus, as one of his members (Eph. 2:6). Seen from such a height, the politics and the religion of this world appear in their true proportions, and are but dimly seen. The Christian has not many things to be careful about (Luke 10:40), he knows the crowd is ever found where the dead are to be buried (Luke 9:60). He has that which the world cannot give; and a hasty glance, however imperfect, o'er the heavenly Canaan weans from all that is around. One moment's enjoyment of the liberty of the world to come makes him comprehend what is the danger of that which the children of this world call liberty. The Christian lives among men, as did Lot, who, from day to day, vexed his righteous soul by that which he saw and heard of their lawless actions (see Greek, 2 Peter 2:8).

And as to man, in his natural state, the prince of this world holds him under the most fatal delusion, far from Christ, by the persuasive thought that he is free. No, unregenerate man is not free; he is not his own; he belongs to Satan, together with all the creation which the enemy, in the true character of a usurper, has subjected to himself. And in order that man and the creation may one day be delivered from the bondage of corruption, there was the need be of nothing less than the intervention of God Himself manifest in the flesh, of the manifestation of the Son of God, who came that he might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and bring life and immortality to light (2 Tim. 1:10).

The natural man is fleshly and sold under sin (Rom. 7:14); with the flesh he serves the law of sin (Rom. 7:25). But God has found the means of redeeming him; the price is the precious blood of

Christ (1 Peter 1:19). He that believes shares the efficacy of the blood; "He is justified freely by the grace of God, by means of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

The solemn question-question of life or death for every child of Adam, then is-" Whom do I serve?" For the Spirit of God says in scripture (2 Peter 2:19), "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." Let us not deceive ourselves, we follow him whom we serve.

## Genesis 22

---

Worship always supposes self-will to be broken.

In the preceding chapters we have seen Abraham in Egypt, and we have observed that while there, he built no altar; but Abraham left Egypt, and then, having given it up, he could build an altar to the Lord. When David saw the child he loved sick, he fasted and prayed, but he was wrestling with God-his will was not brought into subjection. When the child was dead, David changed his raiment, ate and drank, and then he could come into the house of the Lord and worship; because the struggle in his heart ceased, and his will was broken. Job, after those heavy afflictions described in the first chapter (the loss of goods and children), rent his mantle indeed (ver. 20), (in all this he sinned not we are told-his sorrow was legitimate-it was not wrong in him to grieve at the loss of his children); but he fell down before God and worshipped; he could worship, because in him self-will was broken, and he could say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!"

But, in the chapter we have just read, we find something beyond what we have seen in Job and in David. They indeed acquiesced in the will of God, but their submission was passive, requiring no act on their part. This is not the case in Gen. 22 Abraham is not only called to accept the will of God, but to act against himself. He is obliged, so to speak, to offer himself up, for to offer up his son was nothing less. God says to him, "Offer up thy son, thine only son." The name of a person expresses to us all that concerns that person, and our relationships with him. Thy son! that word touched the tenderest feelings-and he was to offer up that son I that name, moreover, recalled God's promises, and it was in this son that they were to be fulfilled, for God had said positively, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." But he whose will is subject to God, rests satisfied with two things, "God will provide," and "I am with God." All hope in the flesh, as to the accomplishment of the promises, must be given up, so that God may stand alone as the spring of life, blessings and promises; as the one whose resources can never be exhausted, even when those means He has Himself pointed out fail for the accomplishment of His promises.

Thus God tries the heart, in order to destroy all confidence in the flesh; but at the same time, knowing that the heart needs support in the trial, He sustains it by a new revelation, which enables him to conquer. Thus we see (Heb. 11:19), that Abraham had a revelation of resurrection (which was then understood), in connection With the sacrifice that was demanded of him. Thus God causes us, in His infinite mercy, to gain in Him what we lose in the flesh.

It was apart from the servants, that is, alone with Isaac and God, that Abraham received this revelation, and learned to offer up the goat instead of his son, as he had himself said, "God will provide Himself a lamb." And it is in the secret communion with God that we learn most of Him.

In Jesus, the true Worshipper of the Father, self-will was always broken: the cup was (we know), full of bitterness; but He, so to speak, forgets this bitterness in his desire to do the will of God, and exclaims, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?"

## God's Rest

---

"As having nothing, yet possessing all things," is a spiritual enigma which expresses a good deal concerning the saint's present position in this world. It shows on the one side the extent and security of his divinely-bestowed inheritance; and on the other, the futurity of its possession and enjoyment.

"Faith is the substance of things 'hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It gives power and reality in the soul to unseen and future things-things which are designed to mold our whole character, and aims and being, here below, and in which we shall find our heavenly and eternal portion.

So entirely, indeed, is revelation occupied with the presentation of the objects of hope, blended and linked, it is true, with that which is actually accomplished in Christ, that a Christian cannot rightly enjoy the present grace of Christ without looking forward. Nay more, it may be said, that " if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

He who by the power and grace of Christ has been " delivered from this present evil world," is by that very deliverance constituted a child of hope, and set forward on his journey to a future world; and if he be true to his calling, and not like Israel, who in heart turned back again into Egypt, he will understand the meaning of that word, " One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The grace that attaches our souls to Christ makes us wish for his return. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Even the cross itself points us to the glory; for He who was "crucified through weakness yet liveth by the power of God." While the very institution of Christ, in remembrance of His death, brings home to the heart the bright hope of His return. "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

This hope, which is presented in various aspects, according to the variety of blessing which God hath prepared for them that love Him (for "He hath blessed us with ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"), may begin at that which is individual-and so far at self-as "in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised before the world began." But it extends in widening circles, until it embraces all that can be enjoyed in the manifestation of the glory of God. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Even for creation itself, amidst its groans and sufferings, and subjection to vanity, through man's sin, there is a reserve of hope. "For creation (Gr.) itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

"We are saved by hope;" but, as it is divinely argued, not by a visible and temporal hope, but by one that is unseen and eternal. For this is the generic character in Scripture, of seen and unseen things. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

To the affections of the saint or the Church of God, this hope is concentrated in the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." And the moral conformity to this hope on the part of His disciples, is found in the exhortation of Christ, "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord."

The Church will have her proper joy in union with her heavenly Head and Bridegroom, in glory, which is now her stay and comfort in grace. But when she thus takes her place in heavenly joy-her central place of deep and unutterable peace and rest in the affections of Christ, on the marriage of the Lamb-there is still another character attaching to this hope, which stamps it with blessed and glorious features in contrast with all that the history of man and of creation has hitherto known.

There is the happiness to the saint (complete in itself) of being " forever with the Lord"; but there are also the blessed surrounding circumstances in which the triumphs of God's grace and glory will be manifested. There is the bright circle of accomplished blessing, of which Christ is the center and spring, extending to things in earth and things in heaven. For God," hath made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him."

God will gather around Himself all whom His love has made happy; as it is the end of Christ's death "to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad." Of this gathering the twelfth of Hebrews presents us with a blessed picture, which I should give thus: "Ye are come to Mount Zion; and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels to a general assembly; and to the Church of the first-born (ones) who are enrolled in heaven; and to God the judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel."

These are the constituents of that blessed assembly, that heavenly feast of tabernacles to which we are now come by faith, and in the actual gathering of which the rest of God will be found.

God's purpose in Christ is "to reconcile all things unto Himself.... whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." And it is added, as to the church's portion, "you that were some time alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled." God's final purpose is to bless, not only as now, the souls of His people, nor even, in the fullest sense, to bless individually; but He will gather around Himself, and will bring into His rest, those whom His love has chosen in sorrow and affliction, and whom He has called to be the partaken of His glory. Here, the very world of their existence, and the whole condition of their being, will accord with the grace, that redeemed them to Himself; and will, with sin shut out, and sorrow banished, and need of conflict gone, and the tide of God's eternal goodness flowing unchecked on every hand, form not the saints rest alone, but the rest of God.

It is the believer's entrance into this rest that is the subject of instruction in these chapters; and the moral wilderness which man's sin has made of this world, may well cause our hearts to long and sigh for this coming rest.

It is indeed set before us, like the coming of the Lord, as the proper object of our hope; but like this, amidst the confusion and evil, the difficulties and sorrows of the last days, it becomes also our

necessary and only resource.

Man in innocence failed to enjoy this rest; the Israelites in the wilderness, through unbelief, came short of Canaan, which was only the type of it; and Joshua, when he had led the tribes into the land, could not give them rest. But God will not be defeated of his purpose. "Some must enter therein." "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

In David, after the tribes had been long in possession of the land, the Spirit of the Lord revives, even to Israel, the testimony of this rest, and presents it as their yet future hope: "saying in David, To-day, after so long a time;" as it is said (i.e. in Psa. 95) "to-day if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts," etc.

The feast of tabernacles, the type of this rest, is to Israel, practically, like the passover and pentecost, an unaccomplished feast. The Church of God, that can say, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," and can speak of "the day of pentecost being fully come," has as yet known nothing of the antitype of the feast of tabernacles.

Israel will have its rest under the shadow of the Lord; and the Lord will have His rest in Israel's blessing. "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord -thy God in the Midst of thee is mighty, He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing." But this is an earthly rest. "God's rest," as presented to the faith and hope of His pilgrims now, is a heavenly rest; and we are urged to "labor to enter into that rest."

Whether our hearts are pressing on to this rest or not, it is certain, that redemption, as to its present results (like the type in Israel), delivers us only into a wilderness. Canaan lay beyond the desert; and the tribes of the Lord must needs learn the toilsomeness of the way before they reached their rest. God had not redeemed them from Egypt to leave them in the wilderness; and where there was any sense of his presence, the people could say, like Moses, in the midst of their weariness, "We are journeying to the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." God will not allow His saints to find a rest in this world, any more than He would allow Israel to find the land of promise until they had crossed the desert and the Jordan. His purpose in redemption is to bring us into His rest; and hence the admonition, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of-entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." He would not have His people indifferent about their inheritance, nor "despise the pleasant land;" but would have their faith and expectation and moral position here in accordance with the unchanging counsels of His grace.

We rest in Christ now, it is true, from every burden of sin and condemnation; and our consciences rest from the guilt which Christ's blood has removed; we "rest thus from our own works as God did from His," but this is only that we may without hindrance, pursue our pathway to the heavenly rest.

Toil and conflict in the world for Christ now, are as much the fruit of grace as rest and glory will be by and bye. God cannot rest in the confusion and vanity, and misery and death, which now mar the fairest scenes of this world; and for the same reason, He says, in effect, to His people, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest; because it is polluted."

God's rest is before us; and the exhortation is, "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest." And be it remembered, that, if the pressure of the last days makes us sigh for our rest and deliverance,

it is God's rest that He is bringing us into. It is but to lower its character, if we think of it only as the saint's rest.

There is something wonderful in the thought that this rest of God, this final purpose of his heart, has been kept in reserve-unentered through all the ages of the past; a joy to be tasted by His people when the Jubilee of redemption is come. It could not, indeed, be entered before, for Christ, the new man and second Adam, must bring us into it, and be' the ground and center of this rest of God.

The sabbath was the great type of this rest; and accordingly, in Gen. 2:3, it is said, "On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made."

Creation is here the sphere of this rest; but it is creation before sin had disturbed the order and beauty of God's works, or had cast a cloud of sorrow over that bright scene, in the contemplation of which it is said, "God rested and was refreshed."

As to man, this rest comes in only at the close (if I may so speak) of long ages of labor. Not that this was necessary to prepare the rest itself; for "the works were finished from the foundation of the world;" though in reality, through man's sin, the rest was broken up: however the type of it, in gracious promise, might remain. God could not rest where sin was producing moral disorder and misery and death, and hence the force of our Lord's expression, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

It is necessary that sin and all its consequences should be excluded from God's rest; and hence the necessity of redemption, in order to bring any into the enjoyment of it. Rest of conscience, through the blood of Christ, God now gives to a poor sinner, as a preparation for His holy presence; but the rest of God itself is in the wide scene of God's completed works, when redemption shall bring alike the heirs and the inheritance into participation in that rest. It stands necessarily in redemption, because sin is to leave no stain on that which God pronounces perfect; and because sinners are to be associated with Him in this rest. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." He must unweave the mighty web of mischief which Satan, since the fall, has cast around man and his lost inheritance, ere the saint can have rest, or God can rest in the completion of His work.

One may, indeed, through grace, enjoy communion with God here, and maintain by the same power of grace the conflict with Satan and all evil, but this is conflict and trial, and not rest. It was in the review of God's finished works in creation that He is first presented to us as having rest; and that rest of God which is future, will be in redemption's completed work, when both the heirs and the inheritance will be in the full power of that redemption which is by Christ.

Nothing in man, nothing in the saint, could procure this rest, nor give title or fitness to enter it. It is emphatically God's rest; and it will bear the stamp of that perfectness which is impressed upon all the works of God.

Nor is this a slight and unimportant circumstance connected with this rest. For all His works are perfect; and thus stand eternally in contrast with the works of man. This is seen in all God's works,

whether, in the order and glory of the great frame-work of creation, or in the transient beauty of the flowers of the field. A lily, for example, is invested by the hand of God, prodigal of its infinite resources, with a splendor of attire that man's proudest efforts can never reach. "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

So in His ways of love and grace, there is an absolute contrast to all the principles and the ways of man. There is no parallel to His love. The way He has taken to bring our souls acquainted with Himself is a demonstration of this. He is GOD in His love, as He is in the supremacy of His power and glory; and the rest which He has prepared for His saints will only be the fruit of the fully accomplished counsels of His love.

In a sense it may be said, that God Himself has foregone His own rest, until He can enjoy it with us His poor weary pilgrims, who are yet on our journey towards it.

In His rest in creation, there is no intimation of any being associated with Him in the enjoyment of it. It is only declared that God rested from all His works. But His counsel from the beginning was • to bring, through the second Adam, His redeemed into this blessedness. Hence, when sin disturbed His sabbath in creation, He goes on to work anew; as has been already quoted, "My Father worketh hitherto." And hence also the renewal of the institution of the sabbath, or seventh day's rest under the law. It still held forth as a type the hope of rest, after all the toil and labor which sin had introduced: though an entrance upon it can only be secured by association with Him who brings in by death and resurrection a new order of things in redemption, of which not the seventh but the first day of the week is our constant memorial.

The seventh, or sabbatical year, in Israel's constitutions, presented another re-duplication of the type of a final sabbatic rest. The jubilee also, at the end of every hebdomad of sabbatical years, with all its joyousness, and thrilling sounds of liberty and recovered inheritances, kept up the type and this blessed hope of final rest.

But as to enjoyment, whether in Israel or the church of God, we are taught that the antitype is yet entirely future, save, as to the work of Christ, by which it will be all brought in.

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God." God's rest is that to which we are now journeying, when He will again keep sabbath amidst the glorious scenes of redemption's wonders, and not merely amidst the works of creation. At creation's rest " the morning stars sang together;" but when God's rest in redemption is entered upon, " every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth," as well as angels' and the redeemed shall unite in saying, " Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever!"

And their notes of heavenly joy will not be exchanged as upon earth for sighs and sorrow, nor will they ever die away again, as now. For redemption will stamp an eternal character upon the rest, and open an eternal spring of joy.

## Grace the Power of Unity and of Gathering

---

Beloved Brother,-I have had the desire on my mind to make a few remarks on a point I believe to have importance at the present moment; and in doing so, I carry in my mind a tract to which circumstances drew attention, and practically review it. And I do so the rather, because I think I read a paper some time back in the " Present Testimony," which, if my memory serves me, placed the subject on a ground which I did not think quite just: that is, it saw only one side of the matter, as it seemed to me. I am not going to comment on it, as I apprehend you can edify your readers better by other means.

What I think important to be understood, is, that the active power that gathers is always grace--love. Separation from evil may be called for. In particular states of the Church, when evil is come in, it may characterize very much the path of the saints. It may be, that, through many acting under the same convictions at the same time, this may form a nucleus. But this in itself, is never a gathering power. Holiness may attract when a soul is in movement of itself. But power to gather, is in grace, in love working; if you please, faith working by love. Look at all the history of the Church of God in all ages, and you will find this to be the case. Gathering is the formative power of unity, where it does not exist. I take for granted here that Christ is owned as the center. If evil exist, it may gather out of that evil, but the gathering power is love. The paper which I would pass under review is a tract, which, from circumstances is not unknown. " Separation from evil, God's principle of unity." I trust I should have grace to acknowledge error where I thought there was such, and I am sure I owe it to the Lord to do so; but my object here is somewhat larger. That tract refers to the state of the Church of God at large, and not any particular members of it; but as one part of truth corrects an evil, so another, by its operation on the soul, may enlarge the sphere and strengthen the energy of good. There are two great principles in God's nature, owned of all saints-holiness and love. One is, I may be bold to say, the necessity of His nature, imperative in virtue of that nature on all that approach Him; the other, its energy. One characterizes; the other is, and is the spring of activity of His nature. God is Holy-He is not loving, but-love. He is it in the essential fountain of His being; we make Him a judge by sin, for He is holy, and has authority; but He is love and none has made Him such. If there be love any where else, it is of God, for God is love. This is the blessed active energy of His being. In the exercise of this, He gathers to Himself, for the eternal blessedness of those who are gathered. Its display in Christ, and Christ Himself, being the great power and center of it. His counsels as to this are the glory of His grace-His applying them to sinners, and the means He employs for it, the riches of His grace. And in the ages to come, He will show how exceeding great these were in His kindness to us, in Christ Jesus. Allow me, in passing, before entering on the examination of the point which is now directly my object, to say a word on the sweet passage I have referred to, because it opens out God's full thoughts in bringing into the unity of which that epistle speaks. We are brought in Christ, and God Himself is the center of the blessing, and in two characters-His nature and His relationship: He both as related to Christ Himself, viewed as man before Him, though the beloved Son. The verses I refer to, are Eph. 3-7. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Lord, when

ascending up on high, said, "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Only that here he goes on to their unity in Christ. There Christ speaks of them as brethren. In this double character, then, in which God stands to Christ Himself, He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings-none left out-in heavenly places, the best and highest sphere of blessing, where He dwells; not merely sent down to earth, but we taken ourselves up there, and in the best and highest way-in Christ Jesus, - save His Divine title to sit on the Father's throne. Wonderful portion! sweet and blessed grace, which becomes simple to us in the measure in which we are accustomed to dwell in the perfect goodness of God, to whom it is natural to be all that He is: who could be no other.

In verse 4, we have "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," according to the glory of the Divine nature, introducing into His own presence, in Christ, that which shall be the reflex of itself, according to its eternal purpose. For the Church in the thoughts of God (and, I may add, in its life in the Word) is before the world in which it is displayed. Here, it is His nature. We are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. God is holy, God is love, and in His ways, when He acts, blameless.

Then there is relationship in Christ, and His is that of Son. Hence in Him we are predestinated to the adoption of children to God himself, according to His good pleasure, the delight and goodness of His will. This is relationship. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as God. This is the glory of His grace; His own thoughts and purposes, to the praise of which we are. He has shown us grace in the beloved. But in fact he finds us sinners. He has to put sinners in this place. What a thought! Here His grace shines out in another way. In this same blessed one-Christ the Son -we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins-what we need, in order to enter into the place where we shall be to the praise of the glory of His grace: and this is according to the riches of His grace; for God is displayed in the glory of His grace, and need is met by the riches of grace.

Thus we are before God. What follows in the chapter is the inheritance which belongs to us through this same grace-what is under us. Into this I do not enter; only remarking, as I have elsewhere, that the Holy Ghost is the earnest of the inheritance, but not of God's love. This is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. These two relationships of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be found to unfold much blessing. They are of frequent occurrence in Scripture.

But interesting as that subject is, I turn now to the one before me. I have read over the tract I have referred to. I confess, it seems to me that one who would deny the abstract principles of that tract is not on Christian ground at all. I cannot conceive anything more indisputably true, as far as human statement of truth can go. Still there is something more than truth to be considered; and that is-the use of truth. God's imputing no sin to the Church, through grace and redemption, is always blessedly and eternally true. To a careless conscience, I may have to address other truth. Now I repeat, that on reading that tract I do not see how a person resisting the principles stated, is on Christian ground at all. Is not holiness the principle on which Christian fellowship is based? And the tract is really and simply that. But two other points I believe it important to bring out along with that-one, relation to man; the other, to the blessed God. The first is this: human nature we all own, and in a measure know, is a treacherous thing. Now separation from evil, when right, which I now

assume, still distinguishes him who separates from him from whom he does so. This tends to make one's position important, and so it is; but with such hearts as we have, one's position mixes itself up with self-not in a gross way but in a treacherous one; it is my position, and not only so, but the mind being occupied with what has been important (justly so in its place) to itself tends to make, in a measure, separation from evil a gathering power, as well as a principle on which gathering takes place. This (save as holiness attracts souls who are spiritual by a moving principle in them) it is not. There is another danger: a Christian separates from evil, I still suppose, in a case in which he is bound to do so. Say he leaves the corruptest system in existence: on this principle, it is the evil acting on the conscience of the new man, and known to be offensive to God, which drives him out. Hence he is occupied with the evil. This is a dangerous position. He attaches it, perhaps anxiously, to those he has left, to give a clear ground why he has done so. They conceal, cover over, gloss, explain. It is always so where the evil is maintained. He seeks to prove it, to make his ground clear. He is occupied with evil, with proving evil, and proving evil against others. This is slippery ground for the heart, to say nothing of danger to love. The mind becomes occupied with evil as an object before it. This is not holiness, nor separation from evil, in practical internal power. It harasses the mind, and cannot feed the soul. Some are almost in danger of acquiescing in the evil through the weariness of thinking about it. At all events power is not found here. God separates us surely from evil, but He does not fill the mind when it continues to be occupied with it; for He is not in the evil. It is quite true that the mind may say, "Let us think of the Lord, and drop it," and get a measure of quiet and comfort; but in this case, the general standard and tone of spiritual life will be infallibly lowered. Of this I have not a shadow of doubt. The positive evil will not be actually acquiesced in; but God's horror of it is lost in the mind, and the measure of Divine power and communion just proportionately lost, and the general path shows this. The testimony fails and is lowered. This is the widest evil-where there is conflict with evil not maintained in spiritual power and creates the most serious difficulties to extended unity; but God is above all. The new nature when in lively exercise, because it is holy and divine, revolts from evil when it comes before it. The conscience, too, will then be in exercise as responsible to God. But this is not all, even as to holiness. There is another, which in many (I may say, at bottom, in all) cases distinguishes real holiness from natural conscience, or conventional rejection of evil. Holiness is not merely separation from evil, but separation to God from evil. The new nature has not merely a nature or intrinsic character as being of God. It has an object, for it cannot live on itself, a positive object, and that is God. Now this changes everything; because it separates from evil-which it abhors, therefore, when it sees it-because it is filled with good. This does not enfeeble its separation. It makes its abhorrence of it lively when it has to be occupied with it, but it gives another tone to that which is abhorrent to it, the possession of good sufficient, when it is not forced to think of evil, to put it quite out of mind and sight. Hence it is holy, calm, and has a substantive character of its own, apart from evil, as well as abhorrent of it. With us this can only be in having an object, because we are and ought to be dependent, only so far as we are positively filled with God, in Christ. We are occupied with Good, and hence holy, for that is holiness; and, therefore, easily and discerningly abhorrent from evil, without occupying ourselves with it. It is God's own nature; He is essentially good; delights in it in Himself; and therefore he is abhorrent, in virtue of His goodness, from evil; His nature is the good, and hence in His very nature He rejects the evil. He will do so authoritatively, no doubt, in judgment; but we now speak of nature.

Hence you will find, that when it is in power, love precedes and makes holy, whether it be mutual or the enjoyment of it in the revelation of God. " And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints"- (1 Thess. 3:12-13). So in 1 John 1-" That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

Now here the separation from evil, walking in the light, in God's revealed character in Christ, in the practical 'knowledge of God, as revealed in Christ, in the truth, as it is in Jesus, in whom the life was the light of men, is fully insisted on with lines as clear and strong as the Holy Ghost alone knows how to make them. He who pretends to fellowship, and does not walk in the knowledge of God according to that knowledge, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But what makes the fellowship? This keeps it pure-but what makes it? The revelation of the blessed object, and center of it, in Christ. He was speaking of One who had won His own heart-who was the gathering power into fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. He knew by the Holy Ghost, and enjoyed what the Savior had said-" He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." This was love, infinite, divine; and through the Holy Ghost, the witness of it, had communion with it and told it out, that others might have fellowship with him; and truly his was such. They joined in it. Now that, I apprehend, was gathering power. The Object gathered to necessarily involved what follows. So indeed, he closes the epistle.: we know that the Son of God is come, and He hath. given us an understanding to know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true; that is, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and Eternal life. " Children keep yourselves from idols." That is the gathering power of Good comes before the warning. This is the more remarkable in this epistle, because it is, in a certain sense, occupied with evil, is written concerning those that seduced them.

Holiness, then, is separation to God, if it be, real, as well as from evil; for thus alone we are in the light, for God is light. This is true, in our first sanctifying-we are brought to know God, brought to God. If we come to ourselves it is, " I will arise and go to my Father." If it is restoration, " If thou wilt return, return unto me." Indeed, a soul is never restored really till it does; for it is not in the light so as to purge flesh, even if the fruits of flesh have been confessed; nor is sin seen as it is in God's sight. Hence love comes in, in all true conversion and restoration, however dimly seen; or through however dark workings of conscience. We want to get back to God; there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared; otherwise, it is despair which drives us farther away. Indeed, what would or could restoration be if it were not to God. But, in the full sense of gathering, that is to common fellowship; it is clearly the blessed object which reveals that in which we are to have the fellowship which so gathers. We are to have fellowship in something, i.e., with the Father and with His son, Jesus Christ. This, then, must draw hearts to itself, that in their common delight in it their fellowship may exist. The principle of the tract is this, that in doing this it must separate from evil. It

is the " this-then-is-the-message" part of the statement. So Christ says " I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto me." Now here was perfect love, entire separation from all sin and condemnation of it. " In that He died He died unto sin once,"-separation from the world, and deliverance from the whole power of the enemy and the scene of it. It is perfect love drawing from everything to itself; showing all was evil, absorbing the soul into what was good, in a saving way from it. But when we follow Him into life, all is gone from which he separated. " In that He liveth He liveth unto God"; that is His whole being, so to speak. Now he is, in this life, made higher than the heavens--the divine glory I do not here enter into but the life-it is a heavenly place he takes, and our gathering through the cross is to Him there, in the good where evil cannot come. There is our communion-entering into the Father's house in spirit. And this, I apprehend, is the true character of the assembly, of the Church, for worship in its full sense. It remembers the cross, it worships, the world left out, and all known in heaven before God. He gave Himself that he might gather into one. But here I anticipate a little for I am speaking as yet of the object, not of the active power. I apprehend that what separates the saint from evil, what makes him holy, is the revelation of an object (I mean, of course, through the Holy Ghost working), which draws his soul to that as good, and thereby reveals evil to him, and makes him judge it in spirit, and soul: his knowledge of good and evil, is then not a mere uneasy conscience, but sanctification; that is, sanctification is resting by the enlightening of the Holy Ghost on an object, which, by its nature, purifies the affections by being their object-creates them through the power of grace. Even under law it had this form, " Be ye holy fbr I am holy." Though I admit, there it partook necessarily of the character of the dispensation. In the cross we have these two great principles perfectly brought out. Love is clearly shown, the blessed object which draws the heart; yet the most solemn judgment of and separation from all evil, such is God's perfectness-the foolishness and weakness of God. Divine attraction in love, evil in all its horror and forms, perfectly abhorred by him who is attracted and attaches himself to that. It goes with sin, as sin to love, and goes there because love thus displayed has shown him that it is sin in being made sin for us. This is the power objectively that separates from evil, and ends all connection with it; for I die then to all. The nature I lived to evil in ceases to be me through faith, as hereafter in blessed activity. But I have, perhaps, dwelt long enough on what objectively gathers and gives fellowship; and surely, our fellowship, communion, is in that which is good-and as heavenly by no evil being there. Imperfectly realized no doubt here, but so far as it is not, fellowship is destroyed, for the flesh has none. Hence it is said: " If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." But' we cannot walk out of darkness but by walking in the light, that is, with God; and God is love, and were He not, we could not walk there.

But we have other privileges; God's love in Christ is not only an object which gathers-it is an activity which does so. Love is relative; it acts and shows itself. Hence God has acted. It is not the silent depths of self-consciousness which heathenism made of God, as mere intellect though erroneously supposing matter equally eternal receiving merely form from God though it then became active in generating thoughts; and, delighted with them objectively, became active in creation to produce them according to truth. In this scheme they justly made primeval darkness the mother of all things. But such is not our God. These, save in benefits sensibly known in creation, knew not love in God. Jesus has revealed Him, and we thus know him such, and light, too, consequently. Blessed knowledge! It is, as given to us in the word, eternal life; and this life is occupied with it, as we have seen, with the Father and the Son. But we can equally say that we know this sweet and blessed truth: "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." It is the activity of love

which is the power of gathering. "He gave himself that he might gather into one the children of God, which were scattered abroad." Even in Israel: "How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Here we have not only the attractive sanctifying object bringing into fellowship, but the activity of love, which acts, gives itself, in order to gather; in this we are allowed to have a part. It is this, while sanctifying and maintaining His holiness, making us partakers of it, reveals God and gathers weary souls.

Now this alone is the proper principle and power of gathering. I do not say on which souls are gathered; for that is clearly holiness-separation from evil in which alone communion is maintained; or darkness would have fellowship with light. But love gathers; and this is as evident to the Christian as that it gathers to holiness, and on the principle of it. For when would the mind of man separate from and leave the evil in which it lives, which is its nature, alas, as to its actual desires, and the sphere in which it lives? Never! Alas, its will and lusts are there-it is enmity against God. This is what the presenting of grace in Jesus has so solemnly proved. Law was never given to gather; it was the rule of a people already with God-or a convictor of sin. Sin does not gather to God, nor law; and one or other is all man's state unless grace acts. Besides, grace alone fully reveals God; and hence without grace that to which we are to be gathered is not manifested. Grace alone teaches the heart so as to bring it-all short of this is responsibility merely and failure. It is Christ gathers, and hereby know we love, because He laid down his life for us. Indeed, truth itself is never known till grace comes. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The law told man what he ought to be. It did not tell him what he was. It told him of life if he obeyed, of a curse if he disobeyed; but it did not tell him that God was love; it spoke of responsibility; it said, "Do this and live." All this was perfect in its place, but it told neither what man was nor what God was; that remained concealed; but that is the truth. The truth is not what ought to be, but what is. The reality of all relationships as they are, and the revelation of Him who, if there are any, must be the center of them. Now that could not be told without grace, for man was a ruined sinner, and God is love. And how tell, moreover, that all relationship was gone? For judgment is not a relationship, but the consequence of the breach of one-as the truth of any existing one, but in the revelation of that grace which formed one on this very ground by divine power? Hence we read "of His own will, begat He us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures"; that incorruptible seed of the word. Hence Christ is the truth. For sin, grace, God himself, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, even are revealed as they are; what man is in perfection in relationship with God; what man's alienation from God; what obedience, what disobedient man, what holiness, what sin, what God, what man, what heaven, what earth; nothing but finds itself placed where it is in reference to God, and with the fullest revelation of Himself, while His counsels even are brought out, and of which Christ is the center. Hence grace is the acting power in and alone capable of revealing truth; for Christ's being here is grace; His working effectual grace. Now, the very existence of such an object and such a power would prove gathering into unity, for it must, being divine, gather to itself; yet, we are not left to abstract consequences, however practically familiar to every renewed soul who does, and must know, that all such are drawn together to Christ. The word of God is plain: "He gave himself to gather together into one the children of God which were scattered abroad." I speak of these things as characterizing the power which gathers. Christ, though the truth itself, yet, while being here, was lonely truth: no new relationship was established on a divine basis for other men. Hence presented grace was rejected grace; the corn of wheat abode alone; but, dying, redemption was

accomplished and atonement made. He was no longer "straitened;" the grace and truth shut up, so to speak, into His own heart could now flow freely forth. The highest love was shown; and sin in man, instead of hindering its application and barring relationship, was its object, at least that as to which it was displayed; and thus, therefore, He gathers. Divine righteousness supplants-what, indeed, never existed, though it was called for -human; divine life, mere human; and God finds His glory in salvation. Grace reigns through righteousness. Now, this it is, by uniting souls in the power of the Holy Ghost to Jesus, which gathers by the cross, whence the truth is told to us as we are here, to Christ in heaven who tells our true place to faith there - saving always of course His personal divine title. Now this, I apprehend, is what Ephesians shows, only that as it begins with the divine glory, the true source of all, that epistle begins with the purpose of love as to us in heaven in glory; and brings in redemption itself as a second thing, needed to bring us there. But, this clearly does not alter the love which is, and is acting, to bring us into this blessed and heavenly unity, and which is thus heavenly and in connection with God's glory is holy according to the holiness of His presence. Christ's path on earth is the pattern of it below-in its full measure on the cross. Hence heaven and the cross are correlative. When the blood went into the holiest the body was burnt without the camp-outside; yea, denying all relationship of God with man as he was. Then gathering into one began. He slew the enmity-as between Jew and Gentile-and reconciled both in one body to God; and so we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Ordinances always separate according to human holiness; grace unites according to divine. I believe I have said enough to make what is in my mind plain; and I am more anxious to state than to insist on it. In the full divine sense, without grace, there is neither truth nor holiness (out of God, of course, I mean), save as holiness may be applied to the elect angels, nor can be; because it is impossible that a sinner can be with God; but on the ground and by the power and activity of grace. The power of unity is grace; and as man is a sinner and departed from God, the power of gathering is grace. Grace manifested in Jesus on the cross, and bringing us to God in heaven, and bringing us in Him who is gone there. This is holiness, certainly the cross was not acquiescence in evil.

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

J. N. D.

## Guidance

---

Taken from a Letter from a French Christian, in connection with "Revivals" and "Alliances."

That which is given for his guidance to the Christian is, not God's blessings, but His will, as revealed in the Word. Precious blessings will, doubtless, be found in the path of faith; God is there, with all His riches and all His grace: the enjoyment of these is most precious; but it is not our guide; it may at times help us to discern what is pleasing to God; but that which is the spring and controller of our actions is not the joy we find by the way, but the express will of God, and it alone.

There is a disposition which is but too natural to us, to seek our own, to have respect for that which is pleasant to us, and to take our own comfort or feelings for guides. But obedience to the will of God is a very different thing: the two principles of action are diametrically opposed one to the other. In the first, case, self is the object sought; in the second, that which is suitable to God. It is only in the second case that there is obedience.

I feel alarmed when I think of the number (greater than might be supposed) of those who pursue their course without clearly seeing what they are doing, without principles, and without the knowledge of the will of God; and, it may be, simply because Christians whom they respect have chosen the same path before them; or because they have found at times more life, joy, or light where they are, than elsewhere. Better motives or convictions they have none. What will become of such in the hour of trial? What perplexity, anxiety, await them! and perhaps even temptations to return to some other path which they have left! God can indeed give more strength after a fall; but it were far better not to have to pass through such experience.

Besides, enjoyment is not always a sure guide: it may be wanting even when things are, as a whole, according to God's mind, where there still remain things to be judged. The very presence of God is the cause of many a discomfort which God's children feel within themselves and among them, because there is sin: their discomfort would not be felt if God were absent. For this reason, souls that have followed the blessing, instead of understanding the will and truth of God, are so shaken when blessing fails, and God comes in to judge; whilst he who understands and obeys the will of God is on a sure foundation-the day may be dark, but he has confidence, and in this there is much peace.

It is always in a faithful walk that most trials are to be met with. Satan lets alone those who do not walk by faith; but he harasses in a thousand ways those whose hearts are right, and whose eye is single before God. Christian assemblies which are faithful, will likewise know most of trial.

They who follow a path simply on account of the blessing and comfort they have found in it, are, in a sense, like those to whom the Lord once said, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves" (John 7:26). If they had given heed to these miracles, they alone would have proved Jesus to have been sent from the Father, and then they would have clung to Him as the One who had "the words of eternal life," and as being "Christ, the Son of the living God" (ver. 68, 69). In this case, their attachment to Jesus would have been unvarying, in

spite of all trials. Instead of this, they had followed Jesus, not for His own sake, but for the sake of the loaves with which He had fed them: the loaves-their own comforts and enjoyments-and not the truth, had been sought for. When the soul is in this state, it may soon leave Jesus, because of the hard things which may be the lot of those that "walk with Him" (ver. 60, 65).

The history of the remnant brought back out of captivity to build the temple, amid so many difficulties, presents much instruction, on account of the similarity, in some respects, of their position and ours at the present time. To be in the city of their fathers, and to set up there as well as they could the worship of God, was doubtless great joy; but what a series of difficulties they met with in the execution of their design, though it was altogether according to the mind of God! What difficulties were raised on every side and then how much chastening, how many merited reproofs, and how many years of famine! How many causes for discouragement had they here, especially if they took into consideration the prosperity and peace of those of their brethren who had remained in captivity! It was not far from this time that Esther and Mordecai were made the means of such marked deliverance to the captives of Media. While there was deliverance, feasting, and joy on the one hand, there was poverty, weakness, and misery on the other. It was therefore needful, in order to be able to hold their position in Judea, that those who were there should understand the will and purposes of God; for had any one only sought blessing, he would soon have been discouraged. Did not some few of them bitterly regret leaving Babylon, when they saw the wretched state of the remnant? And yet they were just in the position in which God would have them. The name and Spirit of the Lord were there; there also were His prophets, His worship, and His Word: none of these were to be found in Media-neither His worship, nor His presence, nor even the name of the Lord, is once mentioned in Esther.

Remember, also, the horrible language of the Jews in Egypt; showing, alas! how Satan can blind the hearts of men when they only seek enjoyment, instead of the purpose and the will of God. As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven.... as we have done.... in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine" (Jer. 44:16-18). Prosperity in this world was one of the blessings of the Jewish covenant; but this terrible example shows us, that in the present case it had become a false light, leading them to destruction.

In connection with "revivals" and "the effects produced by the Evangelical Alliance," it has been asked, "Why is there so much blessing around, while there is none among those that walk with you?" I reply, that it is a mistake to suppose that there is none. If God makes us partakers in what He counts the most precious blessing, I cannot say there is none. The pains He takes to humble us, and to lower us in our own eyes, is a most precious and incontrovertible proof of the interest He most graciously takes in us. His work is to strip us of ourselves, of self, which is the greatest obstacle to our blessing. It is bitter water to the flesh, doubtless; but it is invaluable. If we have risen very high in our own conceits, on account of some little light (and our foolish pride has already brought us much sorrow), what better could God do for us, than to deliver us from that which hindered us from being vessels of blessing? As a disordered stomach turns sour the most healthful food, so every blessing which, in such a state, we might have received from God, would

have proved a temptation, and would have served but to nourish the flesh.

Now, He is bringing us down to a state of heart in which there are fewer obstacles to His blessing us; and how precious is this Death is no longer an instrument of evil for our hurt in the hands of the devil; it is in the hand of Jesus, and He makes use of it (bitter as it may be) as a remedy, for our good. Therefore it would be a great mistake to say, "We have no blessings."

Neither let us forget the state of ruin into which the Church has fallen. We who preach this ruin are the first to feel the misery of it. We are far from having gathered all God's children, or from possessing all the gifts. We are also (unconsciously, perhaps) enslaved by many a worldly custom and principle; and in the little that remains we are unfaithful. These and many other things suffice as the explanation of the much trial and wretchedness which is often so painfully felt.

Then as to those who are bewildered by such things as "revivals" and "alliances." It is indeed beautiful when souls are really turned from darkness to light, and it is a great honor to be used of God for such a work; yet my object in separating myself from evil all around was neither evangelization, nor the conversion of souls;... and yet we have had to praise Him for the conversion of many souls, which have been given to us in past times and even of late. O no! I have no reason to envy any; but it is well for us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due season.

As to the assertion, that the conversions, awakenings, etc., which have taken place in national churches, etc., prove that God authorizes and approves of the system in the midst of which such things occur, I decidedly and entirely reject it. God blesses His own Word, and gives also a blessing to the faithfulness of the one who preaches it with sincerity, candor, and zeal; but He will show, sooner or later, that, while acting in the system, the system itself could not meet His approval. Did not the Lord show this in the apostles' days? How many blessings were shed on the Judo-Christian Church at Jerusalem! "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe" (Acts 21:20): and advantage could be taken of this to show that God approved that Judeo-Christian state of things-as also to wage war with those who did not link themselves with it, so as to slight the efforts of a Paul. But what was the fact of the case? God was there to bless His WORD and His sincere laborers; but the system was judged soon after, when Titus came to destroy the city, burn the temple, and scatter that oppressed nation. God can act in the system as in a vessel, but not with the principles of the system; for He never gives efficacy to a bad thing. (Signed) A. D.

[The writer of the above rejoices always when Christ is preached, and at every conversion by that name.

Speaking of union, he says elsewhere-" This word is loudly sounded forth now. The importance of union among Christians is in every one's mouth. But is the union proposed real? Is it the fruit of the means recognized in Scripture? Is its tendency the same? Many a uniting of Christians is union with the world, and tends to lead them back to multitudinism (i.e., union with the world), which is the negative of their having been separated from this present evil world. Such is but a snare of the enemy again to get into his possession that which had escaped from him; it is a snare of the enemy, and to be judged as such."

## Heaven

---

My desire is to collect from Scripture the instruction afforded in it with respect to heaven, whether we regard it as the present home of our affections, or as our future actual habitation. "Partakers of the heavenly calling," it is surely well for us to know what is revealed as to the place to which we journey. Already made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," we are but looking round at the objects amid which abounding grace has already in spirit, and as one with Christ, placed us, in thus meditating on what Scripture reveals of heaven. It is not intended to confine our attention to the passages in which the word "heaven" occurs, or to notice all those in which it does. May the blessed Spirit of God himself direct and control both those who read, and the poor sinner saved by grace, and waiting for God's Son from heaven, who attempts to write on such a theme.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." These are the words with which the volume of inspiration opens. It is not till we reach the heart of the book, however, that we learn for what ends respectively these separate spheres were formed. "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Psa. 115:16). But while such was the general and ostensible design of God, we learn from another Scripture, that what seems an exception to this, viz., the raising of the saints to a place-and such a place!-in heaven, was really the purpose of God before all worlds. In Eph. 3:9-11, we read of "God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by [or by means of] the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he hath purposed in Christ Jesus." Thus we see that while, as one has observed, "neither heaven nor hell were made for man;" while it is sin that has opened hell to the human family (see Matt. 25:41), and grace that has taken occasion from man's sin, to open heaven to redeemed and blood-washed sinners; the purpose according to which these wonders are accomplished, is an eternal purpose. God, foreseeing the fall of man, purposed from all eternity to raise some from among the ruined race to occupy, with his glorified son, the heavens, which the Psalmist informs us "are the Lord's," while it is the earth he has "given to the children of men." It is not by accident then, but according to God's eternal purpose, that we find ourselves, instead of being blessed with temporal favors in earthly places, "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And if the thought arises in each one of our wondering hearts, "Why have I found [such] grace in thine eyes?" let the answer at once satisfy and assure us, and give us courage to look around by faith on the inheritance of which we are with Christ co-heirs, "that in the ages to come he might skew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Save in the way of typical illustration, the Old Testament does not furnish much instruction as to heaven. We do read there indeed of Enoch, that "he walked with God, and that he was not, for God took him." But it is in the New Testament we find that "he was translated that he should not see death." It is in the New Testament we are thus taught the meaning of the words, "God took him"-he "was not found, because God had translated him" (Heb. 11:5). So as to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; we read in Genesis of their pilgrim-character and course, and feel that there must have

been some wondrously powerful attraction to act thus on their souls, and make them strangers on the earth. But it is in the Epistle to the Hebrews we learn the secret of it all. Of Abraham it is said, " For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Of the whole of those who in these early days of the world's history "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," we are told, " They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." The patriarchs themselves, and the other saints of the Old Testament, did no doubt look forward to a heavenly country and a better resurrection; but it was in the exercise of a faith which went beyond the dispensation under which they were placed; and hence it is not from their history, but from the notices of them which the New Testament contains, that we gather the heavenly character of their prospects and their hopes. The dispensation itself (that, at least, under which Israel was placed), was essentially an earthly one; and the notices of heaven which are scattered through' the Old Testament regard it simply as the dwelling-place of God, and of the angelic messengers of his power; or else, as the place where the sources of those influences are which affect the state of things here below, whether that state be viewed as actually existent, or viewed prophetically as anticipative of the future. Thus we read of Jehovah, as " He that sitteth in the heavens"-, " The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven"- " The Lord looked down from heaven"- " He will hear him from His holy heaven."- "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens"- " Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens"- "Sing unto God, sing praises to His name; extol Him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH"- " To Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens which were of old"- " The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens"- "Praise God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power"- " God is in heaven, and thou upon earth." These are a specimen of the passages which speak of heaven as the dwelling-place of God, and the throne of his glory. As the place whence those influences proceed which regulate the course of events below, we have mention of heaven thus. Nebuchadnezzar was to be driven out until he had learned this solemn, salutary lesson; and then, it was said to him, " Thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule." This, of course, would apply to the then existing, as well as to the present state of things. The connection of the heavens with the earth as the source of holy, benign influences in the future millennial kingdom, is more largely treated of. " And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel [or the seed of God]" (Hos. 2:21,22). "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth I who hest set thy glory above the heavens" (Psa. 8:1). " Ascribe ye strength unto God: His excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of Thy holy places: the God of Israel. is He that giveth strength and power unto his. people. Blessed be God" (Psa. 68:34;35). "Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth" (Psa. 76:8,9). " Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." " For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord" (Psa. 102:19-22). " Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the

skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord, have created it" (Isa. 45:8). Such is the light shed on this subject in the scriptures of the Old Testament. Heaven is regarded as God's dwelling-place-his throne; and whether the present or the future be treated of Heaven is only viewed as the source and depository of influences which affect the earth. That heaven should be in part peopled by inhabitants chosen from among earth's ruined race; and that in those glorious days to come, when the heavens shall so beneficially influence the earth, it should be by men, not angels, that these influences should be applied-these were truths, the revelation of which was reserved for another and brighter economy than the last. It is to us that it is now made known in the words of the Apostle: "For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Heb. 2:5). The habitable earth to come (for such is the meaning of the word) is not to be under the government of angels; but, as the Apostle goes on to skew, of man. First, of that blessed Son of Man, spoken of in the eighth Psalm, here quoted by Paul. Then, further, to those many sons who are being brought to glory, and as to whom it is said of the captain of their salvation, that " he is not ashamed to call them brethren." But here I find myself in danger of anticipating what more properly belongs to a further stage of the present inquiry.

We have not to read far in the New Testament, before we find ourselves in another element, so to speak, than that which pervades and characterizes the Old. It is no longer exclusively, or even chiefly, man, and his world, and his trial in it, with God in the distance, and behind a veil; no, not even accompanied, as all this is in the Old Testament, with bright promises of future, but distant, glory and blessing. It is the Son of God Himself, come here from heaven, manifesting what heaven is in His own ways, opening heaven to view, and becoming by His death and resurrection the way of access to heaven for sinful man. And though this new and heavenly light does not burst immediately upon us in its fullness-though the first Gospel we read presents Christ more in Jewish connection, as the son of David and the seed of Abraham, " a minister," too, "of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. 15:8)-still He is, as to His Person, "Immanuel, God with us," and His glory cannot be hid. Yea, when He seeks to hide it under the veil of a lowliness in which He, sinless, and indeed the Holy One of God, stoops to identify Himself with the repenting remnant of Israel in the very act in which they confess their sins, then heaven opens, the Spirit of God descends as a dove and lights upon Him, and a voice from heaven proclaims, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:16, 17). How the light of heaven begins to break upon us here"! How we begin to learn what the mind, the heart, of heaven is! First, the blessed One Himself is from heaven; and in Him we see the perfect moral display of what heaven is. Man-and earth has hitherto taken its character from man-seeks to exalt himself. Here is One who so deeply humbles Himself, that, sinless and infinitely holy as He is, He condescends to take His place amid those who were confessing their sins. He had no sin; and, in the still more emphatic language of Scripture, " knew no sin"; yet does He identify Himself with the repenting remnant in this first movement of their hearts towards God; and to all that the Baptist urges to deter Him, He meekly replies, " Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." What a contrast between heaven and earth! The only persons on earth in whom the Spirit of God was then working, took the place not of justifying or exalting themselves, but of confessing their sins and justifying God. Here was One from heaven, who, I need not repeat, had no sins of His own to confess; but whither do the instincts, the mind, the heart of heaven lead Him? To this broken-hearted, contrite, confessing company. Amid them He takes His lowly place of

self-emptying self-renunciation; and heaven-responsive to this perfect exhibition of the mind and ways of heaven in Him who came from heaven -opens, to declare its approbation and delight; while a voice from heaven proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus is heaven's delight, as well as heaven's perfect moral manifestation and display. Blessed Jesus, draw us towards and after Thyself!

But this light of heaven is too pure and unearthly for the self-will and pride of man; and any who receive and reflect it, must expect no better treatment from mankind than that which He received, who in His own Person brought this light of life into the world. But if rejected by earth, heaven smiles but the more; and it is interesting to see how early in His ministry the blessed Lord taught His disciples to look away from earth to heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"- "Blessed are they that mourn"- "Blessed are the meek"- "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake"- "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." Very different indeed is this from the language of the Law. It had spoken of blessings on the obedient of quite another sort. Blessed they were to be in the city blessed in the field-blessed in their basket and their store: the Lord would cause their enemies to be smitten before them, and all people should be afraid of them. The Lord would make them the head, and not the tail; they should be above only, and not be beneath. Now it is-"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." But how blessed? Hear the answer: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." They who, attracted by heaven's light and love in the Person of Jesus, followed in His steps, and so shared His rejection by the earth, should find, like Him, both their solace and their reward in heaven-a solace so sweet, a reward so rich, that, amid all their trials and persecutions, they might, in the hope of it, "rejoice and be exceeding glad. Heaven, then, is the place of reward for those who, through grace, have suffered with Christ, and suffered for Him on earth.

Heaven's love, we have said, as well as heaven's light, was displayed in Jesus. And surely it was so. And He would have it so in us, beloved, as well. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust...Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:44-48). If Jesus had come from heaven to let in the light of heaven upon our souls, attracting us away from earth so effectually that earth's rudest blasts of persecution should only cause us to "rejoice and be exceeding glad" that our reward was great in heaven, how was this joy 'to be evinced? Surely in practical resemblance to our Father in heaven, who showers blessing on both the evil and the good, on the just and on the unjust. A heathen or a Jew, who looked not beyond the earth, could be kind to those who were kind to him; but if grace has opened heaven to us, and caused us to know that we have a Father in heaven, surely that Father's mind and heart and ways must now become our standard. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The instructions addressed by our Lord to the disciples as to prayer afford precious light respecting heaven. Those instructions were perfectly adapted to the state in which the disciples were then found; and in their spirit, and in many respects as to the letter, they are still adapted to ours. "Our Father which art in heaven." It is not only that God dwells in heaven; that is abundantly shown in the Old Testament. But now that God in heaven is revealed in such a sort that poor sinful

mortals on the earth can say to Him, " Our Father which art in heaven." But, further, that Father is obeyed in heaven -cheerfully and perfectly obeyed. There is but one will consulted or regarded there; and that the infinitely perfect will of our Father in heaven. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Happy, happy place! No struggles of the creature's will for pre-eminence there. No disobedience-no self-will. How happy that family, even on earth, where the children delight to obey their parents; or rather, in the intelligence of affection, to anticipate their wishes and fulfill them before they can be expressed. What profound happiness there is in the spirit of obedience. What must heaven be, where every movement of the affections, every word, and every action is in absolute, perfect obedience to our Father who dwells there! And what will earth be when this prayer is answered? "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Alas! how different from this is earth at present; and how divine and perfect the wisdom and love which would have us transfer our hearts and our treasures from such a place to heaven. " Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Would that these words might be written indelibly on our hearts. Vain indeed is the attempt to have our treasures below and our hearts above. Is not this the real secret of the want of heavenly-mindedness so universally complained of even where heavenly truth is known. "If ye know these things," as our Lord said on another occasion, " happy are ye if ye do them."

Towards the close of Matthew's gospel, we have a passage which teaches us that in heaven those relationships have no existence which so principally form the character of human existence here below. The Sadducees had thought to entangle our Lord by the question respecting a Jewish woman who, according to the Jewish law in that special case, had had seven husbands in succession. " In the resurrection," they asked, " whose wife shall she be of the seven?" Jesus, in the perfection of his wisdom, replied, " Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." I only cite this here as conclusive proof with regard to heaven, that there our divine relationships to God and Christ by the Spirit, and to one another as in the Spirit, will have entirely superseded those natural, human relationships which only exist on earth. We shall be " as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30).

We shall be no losers by this, beloved. If natural, earthly relationships have no place in heaven, there are relationships there which will fill up all the capacious affections of the renewed heart. These we know by faith even now, and find, however feebly, their blessed operation on our souls. What else is it that is set forth to us in Matt. 25 under the representation of virgins going forth to meet the bridegroom? The night may be long and dark. Faith, and hope, and patience, may all be tried to the uttermost. Even those who are most wakeful, and have the fullest supply of oil, may, through unfaithfulness, yield in some measure to the universal drowsiness; and the lamp may require a special trimming on the immediate approach of the Bridegroom. But there will be those, when he comes, who will have thus trimmed their lamps, and of whom it is said, " they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." What must it be to be inside that door? Happy souls-wise and favored virgins who are admitted there!

But another parable in this chapter tells us something of heaven's happiness, or rather of the happiness of those who are to dwell there with Jesus. Such are represented as servants to whom their master has entrusted goods to be employed for him during his absence. And what is the reward to be bestowed at his return on those who have faithfully occupied their respective talents in his service? "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." O yes, it will be a part of heaven's happiness, though heaven be not mentioned here, for those who have made Christ's interest their own, and have faithfully used for him the few opportunities here afforded them for glorifying him, to be admitted by him to a participation in his joy, with inconceivably augmented opportunities for serving and glorifying that Lord, to serve and honor whom is all their happiness and delight. "I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Passing over Mark's gospel as not differing materially with regard to the present subject from Matthew's; in Luke, we find throughout in a special way the moral expression of what heaven is. We don't wait in this gospel till Jesus is thirty years of age, to learn heaven's joy over him as incarnate and on earth. The very night on which he was born, the angel of the Lord visits the pious shepherds as they watch their flock; the glory of the Lord shines round about them, and the angel announces to them, in language sufficiently expressive of his own interest and delight in the message he conveys, the tidings of the Savior's birth. And ere the words have well fallen from his lips, "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." What a testimony this that Jesus is the center of heaven's joy! And what a reproof, too, of man's-of our-indifference to that Blessed One who has condescended to link himself with us as he never did with the angels in heaven.

In Luke 9 we have an account of the vision seen by Peter, John, and James, in the holy Mount. This vision, we are told by Peter, represented "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." They had not followed cunningly-devised fables, in making known this power and but were eye-witnesses of His majesty (see 2 Peter 1:16-18). Three of the Evangelists give us an account of this vision; and there are circumstances noted by each one, which are not mentioned by the others. Altogether, it presents us with a delightful view of the blessedness to which the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will introduce us. There is the beholding Christ in glory. What will it be to gaze on that countenance, once marred for our sins, and covered with gore, but now, even as for a little season on the holy Mount, resplendent with glory? He "was transfigured before them; and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." So says Matthew. "And He was transfigured before them; and His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." Such is the testimony of Mark. "And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening." So writes Luke. But how shall we bear to gaze on such glory? Ah, we shall be in like glory ourselves! "There talked with Him Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory." To see Jesus, to be with Him, to be like Him-is this not heaven? But further, "they talked with Him." Each Evangelist tells us this. "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with Him." (Matthew). "And there appeared unto them Elias, with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus" (Mark). "And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory" (Luke). Observe, they talked with Him. Each gospel thus expresses it. It was not that He spoke to them, and that they

stood at a distance, as servants, receiving His communications. They talked with Him. They were in familiar intercourse. And shall not we in heaven? Then what must heaven be? But what was their theme? It is Luke who informs us of this. They "spake of His decease [or exodus] which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." And will not this be our theme of eternal wonder, and ever new, if not ever-increasing delight? But further still: "a cloud overshadowed them." What was this cloud? "There came a voice out of the cloud" we are told in the gospels. Peter says the voice came to him "from the excellent glory." No wonder that Peter and the sons of Zebedee feared as they entered into the cloud. What man, still in mortal flesh, could bear to be enshrined in that "more excellent glory?" But Moses and Elias could sustain it. It was their element, so to speak. It shall be ours in heaven. What were the words uttered by this voice, which came to Jesus?—Mark this. "There came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Ah yes! this is heaven's deepest joy; fellowship with the Father Himself, in the delight with which He views His beloved Son; and fellowship with Jesus, in His delight to be thus the object of the Father's love. One is reminded of the lines:—

This joy, e'en now, on earth, is ours,

But only, Lord, above;

Thy saints, without a pang, shall know

The fullness of thy love.

Blessed Jesus, draw us onwards by the attraction of Thy love!

As we pass on with Luke, we find, strikingly marked, the earthly condition, and the temper of mind, which in Jesus corresponded to the glory, which, for a moment, we have been, as it were, permitted to behold. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath no place where to lay His head." This marks the condition:—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." These words, in answer to the disciples who would have called down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, indicates the temper of mind of Him to whom all this glory belongs. Both passages are in the same chapter with the account of His transfiguration.

Heaven is noticed in the next chapter, as the place where the disciples' names were enrolled. Of the earthly remnant, in days to come, we read, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautified and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem" (Isa. 4:2,3). But our Evangelist, or rather our Lord Himself, whose words are recorded by the Evangelist, speaks of even a nobler registry than this: "Rejoice," says he, "because your names are written in heaven." Israel was giving sad evidence of its unpreparedness for those days of blessing on the earth of which prophets had written and psalmists had sung. In this very charter, Jesus had been lamenting over the cities in which His mighty works had been wrought. His disciples were the companions of His rejection. But, if there was to be no present registry of the living in Jerusalem; if Jerusalem itself was to become a desolation, as it did shortly afterward, the disciples were to know, and we were to know, that there is a registry kept in heaven. Happy they whose names are recorded there.

Luke 12:37, intimates as to those servants who are found watching when the Lord comes, that He will Himself become the servant of their joys. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Minister, in grace, to our necessities here, Christ will yet become minister to our joys in glory.

Then in chap. 15, who is there who has not found there such an expression of what heaven is, as has caused his heart to leap within him for joy? If heaven be the place of glory, it is also the abode of grace. Not a heart there but what beats in unison with the grace of Him who reveals Himself as "the God of all grace." Did heaven look down with interest and solicitude when the good Shepherd came thence, to seek in this dreary wilderness the lost one from His flock? And when He returns home, with that lost one on his shoulder, calling together his friends and neighbors, to rejoice with him, has heaven no response to such a call? "I say unto you"-and who so able to tell us of heaven's mind, and heaven's ways?" that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." And again, as to the woman and the lost piece of silver, and her rejoicing with her friends and neighbors, that she has found it, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." And though heaven be only mentioned in the parable of the prodigal, by the prodigal himself, when he says to his father, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; what is the effect of the entire parable but to place us, as it were, in the center of heaven's joy, and make known to us that the wondrous occasion of this joy is the fact of our being there! "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." True, there is not a word of the prodigal's joy, nor would it be the place for such a word. When God rejoices, and all heaven rejoices over his recovery, silence as to himself and his feeling best expresses the deep, unuttered, unutterable joy which fills his heart. True also, that in the parable there is an envious, discontented, complaining elder brother. But he represents no one that will actually be found in heaven. His character is drawn to convict and confound the Pharisees, who, rejecting the grace of Christ themselves, as unneeded by them, repined at its overflow to others, who consciously to themselves, and manifestly to all, did stand in need of it. And then, as matter of fact in the parable itself, the pride and envy of the elder brother keep him outside the house. The prodigal enters, arrayed in the best robe, with a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet., The father is there, rejoicing over the lost one he has regained; and the very servants of the house, taking their tone from him, participate in the deep joy which swells every heart. How their words to the elder brother show with what zest they enter into the spirit of the whole occasion! Their hearts are full. "Thy brother is come and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound!" But "he was angry, and would not go in." Excluded thus by his own sullen pride and envy, his presence mars not the joy that reigns within. Would that any who are too self-righteous to enter heaven on the same ground as "publicans and sinners," might be led to lay this to heart. But O what a view of heaven and heaven's joy does this wondrous chapter afford us. And if by faith we have entered there in spirit already, and had our hearts assured by the grace that not only welcomes us, but finds its own highest, deepest, richest joy in receiving us, vile, worthless, and beggared, as we were, it does not the less instruct us as to what we shall find heaven to be when actually there. A heaven of glory would be no heaven to sinners, or to those who have been so, were it not the heaven of perfect grace this chapter shows it to be.

In what blessed harmony with all this is what we find in Luke 23:43. The poor dying malefactor, who, After first uniting with his fellow-criminal in reviling Jesus (see Matt. 27:44), had his heart so touched as to confess Jesus, and reprove the other, who continued his revilings, entreated the One who was dying by his side in the well-known prayer, " Lord, remember one when thou comest into thy kingdom." He had the Old Testament Jewish expectation of Messiah's kingdom, and he now also had faith to acknowledge as the Messiah the sufferer by his side, entreating that he may be remembered by Him in the days of His yet future kingdom.

Our Lord reveals to him something much more near and intimate. Paradise was to receive His own spirit, when He resigned it to His Father; and in that Paradise the soul of the poor dying thief was to be with Him. " Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Of Luke 24 it may be remarked, as, indeed, of all the accounts the Gospels contain of the intercourse between Jesus risen and His disciples, that they afford us some light as to our heavenly state.. However it may be true of the souls of departed saints, that, absent from the body, they are even now present with the Lord, we are assured that it is in resurrection we shall enjoy the heavenly glory. And no one can read these records of the interviews between Christ and His disciples, subsequent to His resurrection, without remarking the similarity between His appearances to them and the various appearances of angels, as described both in the Old Testament and the New. What would be an obstruction to gross corporeal frames, such as we at present possess, was none to the resurrection-body of our Lord. So different was the manner of His intercourse with His disciples from all that they had witnessed prior to His death, that on one sudden appearance noticed in this chapter, " they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." He invited them, however, to satisfy themselves that it was He; and more than this, that it was His body they beheld. " Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." He even ate before them, that not a doubt might remain on their hearts. Yet what do we find in this chapter? First, He walks by the side of two of them, as, they suppose, a total stranger; then, after causing their hearts to burn within them by His discourse, constrained by their urgency, He turns in with them, to partake of their hospitality. In the act of taking bread, blessing it, and giving to them, their eyes are opened, and they know Him; but He vanishes out of their sight. They return to Jerusalem, and find the eleven, gathered together with others, saying to one another, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." The two from Emmaus then relate what had passed with them; and it is as they speak, Jesus appears in the midst on the occasion already referred to, when they thought it was a spirit. The doors were closed, for fear of the Jews, as we learn from John's Gospel; but this was no obstruction whatever to Jesus. When He had been with them after this sort for forty days, " He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." However He might in His resurrection-body visit for a time those who were still in bodies of flesh and blood, manifesting Himself to them as we have seen-heaven, not earth, was the home of His resurrection-body. Heaven was His home, as we know, in other and higher senses than this. But even His body, the derivation of which, by the power of the Holy Ghost from His Virgin Mother, was His one great link to earth, is now, as the Apostle has it in 1 Cor. 15:44, a " spiritual body," and rises to its own proper home and element in the heavens. The blood having been poured out in atonement, He having laid down the life He had taken on assuming flesh, He has received it again

in resurrection. He can say, " a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have;" while the Apostle assures us that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. This is much too sacred a subject for speculation, or anything indeed but the spirit of lowliest worship; yet may we rejoice to see in all this intimations of what our own future state will be. We, too, as we know, are in resurrection-glory to reign with Christ over this world below. But, however we may be commissioned and enabled, in fulfillment of the errands and offices we shall then discharge, to appear occasionally to the inhabitants of the millennial earth, as the risen Jesus did to His disciples, heaven is the proper home of such bodies as we shall then possess. Conformed to Jesus in resurrection, where His risen body has found its abode, our bodies shall also find theirs; while it will be as easy, doubtless, for a spiritual body to appear, and vanish, and instantly transport itself from one place to another, as we have seen was the case with the risen body of our Lord during the forty days succeeding His resurrection. One only thing let us ever bear in mind, it will not be to please ourselves, or to do our own will, that the wondrous powers of the resurrection-body will be employed; we shall then, blessed be God! have lost all desire for this. And if we be "like unto the angels," and more than this, like to our risen Lord, as to the capacities of our bodies, we shall be like them, too, in perfect subjection to the will of God. The Psalmist speaks of the "angels that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." And we know who it was that said-" I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." "Whatever capacity we may possess in resurrection for transporting ourselves from heaven to earth, or from earth back again to heaven, we shall never once either do it, or desire to do it, in any other errand than to do, as our Master, the will of Him that sends us. "What would be the utmost physical capacities without this moral, spiritual perfection -this entire, delighted subjection of heart, mind, and will to God?

If we pass on immediately from Luke to the Acts, it is not because John affords no light on the subject before us, or because it is intended to omit the consideration of it; but because Acts is properly the inspired sequel to the Gospel by Luke. Luke closes with the ascension of Jesus to heaven; Acts commences by recapitulating the particulars of that event, supplying some which had not been recorded in the former treatise. The hearts of the disciples not yet transferred from earth (I do not mean in any evil sense, but earth as the sphere of thought and hope) to heaven, had been curious to learn from their Lord whether at that time He would restore the kingdom to Israel. He informs them, that it is not for them to know the times and the seasons which the Father had put in His own power, but that they should receive power by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and in that power be His witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. It was when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, that He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Their steadfast gaze upwards shows how heaven had now become everything to them, by its having received their beloved Lord. And what is it that is first presented to their rapt and wondering spirits, as they gaze thus upon the cloud which had enshrined the Object of their hearts? It was the prospect of His re-appearance: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Heaven thus became everything to their hearts in two ways. First, to their affections, as the present receptacle and abode of Him to whom their hearts belonged; and, secondly, to their hopes, as the place whence they were to behold their returning Lord. Beloved, is heaven all this, and for the same reasons, to our affections and to our hopes? Well may we challenge our hearts as to this. What answer can

they make?

How true to this heavenly attraction were the hearts of the apostles and early Christians! Read through the /early chapters of the Acts, and you will find that with them heaven was the grand all-absorbing thought; and what made it so to them was this, that Jesus had ascended there, and was there exalted to the right-hand of God. " This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right-hand," etc. " Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things." " Him hath God exalted with His right-hand." What was the practical effect of this knowledge of Christ as the glorified man in heaven, witnessed to by the Holy Ghost; who had come from heaven to declare and to attest His glory? Ah, it was to make earth nothing in men's esteem. If heaven had become everything because Christ was there, earth had become nothing because Christ was rejected from the earth. Accordingly, that which, as earthly men, they would have prized and cleaved to, they rejoiced to relinquish. Distinctions, such as those between poor and rich, vanished from among those who were joint partakers of this heavenly knowledge. A crucified, risen, and exalted Christ, known by the Holy Ghost, came down from heaven, absorbed the attention and concentrated the affections of each, and in the light of this heavenly Object, everything on earth was lighter than vanity. " And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." Jesus had come from heaven and perfectly exhibited the mind, and heart, and ways of heaven, in His whole life of humiliation, and obedience, and love. Now there was an assembly in which for a little season the same mind, and heart, and ways, though not with equal perfectness, were manifested. And what is the secret' of the church's present forlorn condition? What, but that she has lost sight of heaven, and got absorbed with the things of earth? Ah, it is the spirit of heaven that unites, and gathers, and blends; it is the spirit of this world which scatters and divides. Get a center on earth, and around it you may gather a few who regard it in one common light; but in gathering these, or gathering with them, you separate from Christ, and from those who are His. Let Christ in glory-heavenly glory-be really beheld by faith, and those who so behold Him must, by the power of the Holy Ghost, who thus reveals Him, be gathered around Him; gathered, too, on ground from which nothing but ignorance or earthliness can keep any apart.

Alas! how soon did such earthly and separative elements enter. And while we trace this in Acts 5 and 6, how do we find in chap. 7 that the world could not bear the bright light of heaven, shining as it yet did in the unselfish, unearthly ways of those witnesses to an earth-rejected and heavenly Lord. But if Stephen had the honor of being the first who was actually made conformable to Christ's death, had he not the honor likewise of being the first to see, and testify that he saw, heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God? Heaven had opened at Christ's baptism, to proclaim Him to be the well-beloved Son of God. A voice from the excellent

glory had declared the same on the holy mount. Christ himself had ascended to heaven in the sight of His disciples; but the cloud they saw Him enter had received Him out of their sight. Now, it is given to the dying witness for his rejected and heavenly Master, to see heaven opened. By faith he had seen this so clearly even at the commencement of his discourse, that his face shone with the reflected glory. " And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face- as it had been the face of an angel." But at the close, when, cut to the heart by what they had heard, they gnashed on him with their teeth; how did he meet-how was it given him to meet-this full enmity of their hearts? " But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right-hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right-hand of God." And it is to this glorified Son of Man he commends his departing spirit, as Jesus himself had commended His to the Father. Blessed resemblance of the servant to His Master, the disciple to his Lord. " Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," said the One; " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," said the other. " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was the language of the One; " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," was the language of the other. From the death of Stephen, the labors of those who preached the Gospel, took a wider scope, and, as we shall see on returning to the Acts, a still more absolutely heavenly character- everything that allied itself especially to the Jewish nation, and thus to the earth, being gradually dropped. But I leave this for the moment and turn back to the Gospel of John.

It has often been observed amongst us, that John gives us no account of the transfiguration; and the reason which has been suggested must surely commend itself to our souls, viz., that throughout this Gospel faith sees Jesus walking in an elevation, and manifesting a glory, equal to that for a little season displayed to the senses on the holy Mount. It would, therefore, be out of keeping with the character of this Gospel, to find in it, as a special, exceptional thing, the event which in the other Gospels marks a glory beaming in every page, one might almost say every verse, of this.

In the other Gospels, Jesus is seen as a man upon earth, distinguished indeed from all other men, by marks which indubitably show Him to be, and that He was acknowledged of heaven to be, more than man; yet the starting point of the historian is either His descent according to the flesh from Abraham and David; or His miraculous conception and birth as the virgin's Son, and even in this character, Son of God; or else, the commencement of His public ministry in Israel. The general character of each history is in harmony, too, with the point from which it begins-the same Christ, I surely need not say, in all: and each Gospel, while true to its own general distinctive character, affording amply sufficient proof that it is the same heavenly Person who is the subject. But heaven is the starting point with John. It is not the descent of our Lord from David, or Abraham, or Adam, or His miraculous conception, or the commencement of His ministry. " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is His eternal existence; His divine titles, acts, and glories; His descent from heaven to assume flesh, and take the various places in which the other Gospels present Him. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." It is not here heaven opening over a man upon the earth, a humble, obedient man, while God proclaims Him to be His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased; it is Christ as the Son of the Father; the One who was with God, and was God; and whose glory when He had taken flesh, so that faith

could discern it, was discerned to be " the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Upon such a One all external glory might well be expected to wait. And, accordingly, at the close of the first chapter we hear Jesus say to Nathanael, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter [or henceforth, ■π' ■ρτι] ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending, and descending on the Son of Man."

In his conversation with Nicodemus, our Lord speaks to him of a kingdom which that which is born of the flesh can neither "see," nor "enter "; and from this insists on the necessity of being born again. But He intimates that this kingdom has a heavenly as well as an earthly department; and while Nicodemus, as a master of Israel, ought to have known that there could be no participation, even in the earthly things of this kingdom, without this new birth, Christ had heavenly things to reveal, which He alone could be expected to know. But He did know them, and could speak of them with certainty, as of things with which He was conversant and familiar:-" We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven." Ah! there are heights which no man can scale, and secrets of glory and blessedness there which no man can reveal, save that One who descended from those heights, and who (surpassing mystery!) while walking here in humiliation as a man, was still, by virtue of his Godhead, as much there as here-" the Son of Man which is in heaven." And if Nicodemus was at that time incapable of receiving the testimony to these heavenly wonders, he was but in one common case with us all. The cross must first be known. God's love in giving His only-begotten Son, and the actual putting away of sin by the lifting up of the Son of Man on the cross: these are the truths by means of which a new life is communicated, the truths, in receiving which a man is born again. Then he can enter into these mysteries of glory and of grace. But the cross was necessary as on Christ's part, and this new birth is necessary on our part, to the reception by us of any vital knowledge of heavenly things. Natural capacity avails nothing here. As John witnesses of Jesus, at the close of this chapter" He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth: and no man received' His testimony." Yet though no man by nature receives it, there are those, who through grace, are made partakers of a new life, who do receive it. "And he that hath [thus] received His testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true." And for such it is added, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." Thus we get a little glimpse of those "heavenly things" which could not as yet in detail be made known. There was one here who knew them, and was capable of revealing them. But the cross was the way to them, and it had not yet as matter of fact, been endured. Because of this, and because the Holy Ghost had not yet descended, the capacity of apprehending them was wanting, even in the disciples themselves. This we see remarkably all through this gospel. The heart of Jesus laboring to make known, what His most intimate associates, and that even to the end, lacked the capacity to apprehend. But more of this anon.

In chap. iv. we have one passage, which opens to us very sweetly something of our own future joys. In the absence of the disciples, Jesus had been sowing the precious seed in the heart of the poor Samaritan woman. She had gone into the city, rousing by her exclamations the men of the place, and thus preparing them for the reception of Christ Himself. There rises before the eyes of

Jesus the prospect so delightful to His heart, of being two days amid this happy throng, imparting to them eternal life by making Himself known to them as "the Christ, the Savior of the world." His disciples are to participate in this joy. They are to reap where He has sown. But sower and reapers are to rejoice together. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors." And as to us, beloved, what was the whole lifetime of Jesus here below but a seed-time, during which He labored for us? And what will all eternity be but the harvest, during which we shall "reap that whereon we bestowed no labor?" And yet what holy fellowship of eternal joy between the One who sowed and the multitudes "who receive wages, and gather fruit unto life eternal!" Truly, "He that soweth, and he that reapeth shall rejoice together."

But if, as we have seen in chap. 3, and might have seen also in chap. 1, the seed sown by this heavenly Stranger was such as found no kindredness in the soil of the natural human heart; if a new life was needed for the reception of the testimony of the One who was from heaven, and above all; it follows, as a matter of course, that the harvest produced by this seed is a harvest to be reaped in resurrection. And what prominence, accordingly, is given to the subject of resurrection in this gospel, of the Divine glory of the Son of the Father. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." Nor is it only in the quickening of dead souls now that the power of the voice of the Son of God is manifested. It is manifested thus, blessed be His name! But it is to be displayed in quickening dead bodies too. "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." It is with the resurrection of life that the subject before us connects itself. And how Jesus seems to delight in the prospect of this! Four times over, in chap. vi., does He anticipate it. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (ver. 39). Then again, "And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (ver. 40). Again, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (ver. 44). Then, finally, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (ver. 54). How true what another has remarked on the expression used in these passages-the last day. "As regards John 6, the Lord is evidently substituting a blessing in resurrection for any royal Jewish blessing. Owned the prophet, and refusing to be king carnally, He goes up alone on high, and the disciples are sent away alone, toiling on the sea (a Jewish remnant strictly) and arrive as soon as He rejoins them; but He is fed upon in humiliation and death in the interval; and hence to such the blessing comes in resurrection: he (that is, the believer) Will be raised up in the last day.... The last day is in contrast with their present blessing, as [under their expected] king.... He does not come an set up the Jews, but the Father draws, and a man comes to Him, and the way He blesses him is in the power of eternal life, raising him up when the close of all this busy and rebellious scene arrives: that shall be his portion in that day-not Messianic security now." Towards the close of the chapter, our Lord hints at His return to the heaven from which He had descended. "Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" To one grand present result of

His ascension into heaven He testifies in the next chapter. The time had not come for Him to show Himself openly to the world. Alas! when it does come, it will be for judgment; and woe to the world then! He goes up privately to the feast, however; and to the officers who are sent to take Him, He says, "Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come." But while thus absent from the earth, and hid where the unbelieving cannot come, what is the character of this absent, rejected, exalted, heavenly Christ? What are His relations to poor sinners, and to His people, who have been brought to know and to own Him? How blessed the answer r "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The Holy Ghost, on earth, was to be the witness of the heavenly glory of this earth-rejected Christ; and while out of the belly of the believer rivers of living water were thus to flow, any poor thirsty sinner was to know how welcome he was to come to Christ and drink. Perfect, illimitable grace, and the presence here of the Holy Ghost from heaven, were to be, as to the enjoyment of them, the fruits to us of the exaltation of the rejected Son of Man.

Passing over our Lord's controversies with the Jews, in which He continually speaks in such language as "I know whence I came, and whither I go"; "Ye are from beneath, I am from above"; "Ye are of this world, I am not of this world"-passing over, likewise, the bright display of His glory in the raising of Lazarus-we arrive at chap. 13, where this heavenly One begins to unfold to His disciples the deeper secrets and mysteries of that place whence He came, and whither He was about to return. First, we have the symbolical instruction conveyed by the washing of the disciples' feet; then we have the direct communications of Christ to the eleven when Judas had gone out.

"When Jesus knew that His hour was come, that He should depart out of this world unto the Father." His hour was come to depart out of this world to the Father; but He was leaving in the world those who are here styled "His own"; and He would leave with them the pledge, assurance, and representation of that in which His love would be "to the end" occupied for them. It was an humbling-what man would call a menial-act, by which He taught them this lesson; but we are here let into the secret of the humility which could stoop so low as to wash the feet of the disciples. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself." The consciousness of being above all was that which enabled Him to take a place of service at the feet of all. So is it in His measure with the saint. The apprehension by the Spirit of heavenly things, enables him to take the lowest place on earth. What could earth's dignities be worth to the Son of God? What are they worth to the heart that knows, through grace, the secret of fellowship with Him?

But all this was in the presence of the traitor. "Ye are clean, but not all." "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." When the traitor was gone out, the heart of Jesus, pent up as it were till then, pours out itself in the midst of the remaining few. The Son of man was now glorified, and God was glorified in Him; and if God was glorified in Him, God would glorify Him in Himself, and would straightway glorify Him. Now He speaks plainly of what He had but hinted at before. He

was to be but a little while with them; and as before He had said to the Jews, now He said to them-" Whither I go, ye cannot come." This He explains to Peter-" Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward." He would not have their hearts to be troubled; they had believed in an unseen God; and now that He was no longer to be an object of sight, He would not cease to be an object of faith. They believed in an unseen God-they were to believe in an unseen Savior also. It was the Father's house to which he was going, and in it were many mansions. Had there not been accommodation for them as well as for Himself, He would have told them: He would not mock them by awakening hopes only to be disappointed. " I go," says He, " to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Heaven was not only to become everything to them because of its having received their Lord, and because of its being the place whence they expected His return.-No, He plainly tells them that, besides this, it is to be their own abode;. and that His errand, when He comes again, is to receive them to the place He has gone to prepare for them, that where He is, there they may be also. Then He adds, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." He had told them He was going to the Father, and had spoken of the many mansions in the Father's house. Now what is it makes the Father's house what it is? Doubtless there are glories and privileges there, infinitely surpassing human thought. But what is it stamps its character on the Father's house? The exile from his native land, when his thoughts wander to the home of his infancy, and he fancies himself again in his father's house-what is it that is the soul of his imaginings? The furniture, the pictures, and the grounds? No, the situation may be ever so pleasant, the furniture ever so rich, the decorations ever so superb-it is none of these that give form and color and substance to the vision of home that floats before the eyes of the banished one: "My father's house," is his idea.

Well, Jesus had said that He was going to the Father; and from their knowledge of the Father, they may conclude what the Father's house must be. But how did they know the Father? In knowing Jesus. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Jesus was Himself the Revealer and the revelation of the Father. In knowing Jesus, they knew the Father; in knowing the Father, they knew where Jesus was going-for He told them it was to the Father's house: and in knowing thus the Father's house, they not only knew the place, but also the way. "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." But though the Savior gives them credit for knowing what had been so fully made known-what they had such opportunities to know-as matter of fact they did not apprehend it.; they were dull of hearing. First one, and then another, makes this manifest by his questions. To all these questions our Lord patiently replies, promising that on His departure He would pray the Father, who would send another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who should not only be with them, as He Himself was, but in them. And then He says, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."

It is not only that this could not be known before the ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Ghost-I speak of the latter clauses of the verse-the thing itself did not exist till then. They ought, indeed, to have known that Christ was in the Father, and that in knowing Him they knew the Father; but they were not in Him till He had taken His place on high as the glorified Head of His body, the church; nor was He in them till the Holy Ghost descended, to constitute as well as to make known the fact. Far as these things must have surpassed the power of apprehension they

then possessed, they were not to lose anything by this. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "Henceforth," He says in the next chapter, " I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." True, indeed, these passages describe our present place of privilege and blessing; but do they the less assure us of what our future portion will be? Will any of our privileges be curtailed in heaven? Do we now know that Jesus is in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us? And will not this continue forever? And shall we not better know the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, of blessedness it expresses, when we are with the Lord in the Father's house, than we do at present? Does He now treat us, not as servants, but as friends, keeping no secrets from us, making known to us all that He has heard of the Father? And will there be more reserve in the intercourse between this blessed One and us in the glory than on earth? Impossible! True, we shall be in no nearer relationships to Him than at present; but it is because nearer cannot be; and though we shall be in no nearer relationships, we shall be in a position to enjoy the blessedness of those which already exist, unhindered by all that mars our enjoyment of them now.

But full as were these communications of Christ to His disciples, their state would not admit of all being told to them. There was no hindrance on Christ's part; He yearned to pour out to them all that His heart contained. But until the Spirit came, they were incapable of receiving the whole of what He had to impart. "I have yet many things to say unto you; but ye cannot bear them now." But there was One to come who should fully supply the lack. "Howbeit, when he the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will spew you things to come." It would appear from this that the things in which the future blessedness of the saints consists, were specially included among those things which the disciples could not then bear, but which the Holy Ghost, when He came, was to make known. But if the disciples could not as yet bear these things, and if to them, therefore, the Savior did not declare them, there was One to whom He could absolutely without reserve pour out all the thoughts, and feelings, and wishes of His heart! Yes, and to the Father He does thus pour out his heart in the presence and hearing of the disciples. It is for us He prays, as well as for the disciples, even for all "them which should believe on Him through their [the apostles'] word." Much of His prayer relates to our position here below; but it is not confined to this. " And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou Last sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." Does not this afford us a soul-enrapturing view of what lies before us? Christ in us, and the Father in Him, that we may be made perfect in one. The glory given to us Which the Father has given to Christ; and this to be manifested, so that the world itself, seeing us in the same glory with Christ, shall know that we have been the objects of the same love. But more than this. Our Lord credits the love of His saints as delighting to behold His glory, and witness the love of which He is and has been from all eternity, the object. And which does give the deepest delight to our souls, beloved-the prospect of sharing Christ's glory ourselves, or the prospect of beholding His glory-the glory with which that Blessed One himself is crowned; while witnessing, at the same time, all that creatures can witness of the love wherewith the Father has from eternity loved the Son? Well, all this is to be ours. "Father, I will [or I desire]

that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me; for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." What a testimony of His affection towards us, that He should so trust ours to Him as to ask on our behalf as the very best thing He could ask for us, that we might be with Him where He is, to behold the glory which the Father has given Him! And if our hearts be but dull and insensible to these touching proofs of His affection now, they will not be so then. Would that they were more tender now! More ready to respond to this love which so truly passeth knowledge

The only other passage in John 1 would notice, is that in which He says to Mary, after His resurrection, " Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God." In ascending to His Father, He placed us in one common position with Himself before the Father, before God. Wondrous words! Who can fathom their depth of blessed meaning? " My Father and your Father!

My God and your God"! What must heaven be, where this is not only known by faith as at present, but unhinderedly enjoyed in all the depth and extent of what it means?

It is thus in the Gospel of John, that the truth begins to dawn upon us, of our union or identity with Christ. "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (this from chap. 14). "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in me" (this from chap. 17). " My Father and your Father, My God and your God" (this from the passage just quoted in chap. 20). How natural the transition from this. to Acts 9 The earlier chapters of Acts follow on after Luke's Gospel. We have seen the end of this already in Stephen's death. A young man is first introduced to us in the record of that event as holding the clothes of those who stoned the martyr. Acts 9 records the conversion of that young man. And to him from the very outset was revealed in a special manner this oneness, this identity of the saints with Christ in glory. Stephen, looking up, had seen heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right-hand of God, ready to receive the spirit of His martyred servant as soon as his murderers had accomplished their work of cruelty and blood. Here Saul, who was one of them, or at least consenting to their deeds, and eager to imitate them, is stopped at mid-day on his way to Damascus, by a light shining round about him, brighter than the light of the sun. Struck to the earth by the insufferable blaze, he hears a voice crying to him in the Hebrew tongue, " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?" To his agonizing inquiry, "Who art thou, Lord?" he receives for answer, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Thus it is made known to him with the first entrance of divine light into his soul, that Christ and His saints are one. If he sees not heaven opened, as Stephen did, he sees the Lord; and His glory makes him blind for three days. And to him at that moment is it at first explicitly revealed, that the saints whom he has been persecuting, are so identified with this Lord in glory, so absolutely one with Him that He calls them Himself! " Why persecutest thou ME?

I am Jesus, WHOM thou persecutest!" Of this fact he becomes, from this time, the devoted and indefatigable witness. First, -he preaches that Jesus is the Son of God; secondly, he testifies that the church is one with Him. This is what he terms his Gospel, the dispensation committed to him; and in the face of stripes, and bonds, and imprisonments, and death itself, in almost every horrid form, he goes on to testify both to Jews and Gentiles, but specially to the latter, this mystery, hid from all ages and generations past, and only now revealed by the Spirit to Christ's holy apostles

and prophets. But let us turn at once to the epistle in which he specially treats of it.

The epistle opens with the well-known words-" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Observe, heaven is the place of our blessings, and they are spiritual in their character; it is in Christ we have these blessings; and they are not blessings that we wait for, but have: " who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Need we wonder at the ascription of praise with which the mention of these blessings is introduced? Rather let us wonder at our own dull, stupid hearts, which can hear and read of such things with so much unconcern. Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinated to the adoption of children, and accepted in the Beloved; having redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins, made to know the mystery of God's will, and having obtained an inheritance in Christ- an inheritance, the earnest of which we at present possess in being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Such are the blessings here enumerated. But what is this mystery of God's will, which, treating us as His confidants, He has thus made known to us? " Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." The unity of all things in heaven and in earth in and under one Head, even Christ, this is the glorious mystery, the knowledge of which has been entrusted to the Church. But what is the Church itself-made thus the vessel of this divine knowledge? First, we must learn what Christ's place is; and thus we shall learn what is the hope of God's calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; but, be it remembered, that for this we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him-we need the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened. The Apostle speaks of " the exceeding greatness of His [God's] power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him [here it is we learn what the Church is] to be the Head over all things to the Church, WHICH IS HIS BODY, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all"! Such is the height of glory to which He is raised, who, for our sakes, went down into the dust of death. It is in the dispensation of the fullness of times that all this glory is to be manifested; and it is then we shall possess with Christ the inheritance which in Him we have obtained. The inheritance here is not heaven; it is our participation with Christ of His inheritance of all things. All things are put under His feet, and we are His body; all things both in heaven and in earth are to be headed-up by Him, and we are the body of Him in whom this is to be accomplished; He is raised far above every name that is named, whether in this world or in that which is to come: yet we are His body. God has given Him to be the Head over all things, to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. So absolutely are we one with Christ, that having glanced at our fallen state by nature, the Apostle proceeds to say-" But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus are we co-quickened, co-raised, and co-seated with Christ in heavenly places. Such is the Church's estate. Why is all this? " That in the ages to come [when Christ possesses His inheritance, and we possess it along with Him], He [God] might shew the exceeding riches of His grace, in His

kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." In the presence of the exceeding riches of this grace, and of the heavenly unity in Christ, into which it has introduced poor sinners, by nature dead in sins and children of wrath, all human distinctions vanish away. Even those once instituted by God Himself between Jews and Gentiles, have no existence here. Both are by nature dead in sins; both have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. " That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross," the blessed Savior endured its unspeakable anguish and horror. He suffered thus, " to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace;" and now, " through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." In Christ Jesus, the chief corner-stone, " the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." This is what. the Church will be when in glory, while even now it is builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Passing over chap. 3, the closing verse of which testifies that the Church is to be a vessel of the Father's glory by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, we meet with a passage in chap. 4 which can hardly fail to remind us of a passage already considered-John 3:13. Christ's ascension on high, having been referred to, the Apostle proceeds-" Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things." Yes, there is One who could only ascend by first descending; and He did descend, even into the lower parts of the earth; that having thus vindicated and accomplished the glory of God in the scene of sin, and Satan's most complete triumph, He might, ascending up far above all heavens, fill all things, so that for God's glory, and the creatures' blessing, and the saints' joy and triumph, there is not a point between the dust of death and the throne of the Eternal, " far above all heavens," where Christ is not, or has not been. And it is to this wondrous One that we, according to the doctrine of this epistle, are united. " There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." The heart finds it difficult to pass by all the precious teaching even of this chapter on this unity or identity of the Church with Christ; but, reminded that heaven is our present subject, we must pass on.

Two things in chap. 5 demand consideration: first, Christ's love to the Church; secondly, the Church's relation to Christ. It is incidentally, as it were, amid the exhortations to walk worthy of our wondrous vocation, that this instruction occurs. But it is often thus that the most deep and blessed instruction is imparted.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing Of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Beloved, this is what is before us. It was for this Christ gave Himself, and it is for this that the whole process of washing of water by the word takes place. The Church, from all eternity the object of Christ's affection as the gift to Him of the Father's love, already redeemed and now being purified, is finally to be by Him presented to Himself, an unblemished, holy, glorious bride, free from spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing-to be the eternal delight of His heart, in the satisfaction of that love in which He gave Himself for her, to present her thus to Himself. The apostle having further said, " No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones"-adds (and well may he add), " This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

But while Christ's love to the Church, and its eternal satisfaction when He presents the Church to Himself in glory, is surely one of the highest (if not the highest) elements in heaven's joy, there is something taught here as to the relation of the Church to Christ, which must not be overlooked: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." The conjugal relationship is so close and intimate, that, by Divine ordinance from the beginning, it supersedes every other. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." This ordinance is not repealed in the chapter before us; but it is set up on the new basis of this conjugal relationship between Christ and the Church (see ver. 31). But while the Church is thus brought into a relation to Christ-the closest and most intimate that human language can express, or the heart of man conceive-what does this involve on the part of the Church? The most perfect subjection to her Lord and Bridegroom. And surely it would be thus even now (it will be so in the glory), that the Church would find her own proper, becoming, satisfying delight in yielding absolute, unquestioning, universal submission to the One who has made her His at such infinite cost to Himself. Thus in all things He has the pre-eminence. I speak not now of His Godhead-glories; but in all the offices He fills, in all the relations He sustains, however we may be by grace associated and even identified with Him, in each one He is necessarily pre-eminent. If we be in Him a habitation of God, growing up into a holy temple, He is both the foundation and the chief corner-stone. If He be not ashamed to call us brethren, we know Him to be the First-born among many brethren. If He and we rise from the dead on one common principle, so that we together form a glorious harvest of full, ripe sheaves, we know who it is that is the consecrated Sheaf of first-fruits-"the Beginning, the First-born from the dead." If the Church be His body, He is the Head of His body, the Church. And if, as here, the conjugal tie is used to express the marvelous unity of the Church with Christ, and the unbounded affection with which He regards her, her place in this relationship is that of the weaker vessel, subject unto Christ in everything. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church." Blessed Jesus I we shall one day fill our place in this ineffable mystery, even as Thou hast filled, and dost fill, Thine. Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord," we, who through grace can even now call thee Lord (but contradicting ourselves, alas! by our waywardness and self-will continually)-we shall call thee Lord, and own thee such, in every movement of heart, will, desire, affection; subject to thee, and finding our perfect happiness in being subject to thee in everything!

Instead of entering here into the detail of the walk suited to the heavenly mysteries unfolded in this Epistle, I would turn back for a moment to an important chapter, purposely omitted till now: it is 1 Cor. 2 The apostle is here addressing those who affected the wisdom of this world, and is reminding them how his speech and preaching had not been with persuasible [see margin] words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that their faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. "Howbeit," he says, "we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." The apostle had a wisdom to speak among those who were able to bear it-a hidden wisdom -the wisdom of God in a mystery-a mystery which had the rulers of the Jews known, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Had they known that He was the Lord of glory, and that the effect of His crucifixion would be to introduce Gentiles as well as Jews into the place in which the Epistle to the Ephesians exhibits the Church, they would not have perpetrated the deed. But the Corinthians themselves were not in a state to receive the knowledge of this mystery: they savored too much of human wisdom, being carnal, and walking as men; and so the apostle could not write to them as spiritual or "perfect," but as unto carnal, even as to babes in Christ. But though he could not open out to them this mystery as he did to the Ephesians, he adverts to it as above; and more than this, he proceeds to speak of the power by which, and the way in which, it is made known-and thus affords important light on our whole subject, as to the way in which it practically operates on the walk.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Thus far the prophet could go in Old-Testament times; and these are the prophet's words quoted from Isa. 64:4. But the apostle adds-what the prophet could not say" But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." This is that power of apprehending heavenly things which we found to have been so lacking even in the disciples all the way through John's Gospel. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The mystery which had been hid from ages and generations was surely among the deep things of God which He only knows, and which His Spirit only can make known. But " now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." And while " revealed them unto us by His Spirit" may specially refer to the apostles-as in Eph. 3, " as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit"-the passage just quoted as to the having received the Spirit of that we might know the things freely given to us of God, surely includes us all. So, while verse 13 describes what in the full sense could only perhaps be said of persons inspired as the apostles were, from verse 14 to the end is surely of universal application. " But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things, yet he himself is judged [discerned] of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." The spiritual man, taught of the Holy Ghost, either by direct revelation, as the apostles and prophets, or by the reception of what they have declared and recorded, discerns all things. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: they may be declared to him, or he may have them in the written word, but he receives them not; neither can he know them; they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man, receiving the things of the Spirit of God, discerns all things, while he is himself discerned of no man. Placed in such intimate relation to Christ that nothing is now withheld, but everything revealed; those things which eye never saw, ear never heard, heart of man never conceived, now revealed unto us by the Spirit of God who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; there is now an answer to the challenge which in the prophet's mouth met no response; "but we have the mind of Christ." The spiritual man has thus intelligence by the Spirit of God of a whole world of objects invisible to others; and acting from motives which these unseen objects supply, his conduct is inexplicable to others; he himself is discerned of no man. The mind of Christ thus makes him in measure what Christ Himself was perfectly when He was here. By virtue of His Godhead He was, even while on earth, the Son of Man in heaven. He was thus amid human relations and earthly circumstances manifesting the mind of heaven; acting from motives

associated with those things discerned by Him, but hidden from all else—the things of which he said, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." Now, in his measure—yea, and according to the measure of his spirituality—the spiritual man resembles Christ in this. He has not, like Christ, been literally and actually in heaven. But he is one with Christ who is there, so that he is said to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. And the Holy Ghost, who unites him to Christ in glory, is, by virtue of His Godhead, both in heaven and earth, as really as Christ was when He was here upon earth. By virtue of this indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the spiritual man discerns heavenly objects, and knows them too as things freely given to him of God. He has thus a vast world of objects with which he is conversant—objects of delight, and affection, and desire, and hope, of which the world knows nothing. Is it any wonder that his conduct should be a riddle to the world—that he should seem a stranger here? Would that it were more so with us, beloved? That dwelling amid, meditating upon, and occupied with, those things of heaven, of Christ, of the Spirit of God, our thoughts, tempers, habits, and ways, might be cast in a heavenly mold. Thus, and thus alone, we should be enabled to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

It may seem strange to pass at once from this chapter to a passage which speaks of perfect knowledge as a part of our future happiness. I refer to 1 Cor. 13:9-12, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.... For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." But there is no real contrariety between this and the statements of chap. ii. True, we are even now one with Christ. True, the Holy Ghost dwells in us; and while he searches all things, yea, the deep things of God, makes known to us the things freely given unto us of God, so that the spiritual man discerneth all things. True, we have thus the mind of Christ. But who of us is not aware that while all is thus perfect on the part of God, of Christ, of the Holy Ghost, of the written revelation by which He acts, those on whom, and in whom, He acts, are far from perfect indeed? Nay, in the very portion where such great things are said as to the present privileges of the believer, the apostle declares he could not act towards the Corinthians on the ground of those privileges, they walked so carnally. And is carnality no hindrance to us? Who of us but might know the mind of Christ, and all the blessed objects of faith, hope, and love, better than we do, were we not hindered by it? And as to the communication of the mind of God by those who were inspired for that purpose, while it is true that all is now revealed, was it by one vessel that all this was accomplished? Had not Peter his line of truth, and Paul his? Thus, as the apostle says, "we know in part, and we prophesy in part." How blessed when that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part is done away! We shall not know in part in heaven. Prophesying, whether in part or in full, will not be needed there. No more seeing through a glass darkly then. We shall see face to face. We shall know even as we are known. If to know the Father and Jesus Christ, even as now by faith, be eternal life, what shall our enjoyment be, when all the hindrances which are inseparable from the poor earthen vessels of this knowledge, of this life, shall be done with forever, and we shall know even as we are known?

It is in chap. 15 we get the fullest instruction as to the change these vessels shall undergo at Christ's coming; a change which will equally be accomplished whether He finds us asleep in the grave, or alive and remaining to His coming. One passage would probably be clearer to most minds if the word heavenly were substituted for celestial. It is the same word as is rendered heavenly in other parts of this same chapter. "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind

of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also heavenly (■πουρ■νια) bodies, and bodies earthly (■π■γεια), but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another." This is the more important, as further on in the chapter these two are placed in contrast. " It [the body of the sleeping saint] is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." First, we are told there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, diverse from each in glory. Then this blessed contrast between the body as it is sown in the grave, and the body as it rises from the grave. Corruptible, dishonored, weak, natural, are the qualities of the one; incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, are the properties of the other. The last point is further dwelt upon--there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. Then we find that the first Adam was the type of the one; that the second Adam is the type of the other. " And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Then we are told that the spiritual was not first, but the natural; and afterward the spiritual. " The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." This is most explicit; and equally so what follows: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Here we get back to the distinction with which the apostle commences this part of his reasoning. There are heavenly bodies, and bodies which are earthy; and each has its glory. Adam's body, doubtless, had a glory peculiar to it before he fell. We know that that of the second Adam has a glory which immeasurably excels it. Well, "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Yes, "this corruptible must put on incorruption; this mortal must put on immortality." Death must yet be swallowed up in victory. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?... Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In connection with this triumph over death, there are two passages it may be well to notice. The first is 2 Cor. 4 and 5 The Apostle speaks of himself as " always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," as " always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake;" and then, quoting Psa. 116, describes the faith, kindred to that of the one whose utterance is there recorded, which supported him under this daily death" Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." For this cause he fainted not. The outward man might perish-- the inward man was renewed day by day. The light affliction, which was but for a moment, he knew to be working for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. What a thought-" a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"! The things which are seen are unworthy of a look, or a thought, when compared with this. The things which are seen are but temporal; the things which are not seen are eternal. "For we know," says the Apostle, "that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In this present tabernacle we may and do groan, being burdened. Even to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, is better than to be at home in the body, and absent from the Lord; but it is not to be absent from the body that the Apostle sighs. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." "Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven." How blessed these pantings of the renewed heart after its heavenly abode! " He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." And how we find here that this absorbing occupation of the heart with its own proper heavenly hopes and objects

produces a walk which others cannot comprehend! It caused the Apostle to be accounted " beside himself." Was he anxious to rebut the charge? Far from it. He was anxious to commend himself to the consciences of his brethren at Corinth, who ought to have understood and appreciated his course. " For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us." It was not merely that gratitude to Christ, for delivering him from hell, had this effect on the Apostle. No; there was the intelligent apprehension of the needs-be for Christ's death, and the object of it, and to that object Paul himself had become entirely devoted. He judged that if one died for all, all were dead; and that He who when all were dead, died for all, did so, not that they who lived by His death should occupy themselves with anything in this wide-spread scene of death here below, but that they might live unto Him who died for them and rose again. Henceforth, no man was to be known after the flesh. Even Christ is not now known after the flesh, but in resurrection and heavenly glory. If any be in Christ, there is a new creation. To be in Christ is to be introduced into a new creation, of which He, risen and glorified, is the Head. The whole natural scene has with such a one passed away, and all things are become new; and all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. Do we, my brethren, thus realize the power of our heavenly position, as identified with Christ? Has earth, with everything belonging to it, become, in our estimation, but one wide-spread scene of death, from which the death and resurrection of Christ has freed us, introducing us into that new creation, of which He is the Head, and which, as to us, will be completed when we are clothed upon with our house which is from heaven?

The other passage referred to is in Rom. 8, there we read-" But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." Here is the same prospect as we find expressed in other words in the passages already considered. But, further, having glanced at our present blessedness as God's children, the Apostle adds-" And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." And such was the effect of this prospect on the soul of the Apostle, that it made all earthly affliction light. " For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Here is a glory anticipated by faith, a glory to be revealed in us. From this the Apostle passes on to consider the state of the whole creation, which lie represents as waiting for the manifestation of this glory: Made subject to vanity, and groaning and travailing together in pain until now, it is yet in hope of being delivered from its present bondage into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. " And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

We find in 1 Cor. 15, that as we have borne the image of the earthy, i.e., Adam, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, i.e., Christ. We shall have heavenly bodies. In 2 Cor. 5 the Apostle exults in the assured anticipation of this " house from heaven, the reception of which by the saints will be, as to them, the completion of the new creation, into which a man is introduced by being in Christ Jesus. In the passage before us there are the same anticipations: the quickening of our mortal bodies, the glory that shall be revealed in us, the redemption of our body. But here we find that not only shall we thus reach the utmost perfection of our being, personally conformed as we shall be to the second great Head of the human family, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven,

glorified together with Him; not only so, the whole creation shall feel the effects of this mighty event--shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty which this glory of the children of God shall diffuse throughout creation. Thus are the heavenly hopes of the saints linked with the brightest prospects for creation itself. Now, as having the first-fruits of the Spirit, and being thus linked to Christ and to God, we are, in our yearnings after incorruptibility, made the intelligent vehicles for the expression of the unintelligent, but not less real, groanings of creation at large. And when creation, reposing peacefully under the scepter of its now rejected Lord, is vocal throughout with praise, shall we have no connection with it then? O yes, it is for the manifestation of the sons of God it waits; and it is in the liberty of the glory of the children of God it will then rejoice. True, that it will be under the scepter of Jesus, the Prince of peace. But are we not His co-heirs? heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ? Yes, if so be we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together.

Before taking leave of these earlier Epistles, I would notice a passage in 2 Cor. 12, which teaches as much by what it omits, as others by what they declare: " I knew a man in Christ about 'fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful [or possible] for a man to utter." What must paradise, what must heaven be, when an inspired apostle heard and witnessed there what he could not communicate to others? Men who have pretended to heavenly visions and revelations, have been lavish of their communications as to what they pretend to have seen and heard and felt. The apostle, who really had such visions and revelations, keeps total silence as to them (for anything we know) for fourteen years; and when he does speak, it is to say, that what he had seen and heard it was impossible for man to utter. What a lesson this!--that while it is all-important for us vividly and distinctly to realize what is revealed of heaven, there is that there which, when it even has been witnessed and enjoyed, cannot in human language be expressed.

Philippians shows us that what made heaven so attractive to the heart of the apostle, was the presence there of Christ Himself. Does he regard it as the abode of his disembodied spirit, in case he should fall asleep prior to the Lord's return? " Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Such is his language. Does he look forward to the coming of Christ, and to all the glory and blessedness for which he has been apprehended of Christ Jesus. It is still the same thing--" That I may win Christ." He had seen Christ in glory: the sight so affected him, that his legal righteousness, his Jewish privileges, his worldly advantages and hopes, all became to him worthless dung and dross. " Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

The Christ he had seen, Christ risen and glorified, is the Christ he still sees at the end of his path of sorrow and privation here; and to be with Christ and like Him--to possess Him--to win Christ, as he says--this was what drew him onwards with an energy that nothing could divert, that nothing could abate. " This one thing I do." " Brethren," he says, " be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample... For our citizenship (πολιτευσμα) is in heaven;

from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." No wonder that in the next chapter we find him saying, " I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." With the heart fully set on Christ and heaven, earthly things become, in a certain sense, all alike. Such a one as Paul could say, " I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." The Lord grant us to know fully this heavenly secret of contentment in any earthly lot!

Colossians treats of heaven partly as Ephesians does, and partly as Philipians. Dead with Christ, and risen with Him, the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, are those on which our minds are to be set. It is not, however, exactly as seated together in heavenly places in Christ, that this epistle regards us. We are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we are to appear with Him in glory. There is the unity of the body too; for we read of " the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands has nourishment ministered, and is knit together." Still heaven itself is our hope in this epistle; it is not entirely, as in Ephesians, the Church calmly seated together in heavenly places in Christ, and with Him awaiting the inheritance of all things in heaven and in earth. Here, at least in some passages in this epistle, heaven itself is the hope. But what a hope! The mystery here, too, is, " Christ in you, the hope of glory." But what a mystery! How the apostle reckons on the certainty of this hope! He gives God thanks for it on their behalf, as though they had it already in possession. Ah! he knows in whose keeping it is. " We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.... for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." What is it, beloved, that can enable us thus to reckon with certainty on this hope--giving thanks for it, as though it had been already fulfilled? Confidence in the Testifier by whom it has been made known to us, and in His testimony: " The hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel." Ah, yes! if heaven is to be a reality to us, we must know on whose testimony it is we look forward to it. We need something solid and certain on which to base such expectations. Could heaven or earth afford us such a basis as "the word of the truth of the Gospel"?

It is in this Epistle we read of " the inheritance of the saints in light"; of being presented " holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in God's sight"; and of " receiving of the Lord the reward of the inheritance." But we must hasten on.

1 and 2 Thessalonians treat rather of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, than of the details of that to which He introduces us. It is, however, the Son of God from heaven for whom we wait; " the kingdom and glory" of God to which we are called; and in that kingdom,. at the coming of Christ, each will receive the reward of his own labor. " For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." The grand truth revealed in the first epistle is, the descent of Christ into the air; whither the changed and risen saints shall be caught up to meet Him. But what as to us ensues on this event? " So shall we ever be with the Lord." Blessed hope! -a hope of salvation indeed, which may well serve as a helmet to resist the heaviest strokes aimed at our heads amid the conflict which intervenes. What is there of hardship and of peril that we may not risk-what that we may not dare-with the certainty " that God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us; that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with

Him"?

The ideas presented to us in the second epistle, having any bearing on the subject before us, are-the being counted worthy of the kingdom of God-rest recompensed to the troubled and persecuted saints, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven-Christ's coming " to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe"-and God's having called us by the Gospel " to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ."

2nd Timothy testifies of death abolished, and "life and immortality [or incorruption] brought to light by the Gospel." In it Paul speaks of enduring all things for the elects' sakes, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ, "with eternal glory." "It is a faithful saying," we are told, that "if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." The apostle himself exults in prospect of " the crown of righteousness, which the Lord," says he, "the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." He thus expresses his happy confidence: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me to His heavenly kingdom." Such is the light, as to the future portion of the saint, afforded by this epistle.

" Hope of eternal life," and " looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ," are the only expressions bearing on the subject in the Epistle to Titus.

Passing by Philemon, we come to the Epistle to the Hebrews, on which we may well bestow a more lengthened notice. The expression, " heavenly calling," occurs but once in Scripture; and it is in this epistle that it is found. But first let us see how the subject is introduced. God has spoken at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets: but in these last days He hath spoken to us by His Son. Thus we have at the outset a Divine, heavenly Messenger: this Messenger is He "whom He [God] hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power." Such are the titles and acts and dignities of the One by whom God hath in these last days spoken to us. But He has fulfilled a work, and taken a place, for man, as well as brought a message from God. " When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Thus is He a heavenly Priest, as well as a heavenly Messenger; and it is in these two characters He is presented to us throughout this epistle. His Godhead, His Sonship, His glory as Creator, His eternity, and His session at the right hand of the Majesty on high, are further dwelt upon in chap. 1, and His superiority in all these respects to angels, the most exalted of God's creatures, solemnly pointed out. We are therefore to give the more earnest heed. The law had been given by the ministry or disposition of angels (compare Acts 7:53 and Psa. 68:17), and escape was impossible for the transgressor. "How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation," spoken at first, not by angels, but by the Lord, " and confirmed unto us by them that heard Him;" God also attesting their word by signs and wonders, with miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost? Such is the commencement of chap. ii.; and here ends the opening argument of the apostle.

But the contrast between Christ and angels very naturally introduces another subject; viz., that the world to come-that is, the millennial earth-is not subjected to angels, but to man; i.e. to Christ, and to others of the human family associated with Him in this dignity. To associate us thus with Himself, He to whom all those glories belong which are enumerated in chap. 1, and by which He is

so infinitely exalted above the angels, had to be "made a little lower than the angels," that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man. The fact was, that both the inheritance and the predestinated co-heirs were, by the just judgment of God against sin, under the power of the adversary and usurper, who had the power of death. To possess Himself of the inheritance, and associate the co-heirs with Himself in the enjoyment of it, Christ had to endure atoningly the judgment of God against sin, and He had thus to encounter and overcome the adversary. Thus He sustains the characters not only of Priest and Messenger, but also of Captain of our salvation; though, more properly, this latter, is included in the office of Messenger-inasmuch as a messenger may be sent to do a work, as well as to deliver a communication. Thus Joshua, who victoriously led Israel into Canaan, was an apostle or messenger as well as Moses, who delivered to them the law; indeed, Moses himself conducted them out of Egypt and through the desert, as well as gave them the laws and ordinances with which he had been charged. Hence Christ is only spoken of as Apostle and High Priest-Aaron being His type as the latter, Moses and Joshua as the former. How affecting the testimony in chap. 2!-"For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Nor is it only as Captain of our salvation He has thus been made perfect through sufferings, but as High Priest also. "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." Such is the doctrine of chap. 2.

It is at the commencement of chap. 3 that the inference is drawn from all that has preceded it. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Brethren of Christ, and holy brethren too! Yes, holy brethren! "for both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." It is not because Christ partook of our nature that this is said, but because He has in resurrection made us partakers of His. It is not the unity of the body here, as in Ephesians and Colossians: it is family unity-Christ the Son of God owning as His brethren the many sons of God through grace made partakers of His nature, and by Him, the Captain of their salvation, brought through suffering triumphantly to glory. Holy brethren, called of God their Father, speaking to them by His Son from heaven, to find in heaven their present place of worship, where their High Priest is-and their future home and dwelling-place, whither the Forerunner hath for -them entered, and whither He will not fail to conduct them at the close of their present sojourn in the wilderness. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." It is in considering Him, we shall learn both what our calling is, and what the spirit and walk suited to it while here below.

It must already have been evident, that in this Epistle heaven is set forth under two typical representations-the land of Canaan, in which case our entrance is by traversing the wilderness-and the Jewish sanctuary, and then our access is by sacrifice and priesthood. Chapters 3 and 4, down to verse 13, are occupied with the former, as well as part of chap. 6. The rest of the Epistle, to ver. 22 of chap. 10, is occupied with the latter; the part that still remains being a diverse practical application and use of both.

In respect to both these representations of heaven, and the corresponding types of our Lord Jesus Christ-viz., Moses, Joshua, and Aaron-the instruction conveyed is quite as much by way of

contrast as comparison, or even more. Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant-Christ as a Son over His own house. Joshua did not give them rest; for then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. In Israel's passage from Egypt to Canaan, there was no anticipative entrance of the commander while the congregation was yet toiling in the wilderness. Here we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor, while as yet all things are not seen to be put under Him: and in chap. vi. we read of the "hope which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." The grand lesson in all this part of the Epistle is, "that we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, perished because they had no better thoughts of God than that He would bring His redeemed nation out of Egypt, without bringing them safely into the land of promise. Those who were actually brought in were Joshua and Caleb, who assuredly trusted God to bring them in, and the little ones that the unbelievers said should be a prey. God grant us so to know His ways, beloved, as to connect thus, by faith, redemption out of Egypt and entrance into the land! Unbelief forfeits, as in the case of Esau, the blessing, the birth-right title to which it profanely despises; it brings upon itself the destruction it dishonors God by anticipating. May we learn the solemn, salutary lesson, as well as feel the full comfort of the assurance that there "remaineth a rest for the people of God"! Into that rest we are in the act of entering. Just as Israel's whole passage across the desert might be said to be their entering into Canaan, so is our entire course, from the reception of the good tidings, to our actual participation in the rest which remains. "For we which have believed do enter [rather, are entering] into rest." "For unto us was the Gospel or, good tidings] preached, as well as unto them." What were these tidings preached to the Israelites? Not, surely, that God would bring His people out of Egypt to let them perish; no, but that He would bring them into the land promised to their fathers. And God did bring them in. Caleb and Joshua, who believed the good tidings, were brought in: the little ones, as we have seen, were also, when they had grown up, put in possession of the land. None fell but those who cared so little for the land, and had such unworthy thoughts of God—who, in short, so disbelieved His word and distrusted Himself, as, in utter and sullen despair, to refuse to go up into the land. What are the good tidings preached to us? That God has redeemed us to Himself, by the precious blood of Christ, to let us perish by the way? No, surely; but that we may enter into His rest, and be in His presence in glory forever. Well, then, we who have believed are entering into rest. God, in His grace, has called us. We, through grace, have heard the call, responded to it, and are on our way, through toils, and hardships, and conflicts, and sorrows, to the "rest which remaineth for the people of God." "Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest." Never let us despond. Never let us grow weary. Never let us think the way too long, the trial too great, or the result uncertain. It was Caleb's undoubting certainty of entering and possessing the land, that supported him through all the forty years he had to wander in the wilderness with his unbelieving brethren. It was this gave him courage, at fourscore years and five, to encounter and to vanquish the tall sons of Anak, and to take possession of the very fortress which, five-and-forty years before, was assigned to him by Moses. Let us, in like confidence, and with like constancy, labor to enter into that rest, Of which the earthly Canaan was but a feeble and imperfect type.

Heaven, as our present place of worship, in contrast with the earthly Jewish tabernacle, is perhaps even a more prominent subject in this epistle than the one just glanced at. But though heaven, with the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ, be contrasted with the Jewish tabernacle, and its sacrifices, and priesthood, the latter are distinctly declared to have been types or figures of the former. "Who

serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle:- for See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern spewed to thee in the mount." "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices." "While as the first tabernacle was yet standing; which was a figure for the time then present."

The Jewish tabernacle, with its services, sacrifices, and priesthood, is thus at once a figure to illustrate, and a foil to set off by way of contrast, the heavenly realities into which we are introduced. We have then a sacrifice which has once and forever taken away sin; which has purged the conscience, and made the repetition of it equally unnecessary and impossible. We have a great High-Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. He was not self-ordained to this office, glorious as He is in His person, in Himself. He glorified not Himself to be made an high-priest; but He that said unto Him, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten Thee." Called of God a High-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He is really what Melchizedek was mystically, and according to the import of his name. Melchizedek's name being interpreted, means king of righteousness, and king of Salem, or king of peace. Our High-Priest is really this-not yet manifested as such, indeed-but not the less really so. Melchizedek was mystically, as to what is recorded of him and his priesthood in Scripture, without father, without mother, without pedigree, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually. But He to whom Melchizedek was made like is a Priest, and is actually, in His own person and priesthood, all that the other thus mystically represented. He has no successor in his priesthood, as Aaron had, and each of his descendants, but is made priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. They were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but Christ, because He continued' ever, hath an untransferrable priesthood, and is able to save evermore them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Such a High-Priest became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. He needs not daily, as they, to offer sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. Those high-priests were men who had infirmities; this One, made Priest by the word of the oath, is the Son, consecrated for evermore.

When the Apostle has proceeded thus far with his subject, he pauses to sum up what has been stated. Let us hear his summary:-

"Now, of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High-Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." He goes on to spew how His is a more excellent ministry, He being the Mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises. Then he returns to his summary, speaking of the worldly sanctuary, with its ordinances of Divine service. The first tabernacle, with its candlestick, table, and shewbread, into which the priests always entered, accomplishing the service. Then the holiest of all, with its sacred furniture, into which the high-priest alone went once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. This was when the way into the Holiest was not yet made manifest. But Christ being come, a High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. The holy place

into which He has gone is thus described. " For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Nor is entrance there confined to Him, while a veil separates His place of service from that in which the priests daily serve. No; that veil, which once divided thus the Jewish tabernacle, was a type of Christ's flesh. And when the real veil was rent upon the cross, the typical one also was rent from top to bottom. Mark, from top to bottom. It was not from the bottom upwards, as though man on earth had done it; it was from the top downwards; and now the exhortation is, " Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high-priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith [literally and really our hope, ■λπ■ς] without wavering; for He is faithful that promised." The remainder of the Epistle is filled with exhortations to faith, and hope, and patience, based on all that has now so rapidly passed under review.

Some things, however, in these concluding chapters, we must not pass by. The Apostle reminds his brethren, to whom he writes, of some former period in their history as Christians. " But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." Not only had they been persecuted for their own profession, of Christianity, but they had voluntarily shared the afflictions of others. What was the secret of their power thus to endure affliction for Christ's sake? Hear the answer. "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Ah yes! it is the certainty of heaven that makes the heart willing, yea, glad, to let go its hold of earth. This is the confidence which the Apostle would have the Hebrew believers to hold fast and never cast away. It has great recompense of reward. True, patience is needed, that after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promise. But the promise is unailing, and its fulfillment hastens on. Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. The just shall live by faith; and while it is true that God says if any draw back, His soul shall have no pleasure in them, the Apostle expresses his confidence that they, to whom he writes, are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. This leads him, in the well-known eleventh chapter, to treat of faith itself, and all the notable instances of it there enumerated. Things not seen are the proper objects of faith; objects as to the existence and character of which it has the firmest convictions, based on the testimony of God. Things hoped for come thus to have a kind of present subsistence to the soul. Faith, like God, whom it believes, reckons on things which as yet are not, as though they were. Thus it was that Enoch walked with God; thus it was that " Abraham sojourned- in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." How simple, and yet how precious a testimony is here borne of those ancient heirs of heavenly promises and a heavenly hope. " These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." And how God appreciated and honored their faith. " For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned; but

now they desire a better country; that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city." Whether you regard this latter statement as meaning that God was not ashamed to be called the God of a people who looked beyond everything on earth for a country and a city in heaven; or whether you understand by it that God was not ashamed to be called the God of those for whom He had made such provision, having prepared for them a city;-in either case, how precious, how full of encouragement, is such a statement.

But further, Moses had respect to the recompense of reward in practically esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. It was in like faith and hope that " others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." The world, indeed, esteemed them worthy of no better lot than to have trial of mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented. But what was God's estimate of them? How it is told out in these words: "Of whom the world was not worthy!" And if God has provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect in that resurrection for which they looked, and in hope of which they suffered and died; if we are all to rise together, or be changed at Christ's coming, O shall we not, stimulated by this still better hope, follow in their self-renouncing, and earth-renouncing steps? Seeing that we are encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus; yes, looking unto Jesus. He is a nobler example still of this patient, victorious faith. He is the Beginner and Perfecter of faith. He has run the whole course. Yea, and He has reached the goal, and obtained the prize. The witnesses of chap. 11 are yet waiting for the resurrection. Jesus, "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Mystery of mysteries! The One whose glory is set forth in the first chapter of this epistle; the One who for us stooped so low, as in the days of His flesh to offer up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death; also stooped so low as to act while here with a regard to the joy set before Him: "for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross." O let us consider Him. Looking unto Jesus, we shall, indeed, both learn what the heavenly calling is, and be drawn onwards and upwards by the force of His wondrous example, as well as by the attraction of His love.

Towards the close of chap. 12, we have a summary-of all to which we Christians have come, in contrast with Sinai and its terrors and its law. We have not come to the latter; " but," says the Apostle, " ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, a general assembly; and to the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the.

Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." What an enumeration! And how stable is all that is here mentioned-how abiding! Once God spake on earth, and then His voice shook the earth. Now He speaks from heaven, and promises yet once more to shake not earth only, but also heaven. When He does so, everything that is shaken will be removed, as of things that are made-things that only stand in creation, stability and strength-all such will be removed, " that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Can any one of

those be shaken to which we have come? "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us hold fast grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear." Let us never forget, however, that this kingdom which cannot be moved, is outside this earth and all that appertains to it. If there was any place on earth which God could have owned, it was Jerusalem, where He had placed His name, and where His sanctuary stood, and where all the solemn services of that sanctuary were celebrated. "But Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach. The blood of that sin-offering was not carried into any earthly sanctuary, or within any earthly veil. It was borne by Jesus risen into heaven itself, and there establishes, in immoveable security, the acceptance and blessedness of every one and everything which stands in its efficacy before God. Everything else must be removed. Everything else must perish. Let us then follow Him, bearing His reproach; "for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." O that we may seek it with earnest zeal, with patient faith, with steady, unwearied, undeviating step. In it we shall find, that whatever we may have heard, or whatever we may have anticipated, "the half has not been told."

In James we have "the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him,"

In opening the first Epistle of Peter, the impression one receives is, that the apostle had been by faith surveying the heavenly country, contemplating its varied glories, and feasting his hopes on the prospect of its rich and endless blessedness, until his heart, full to overflowing, finds vent for its emotions in the words with which he commences: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Here the inheritance is in heaven; and the resurrection of Jesus Christ is that by which we have been, through the abundant mercy of God, begotten again to a lively hope of it. But what an inheritance this is-" incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away"! And how it is secured to us-the inheritance itself reserved for us in heaven! while we, by the power of God, through faith, are kept for it while sojourning here below. So powerful was the influence of this hope on those to whom Peter wrote, that in it they greatly rejoiced, notwithstanding the heaviness, through manifold temptations, of which they were the subjects. The very trial of their faith was precious, in that it would surely be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. And how what is here said of their present joys demonstrates what their and our future happiness must be " Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." If faith can give such warmth of affection and such depths of holy joy in Christ, what must it be to see Him for ourselves-to behold Him face to face? And how forcible the exhortation-" Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"! And if all our present joy be in Christ by faith, and our position that of waiting to behold Him in glory, how suitable the entreaty of the apostle in the next chapter!

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." It is this hope of an inheritance in heaven which makes us strangers and pilgrims on the earth; and it is in proportion as we maintain our strangership, our pilgrim-character, that the

hope will glow brightly in our souls. Yea, and if fiery trials should overtake us, we need not be dismayed, as though some strange thing had happened to us. Even in this case, says the apostle, "rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Peter, himself an elder, describes himself as a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, and exhorts those who are elders to feed the flock of God; urging, as a motive, "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." In praying, also, for all those to whom he writes, the apostle thus speaks of God: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." We are said, in Rom. 5:2, to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God:" In Rom. 8, as we have seen, we are said to be "heirs of God." In 1 Thess. 2:12 we read of "God, who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory." And here the God of all grace is He who has "called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." We have not here the expression, "heavenly calling"; but surely it is the heavenly calling which is thus described.

The inducement held out in 2 Peter 1:11, to diligence and faithfulness, is, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Then follows the allusion to the vision on the holy mount, which has been already considered as the Gospels passed under review. In the last chapter of this Epistle it is not heaven distinctively which the apostle anticipates; but the passing away, in the day of God, of the heavens and earth which now are, to be succeeded by that of which he says, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." In this post-millennial heavens and earth evil will have no place; all things will then have been made new, and have become the dwelling-place of righteousness - "wherein dwelleth righteousness." But we must pass on.

1st John, like the Gospel of John, is most essentially heavenly in the character of the truth it unfolds; but it is rather the display of the heavenly, eternal life down here, than what specially relates to its existence above. The Gospel gives us the manifestation of the Eternal Life in Him of whom it is said, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." The Epistle presents it in its varied characters and manifestations, as existing derivatively in the saints. It commences, indeed, by adverting to its perfect manifestation in Jesus; so that John and the others had seen, and heard, and looked upon, and handled with their hands, and now declared unto the saints, that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and had been manifested to them: but all this is in order that we might have fellowship with them; "And truly," says the apostle, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." All this is most heavenly; but it is the enjoyment and display of the heavenly life on earth amid existing circumstances - not what will be distinctive of our enjoyment when that which is perfect is come, and that which is in part is done away. Still, this latter is not left out: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." In what perfect harmony is this with all that has been considered! To see Christ as He is; to be, in consequence, like Him - this is what we know as to what we shall be, though it be not yet manifested openly. And mark the certainty with which the apostle writes: "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." Human reason and the unbelief of the heart would say, that to be certain of heaven, would tend to make us careless as to the way thither. But how does the

apostle say this certainty of being with Christ and like Him acts on the soul? "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." It is only to a new and heavenly nature that the certainty of being with Christ, and like Him, can afford enjoyment. And if, through grace, I am now partaker of a nature which rejoices in hope of this, as the consummation of my happiness, it is impossible but that I seek present moral conformity to Him, whose resemblance I hope to bear perfectly when He appears. What saint of God is there who cannot say in the brighter light of our own proper hopes, what the Psalmist said in Old-Testament times?-" As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

The doxology with which the Epistle of Jude concludes, gives us one delightful view of the future blessedness of the saints. " Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." What a view both of God and of our own heavenly future, for those who in these last days have to wend their way through the intricate mazes with which the apostasy has surrounded the path of faith! That path, blessed be God! is as direct as ever. But the by-paths, right and left, are so multiplied and so seductive, that it is unspeakable strength and comfort to the heart to know that we are cast on the care of Him who is able to keep us from falling-able to lead us right on to the end; and then to present us " faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Well may our hearts respond, " To Him be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Revelation remains-a book which of itself, as to its bearing on our present subject, might well furnish matter for an essay as long again as that we must now draw to a close. The second and third chapters afford a sevenfold presentation of heavenly glory for the encouragement of those who, amid decline and apostasy and evil, seek in the strength of grace to overcome. To eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God; to receive a crown of life, and not be hurt of the second death; to eat of the hidden manna, and to receive a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it; to have power given him over the nations, even as Christ has received of the Father; and to have given to him the morning-star; to be clothed in white raiment, and instead of having his name blotted out of the book of life, to have it confessed by Christ before His Father and His angels; to be kept from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth; to be made a pillar in the temple of Him of whom Christ speaks as " my God," and to go no more out; to have written upon him the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from his God, and to have written upon him Christ's new name; to have granted to him to sit with Christ in His throne, as He has overcome and sat down with the Father on His throne-such are the promises of future rest, and fellowship, and triumph, and blessedness, and security, and stability, and glory, held out to him that overcometh.

After this, a door opens in heaven itself; and the prophet of Patmos relates to us both what he beheld there, and the course of events on earth which he was given to witness from this heavenly position. A throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne; and He that sat on it was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. Round about are four-and-twenty seats, and upon them four-and-twenty elders in white raiment, with crowns of gold on their heads. There is a rainbow, moreover, round about the throne, and before it a sea of glass, and seven lamps of fire burning, which, we are told, are the seven Spirits of God. Four living creatures are in the midst of the throne

and round about it, who rest not day and night, saying, " Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." When they do thus give glory, and honor, and thanks to Him that sits on the throne, the four-and-twenty elders fall down and worship Him, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, " Thou art worthy, O Lord." A book is seen by the apostle in the right hand of Him that sits on the throne, a seven-sealed book. The question is raised, " Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" But neither in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, was one found able to open the book, or so much as to look thereon. John weeps, even though in the spirit in heaven, because no one is found worthy to open and read the book, or to look thereon. But his tears are wiped away when he beholds, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the living creatures, and of the elders, stands a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. He comes and takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sits upon the throne: this is the signal for prostrate worship and universal praise. The living creatures and elders fall down before the Lamb; they sing 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 us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." To the chord thus struck by those who form the innermost circle around the throne, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels respond; and then, as it were by anticipation, "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, are heard saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever." The strain of heavenly harmony thus raised in heaven's innermost circle of glory and of blessing having caught from lip to lip, till it is echoed back by the utmost bounds of redeemed creation, returns as it were in full chorus to the center from whence it proceeded: "And the four living creatures said, Amen; and the four-and-twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth forever and ever."

I dwell not further on these, or on the twelve succeeding chapters. The difference between heaven as exhibited in Hebrews, and heaven as exhibited in the Apocalypse, has lately been pointed out by another (see No. XX. Vol. Iv. of Pres. Test., pp. 306-308). In the Apocalypse it is the place whence the judgments issue by which Christ's rights are asserted and vindicated, and by which the corrupters and destroyers of the earth are themselves destroyed. It is the place whence, as in chap. 19, Christ Himself, the Rider upon the white horse, and the armies which were in heaven-the saints previously caught up there, and seen in heaven again and again, from chap. 4 to chap. 19-come forth to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. But one event in chap. 19 must not be passed over: it is the marriage of the Lamb. Espoused on earth, as a chaste virgin, to Christ, knowing by faith that she is the object of the full affection of His heart, and nourished and cherished by Him according to Eph. 5, she is still not the Lamb's wife till the period marked in this chapter. In expectancy she is so now; and forming for Christ under the hand of her Divine Fashioner, the Holy Ghost: but it is not until the Church is completed, and in glory-and more than this, the false pretender judged-that the voice is heard, " as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Yes, it will be then that the mutual affections of Christ and His elect bride (always perfect and

infinite on the part of the heavenly Bridegroom) will not only receive their perfect and mutual satisfaction, but the nuptials in which this is consummated will be publicly solemnized, and give occasion to those bursts of loudest praise and acclamation with which, as one reads the prophecy, one seems to hear the expanse of heaven resound. A voice comes out of the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great." And again, when the marriage has been spoken of: "And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

The twentieth chapter gives us the thousand years' reign of Christ, and of all those who have part in the first resurrection-" Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." At the close of this period, when Satan has been loosed for a little season, to stir up the last revolt against God, and when judgment, final and overwhelming, has overtaken both him and those whom he deceives; when the judgment of the wicked dead before the great white throne has taken place, and heaven and earth have fled away from before the face of Him that sitteth on that throne; when, as John sees it in vision, a new heaven and a new earth are made, in which there is no more sea; then does he see also, "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The lapse of a thousand years has made no change in the bridal character of the Church. The last glimpse afforded of her by inspiration, as she enters on those everlasting ages, which succeed not only her own travail and sorrow upon earth-that had closed a thousand years before-but which succeed the millennial dispensation, the period of the kingdom, which, at the end, is delivered up to God, even the Father, from which point, all dispensations having run their course, God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is all in all-the very last glimpse we get of the Church, is to see her in her full bridal glory, as when the marriage of the Lamb had just come, His wife having made herself ready "And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband! It would seem too that in the new heavens and earth, which succeed the millennial state, she will still retain a peculiar place. The habitation of God through the Spirit even now, she will then retain this high and holy character. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, 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." The happy effects of this residence of God among men (the Church being, as would appear, his tabernacle) are then described. " And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; [this He will have done, for the Church long before]: 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." All evil and evil-doers shut up forever in the lake of fire, which is the second death: all things else made new: the whole of that new creation becomes the inheritance with Christ of those who have overcome. " He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

It has just been said, that the last glimpse of the Church, which inspiration affords, is at the commencement of the eternal ages, and that she still retains her full bridal character and glory. There is another view given us-not a later one-but another. It is a detailed symbolic description of her glory, as connected with the millennial earth. All in it, however, which is essential to her own state, will remain forever. And where is there a saint, whatever the amount of his intelligence as to the import of the symbols employed, whose heart has not been warmed and cheered and filled

with holy joy in hope, as he has read this description of the heavenly city? Its golden streets, its jasper walls, its gates of pearl, its foundation of precious stones-do they not impart to the soul an impression of magnificence and glory, which the tongue cannot utter, which human language is too poor and feeble to express? And then the relationship-the bride, the Lamb's wife. The corporate order, arrangement and stability. A city-the pilgrim and stranger state exchanged for eternal establishment and rest. The dimensions-that great city. No longer "a little flock," as the children of faith have been in each successive generation. In the aggregate, they are a great city. Then there is the character-holy. The name-Jerusalem; recalling to the heart, even in that which has been and will be the earthly copy of this divine and heavenly original, the earthly Jerusalem, such thoughts of grace and of glory. The source-descending out of heaven, FROM GOD. To crown all, there are the words, "Having the glory of God." Yes, it will be the fulfillment to the uttermost and beyond everything that either faith or hope can now conceive, of the words, "heirs of God" - "called to His, kingdom and glory" - "called to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus." The One seen sitting on the throne in chap. 4 was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. Of the city it is here said, "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal." Conformed thus to the glory of God, and become the vessel for its display, the city has no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. It has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. The happy nations of the spared inhabitants of the millennial earth, walk in the light of it. The rays of the Divine glory, softened and qualified by the medium through which they pass, the jasper walls of the golden city, give light to the nations of the earth, fulfilling thus the ancient prophecy to Jerusalem below, "Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The gates of the city are not shut at all by day, and there is no night there. The glory and honor of the nations are brought into it; but anything that defileth or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, can have no entrance within its holy precincts. A pure river of water of life issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, flows through the midst of the street. On either side of the river there is the tree of life, its fruit finishing immortal food to the immortal inhabitants, while the leaves of the tree minister healing to the nations below. There is no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb are in the city; and His servants serve Him. They see His face, and bear His name on their foreheads, and reign throughout one uninterrupted, cloudless, eternal day. Bright, blessed, glorious vision of our eternal home! May its brightness light up the whole path by which we are hastening onwards to it; and may it endear to our hearts the hope of Him who announces Himself to us as the bright and morning star, whose presence, while it introduces us to all this blessedness, is itself the highest and chief element of which all this blessedness consists.

## The Epistle to the Hebrews

---

A dissent from a view expressed by me on a portion of this epistle (chap. 7) has induced me to go over it again with the caution I had gained. I did not, as I believe God would bear me witness, seek new truth, there is no new truth, but believing, to those who acknowledge the Lord, that He will, by the Spirit, do as He did when on earth, enlighten those who are subject to and love Him; and that the promise to guide into the whole of truth will not fail.

We have no reason to avoid truth, but I would wait on Him, not in the spirit of saying, Let it come near to me that I may know it, but looking to Him to impart it, to my need and that of others, as truth to serve in the way of our salvation. It is exceedingly needful to wait on God's time to make truth plain. He certainly will not fail those who build themselves on their most holy faith; who own the SON and gather round Him as having the words of eternal life. We are out of all fold, and it is His voice and His obedience that is our guide and bond. There are those who build themselves on their most holy faith, who do not wait God's time. They press forward untimely, and get off the track that leads the farthest and surest.

If they fulfilled all they knew, God would reveal all the rest to them according to His good pleasure, even to the highest steps and helps of His calling. Every bias in apprehension of the word springs from this act of the flesh, not waiting, upon God.

It had been long evident to me that the Spirit had two special objects in the Epistle to the Hebrews, one of these has become much more salient to my mind in recurrence at this time to the bearing of this. Epistle. One object was to prevent. Hebrews who had received the truth from relapsing back into the dead and rejected

ordinances of Judaism; the second, which for long had been indistinct to my mind, was to advance those who being the Lord's had not advanced beyond Hebrew Christianity. The force of the word "we" is also materially engaged in these questions. The passing from one position to another, of those addressed, requires a finer insight than any other portion of Scriptures and to us bringing the most important elucidation. I confine myself to the two first mentioned broad distinctions as a help to the intelligence of the church.

The channel of the Old and New Revelations is first touched on. We learn (in Acts, chap. 7) that the law was given by the disposition of angels, as here the communications were by the prophets. They are now by SON, a peculiarity of expression noted in the margin of the common version. This gives a key to the whole depth of the Epistle. The opening of it marks out the structure of it throughout. Side by side from first to last in succession is what Was in Judaism, and what by Christ. It might appear disconnected in the succession of subjects; but the links are also manifest.

In the first two chapters, is pursued the difference between the angels and SON. At the end of the first chapter, the angels take the place of servants (in externals), who before ministered as superiors in charge of the external things of God; in connection with His ancient people. In the second chapter, with a "wherefore" come the results of the difference of standing of the saints

towards God. It rises in character as it goes on in the eleventh verse, the sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one (e eves) and the adoption is comforted by the fellow-feeling of Him who suffered to be exalted.

In the third, comes the difference of the calling, opening with the words, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." The calling in the wilderness is set before us, and the grievousness of unbelief to the failure of coming through; and this applied to those of the superior calling, to wit, heavenly In the seconds it was only the greater grievousness of trespass against a better grace. Moses is shown as faithful in God's house. "Christ as SON over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and boasting of our hope firm unto the end." I find Christians marvelously afraid of an "if"; but here it is, and is to be found elsewhere, as in Col. 1:23. This is not any "if" in the fullness of the work of Christ, or in the peace of His blood, but in the abiding in the calling to which the hope of the Gospel, i.e., the hope of the Gospel of Glory, is attached. It is emphatically repeated in the fourteenth verse of the chapter we are considering.

In the fourth, comes the "rest to the children of God"; after showing how room was left for the introduction of this rest after others had been fulfilled. It is the "rest with us," spoken of in 2 Thessalonians. Let us labor to enter into this rest. " He died for our sins, to deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father." We have to pass through the wilderness as belonging to God. Separated to God as sons in the midst of an evil age, we have this rest set before us—we rest in the atmosphere of death when we rest anywhere here. At the end of the chapter we are considering, a compassionate priest fitted to help us through our trial in the desolateness of the way. We are now introduced to the considerations we have entered upon. Enough has been said to show the structure of the book in respect of the comparison carried on. After the comparison of the priesthood, which we now enter upon, we have, at the beginning of the eighth chapter, the difference of the value of the blood of the offerings and covenant, and the full consequences repeated of turning aside and falling into this sin against God, namely, of falling away from the better ordinance of God in Christ. The eleventh requires no elucidation. It is the nature of faith. The twelfth shows the difference of the place from whence the call cometh. He will call again from earth. The thirteenth turns on a remarkable fitness of the blood, carried into the holiest to the defiled condition of the sinner before God; being the blood of the victim that was burned without the gate, carrying the application much farther than in chaps. viii., ix., x. In the thirteenth, it is not merely trespass, it is the body of sin, the defilement of the whole being, " He became sin for us"; and we are again manifestly on the high ground, and with the saints of the high places, who are called to come out of the camp and suffer with Him in following Him out of it, or addressed to those who are to advance to this point. We cannot give the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the future relationship of the earthly people to the Lord.

The fifth chapter begins with the mention of a priest, taken from among men. The end of the former chapter should be read with the beginning of this. The neglect of the distinction made in the words, " taken from among men," has been the means of displacing the Son of God, and lowering his nature, for some have not come short of making that which attaches to one taken from among men, to attach to the Son of the living God.

The likeness between Aaron and Christ is the calling of God, not his being taken from among men, and then to offer for his own sins, and that (observe) not offering of himself for himself, a condition

which destroys with its capacity of atonement. Being encompassed with infirmity for the competency to the office of compassion as a faithful high-priest, is no part of his vicarious sacrifice. How blessed to be clear in what we are suffering for, unmixedly for His name and gospel! How sure the comfort of this comparison! At the end of the chapter he turns distinctly to the Hebrews; though how true it may be of any! They were unskillful in the word of righteousness. The meat of the advanced is strong meat. And what good and evil are the senses of such exercised in, but the good and evil according to the hope of the calling now proposed to them?

We now come, in the next chapter, to the manifest proof of this in finding a list of things on which Hebraizing Christians rest to this day. But those whom He addressed were to advance. Those that now Hebraize are going back with little hope of repentance, save when the Joy of the Lord had once been present enough to make it necessary in extremity. And observe the case in

this chapter; they must go on or they will fall back. Christ had offered up Himself to purge their conscience from every obligation to dead works, and had entered into the Holiest, having been made a high-priest, after the order of Melchizedek, our forerunner into the HEAVENLIES.

Now, beloved brethren, who have added nothing to me, I beg you to consider the place to which the Lord is here brought, and then what He has to do there; He will be as Melchizedek to those who in that day have the law written in their hearts, and will come forth thence as such, though that statement does not enter here. But as SON-SON as risen and perfected evermore- entered there, He shall not merely come forth as priest after the order of Melchizedek. It is as entering there, not as coming forth thence, that He is here presented to us; He whose genealogy is not counted from Abraham nor to Abraham as after the flesh, is our priest.

The dignity of priesthood is marvelously set forth in this chapter. God knew the need of those who had to walk before Him. He is therefore in the presence of God for us. There must be a mediator, through whom those may be lifted up who fall, and to give effect to the relationship which God grants to man by Him in the heavenly places. This dignity is distinctly set forth in verse 11. On the strength of (or a sense in this direction, and not under as given in the English version  $\epsilon\pi\iota$  and not  $\nu\pi\omicron$ ) the priesthood the law was given; and the priesthood is not changed because the law was changed; but the law is changed (not written on hearts instead of stone), of necessity changed because the priesthood is changed. The law failed-the introduction is of a Getter hope. We have no law to sin against, but the law of risen SONS. The law was made for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers; but he that walketh in the Spirit is not under the law. The action of the priesthood of Aaron could apply only to the infraction of the law for which he had been made a priest. " This man also hath somewhat to offer."\_ God's purpose now is that in union with Christ risen, His life should be our existence, and as to our walk on earth the rule of it, as belonging where our life is. We are called up. The prize is to be there, and the presence of Christ is there, and we are called up thither of God. We are Christ's house if we hold fast to the mark. A risen and glorified SON, at the right-hand of God, is our priest, and Himself the offering, a priest forever. The word of the oath, which was after the law, appointed SON perfected for evermore.

If we die with Him we shall live with Him; if we suffer with Him we shall be glorified with Him, and the blessing of the compassion of this our priest is wanted. It is true, that as Melchizedek-priest he is become surety of the new and better covenant to Israel; we are not deprived of Him because of this. By Him we draw nearer than they. His place to them is one of His glories in which we rejoice.

## An Honest and Good Heart

---

An honest and good heart is the heart that loves Christ. That man has an honest and good heart that finds Christ so precious that he would not give Him up for anything.

We may have to suffer for Christ's sake in this world; but no suffering can take away from us any of the blessings that we have got in Him.

We have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

They that received the seed on the stony ground had not an honest and good heart, for they gave up Christ in the time of persecution and affliction.

They that received the seed among thorns, had not an honest and good heart, for they tried to keep the love of money and of pleasure in their hearts together with the love of Christ; but this cannot be. The love of money and of pleasure will prevail over the love of Christ, if we try to keep them both in our hearts at the same time.

Neither money nor pleasure could get for us what Christ has got for us; and therefore they should never be allowed to have a place together in the same heart.

We could not by pleasure or money get pardon and life; but we have got them through Christ.

We could not by money or pleasure get a treasure in heaven, but we have got it through Christ.

He is the word which is the seed of life to us.

No man can have an honest and good heart who does not keep Christ in his heart as the word of life.

But if he keeps Him, then he will bring forth fruit.

Everything we do by which we show that Christ is precious is fruit. To confess His name is fruit.

To give thanks to Him is fruit.

To suffer for His sake is fruit.

To show kindness to one of His disciples for His sake is fruit. To forgive for His name's sake is fruit.

This fruit is brought forth with patience, because we have to bear His cross and to endure many things.-From the MSS. of T. T. Ed.

## Jeremiah

---

The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah has a different character from that of Isaiah. It does not contain the same development of the counsels of God respecting this earth, that Isaiah does. It is true that we are told many things in it concerning the nations, but it is principally composed of testimony addressed immediately to the conscience of the people, on the subject of their moral condition at the time the prophet speaks, and with an eye to the judgment with which they were threatened. Judah had forsaken the Lord, for their repentance under Isaiah was but a fair appearance, and under the kings that succeeded him, their degradation was complete. The prophet's heart was overwhelmed with grief, because of his love for the people; at the same time that he was filled with a deep sense of their relationship with the Lord. The sense of this produced a continual conflict in his soul between the thought of the value of the people as the people of God, and a holy jealousy for the glory of God and His rights over His people-rights which they were trampling under foot. This was an incurable wound to his heart. He had pleaded for the people, he had stood in the breach for them before the Lord; but he saw that it was all in vain; the people rejected God\_ and the testimony that He sent them. God Himself would no longer hearken to prayer made for Israel. Jeremiah prophesies under this impression. A sorrowful task indeed, and one which made the prophet truly a man of sorrow. And although he could always say that if the people repented they would be received in grace, he well knew that the people had even no thought of repenting. Two things sustained him in this painful service (for what could be more painful than to announce judgment for their iniquities, to a people beloved of God) first of all, the energy of the Spirit of God which filled his heart and compelled him to announce the judgment of God, in spite of contradiction and persecution; and then, the revelation of the people's final blessing, according to the unchangeable counsels of God. After this brief notice of the spirit of the Book of Jeremiah, the proofs and details of which we shall find in going through his prophecies, let us now examine these in succession.

It is well-known that the order of the prophecies in the Septuagint is different from that in the Hebrew Bible. But I see no reason for not receiving the latter. There is no doubt that it does not observe the chronological order. The names of the kings in the successive chapters, clearly prove this. But it appears to me that where there is chronological confusion, the subjects are classed, and that according to the mind of the Spirit.

The first twenty-four chapters have rather a different character from those that follow. To the end of chap. 24 it is a reasoning, a moral pleading with the people. In chap. 25 there is a formal prophecy of judgment on divers nations by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar. And afterward we find prophecies much more distinct from each other, and connected with historical details.

Chaps. 30-33 contain promises of assured blessing for the last days. From chap. 39 it is the history of that which followed the taking of Jerusalem, and the judgment of Egypt and Babylon.

We will now state the different distinct prophecies, chap. 1, chaps. 2-6, chaps. 7-10, chaps. 11-13, chaps. 14, 15, chaps. 16, 17, chaps. 18-20, chaps. 21-24, chap. 25, chap. 26, chap. 27 (verse 1,

read Zedekiah instead of Jehoiakim), chap. 28, chap. 29, chaps. 30, 31, chap. 32, chap. 33. This last, however, is connected with the preceding one. Chapter 34, chap. 35, chap. 36, chaps. 37, 38, chap. 39, chap. 40-44, chap. 45, chap. 46, chap. 48, chap. 49:1-6, verses 7-22, verses 27, verses 28, 29, verses 30-33, verses 34-39, chaps. 50-51; chap. 52 is not written by Jeremiah.

There can be nothing more striking in the way of deep affliction than that of the prophet. He is distressed; his heart is broken. One sees, too, that God has made choice of a naturally feeble mind, easily cast down and discouraged (even while filling it with His own strength), in order that the anguish, the complaints, the distress of soul, the indignation of a weak heart that resents oppression while unable to throw it off, or overcome it, being all poured out before Him, should bear testimony against the people whose inveterate, wickedness called for His vengeance. The affliction of Christ, whose Spirit wrought that of Jeremiah, was infinitely deeper; but His perfect communion with His Father, caused all the anguish that in Jeremiah's case broke out into complaints, to be in secret between Jesus and His Father. It is very rarely expressed in the Gospels. He is entirely for others in grace. In the Psalms we see more of His feelings in Jeremiah's case, it was proper that the anguish of the faithful remnant should be expressed before God. The absolute perfection of the Lord Jesus, and the calmness which, through the presence of God, accompanies His perfection, in all His ways allowed of no complaint, whatever might be the inward anguish. of His heart. Sympathy for others became the position of Jesus. We see that our precious Lord never failed in this. But it was equally becoming that the outpouring of heart of the faithful, who needed this sympathy should be expressed by the Holy Ghost. It is not that there was no weakness in the heart that poured itself out, but if the Spirit lays it open, it is evident that He must express it as it is. Otherwise, it were useless and false. Consequently, Jeremiah enters much more personally into his prophecies, than any other prophet. He represents the people in their true position before God-such as God could recognize, as being before Him in this character-in order to see whether, receiving from God that which applied to this position, and expressing the sentiments inspired by such a position, it were possible to reach the conscience and win the heart of the people. Be it understood, that these sentiments were expressed according to the Spirit, and accompanied by the most direct and positive prophecies of that which God would bring upon the people. It is to be observed, also, that a great part of that which is written, was not addressed in the first instance to the people, but to God. This position of Jeremiah's, as the representative before God of the true interests of the people, or of the remnant, causes him to be looked at sometimes as though he were Jerusalem itself; and at other times, as a remnant separated from it and set apart for God. But these points will be better. understood by examining the passages which bring them into notice. The period during which Jeremiah prophesied was of considerable length, and embraced the whole time of Israel's decline, from the year after that in which Josiah began to cleanse Jerusalem and all the land, until the final destruction of Jerusalem by the army of the Chaldeans; and even a little while after in Egypt-a period of more than forty years; a period throughout of distress and anguish. For although Josiah was a godly king, the reformation of the people was only an outward one, as we shall see. So that the anguish of one who saw with God, was so much the greater on account of this appearance of piety. "And the Lord was not turned away from His fierce anger, because of the sins of Manasseh." Nevertheless, the prophet distinguishes between the two periods, i.e., the reign of Josiah, and that of his successors.

Excepting in chaps. 21-24, there are no dates for the first twenty-four chapters. It is probable that they were mostly given under Josiah's reign. They contain moral arguments, the expression of the prophet's sorrow of heart, and solemn warnings of the coming invasion from the North. The four chapters I have specified, have no chronological order, and are probably composed of prophecies given at different periods. They contain the judgment of the different branches of the house of David successively, as well as that of the false prophets, Who deceived the people. They end by declaring the fate of the captives in Babylon, and of those that remained with Zedekiah in Jerusalem-the two very different from each other.

In chap. 1, the prophet is established in his office, to which he had been appointed by the Lord even before his birth, that he should carry His word unto the nations. But Jeremiah's fears are immediately manifested. The Lord encourages him by the assurance of His presence. He puts His words in his mouth, and appoints him as prophet over the nations; to root out and to plant. Two visions are shown him, which contain the summary of the prophetic charge communicated to him, and announce that Jerusalem shall soon be stricken by the kingdoms of the North. Under these circumstances, Jeremiah is set before a rebellious people, who will strive against him. Nevertheless, he must declare everything; and as the Lord had before encouraged the prophet, He now adds to the encouragement, in order to enforce it, a threat in case of disobedience; namely, that if, through fear, he drew back from his commission, the Lord would become a greater cause of fear, and would break him to pieces before those of whom he was afraid. But if he fulfilled his appointed task the Lord would be with him. The verses 6-8, and 17, 18, show the great fearfulness of the prophet's spirit, which needed to be thus strengthened by the Lord.

Chapter 2 contains a most touching appeal to the people at Jerusalem. It requires no explanation, but deserves the heart's serious attention. It testifies in the most striking manner to the kindness and tender love of the Lord. Chapter 3 has the same character; but it contains details of Israel's and Judah's behavior, and proclaims the restoration of Israel, and the blessing of the last days. For this judgment being executed on Israel, God can allow His heart to flow out in the testimony of grace. This necessarily gives a place also to Judah, as the two are to be united. The end of the chapter enlarges, in a very affecting manner, on the spirit that Grace will produce in Israel when they are brought back, and on the manner in which the Lord will receive them. In verses 23-25, the prophet confesses the people's condition at the time in which he spoke. It is in this chapter that we have the solemn revelation, that as far as the people were concerned, the reformation under Josiah was but hypocrisy. Chapter 4 resumes this subject, and applying it at that time to the people, tells them that if they return, it must be unto the Lord himself; that neither forms nor half-measures would be of any use. After the 4th verse, the prophet announces the certain judgment of God, which should come from the North, and fall upon Jerusalem in destruction.

In chap. 5 the sin and the iniquity are shown to be universal. Rich and poor, all are alike, and " Shall not I visit for these things? " saith the Lord. Nevertheless, He will not destroy entirely. The source of evil, or at least, that which maintains it, is pointed out. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means. Chapter 6 continues the testimony, but gives also the position of Jeremiah in the midst of all this evil. In verses 11-27, the judgment is plainly announced. The conduct of the false prophets is again marked. In both these chapters the coming of Nebuchadnezzar in judgment is evidently declared.

Chapter 7 begins a new prophecy, contemplating especially the temple, which, instead of being a protection, as the people, without conscience, would have it-was become a further demonstration of their iniquity. They were to remember Shiloh, for the house of God should likewise be overthrown. Judah should be cast off as Ephraim had been, and God would hear no intercession for His people. He required obedience and not sacrifice, and if the people came into His house while they were practicing idolatry, they did but defile it. But (8) Israel had less understanding than the birds of heaven, which, at least, knew their appointed times; while Israel knew not the judgment of the Lord. In verses 10, 11, he repeats the accusation of chap. 6:13, 14. From verse 18, to the 2nd verse of chap. 9, the prophet lays open the depth of his grief. From verse 3, of chap. 9, he proclaims judgment. A judgment which shall also visit the nations around. And in view of these judgments, he exhorts every man not to glory in man, but in the knowledge of the Lord (23, 24). In chap. 10 the idols and the vanities of the nations are put in contrast with the Lord. In verses 19-25, we have the affliction of the prophet, speaking of the desolation of Jerusalem as though he were himself the desolate city, and praying to God that His dealings might be only chastisement and not excision. The reader will do well to observe that the repetition of God's pleadings with Israel (although these pleadings, while varied in their character, need little remark to make them understood) is the most touching proof of the kindness of God, who multiplies His appeals to a rebellious and perverse people, " rising up early," as He expresses it, to protest unto them.

Chapter 11 suggests some observations. God addresses himself again to Israel on the ground of their responsibility; reminding them of the call to obedience, which had been addressed to them ever since their coming out of Egypt. God was about to bring on the people the evil with which He had threatened them. Jeremiah is not to intercede for them. Nevertheless, He still calls Israel His "beloved;" but being corrupted, what had she to do in His house? Whatever she might have been to Him, judgment was coming. At the end of the chapter, Jeremiah takes the place of the faithful remnant who have the testimony of God. His position continually reminds us of the psalms. We see the Spirit of Christ, which is often clearly expressed, but sometimes it appears to me, in expressions more mingled with Jeremiah's personal position, and thereby less deep and less akin to the sentiments of Christ; although the same in principle with the psalms. Jeremiah, on account of his faithfulness and his testimony, was exposed to the machinations of the wicked. The Lord reveals these things to him, and according to the righteousness which characterizes the condition of the remnant, he calls for the vengeance of God. This was the means of deliverance for the remnant. He announces the judgment of these wicked men by the word of the Lord. In the 83 psalm the same principles will be found, and the same wickedness in God's enemies; only there these enemies are Gentiles. But the range of thought is wider. Israel, and the knowledge of the Lord, are the object of the prayer in that psalm. Compare also chap. 9 and Psa. 65. Here there is more intercession on Jeremiah's part; the psalm speaks of judgment. Compare also Psa. 69:6, 7, and Jer. 15:15. The words of the psalm being from the mouth of Christ himself; the request is for others, and infinitely more touching. This comparison of passages will help in understanding the relationship between the position of Jeremiah and that of the remnant described in the psalm. We may also compare Psa. 73 with the beginning of chap. 12. This last chapter forms a part of the same prophecy as the preceding one. Jeremiah pleads with God on the subject of these judgments, but in a humble and submissive manner, which God accepts by making him feel (a painful necessity) the evil of the people more deeply. At the same time He sustains the prophet's faith by the personal interest He manifests in him. God makes him understand that He has

forsaken His inheritance; the state of things was therefore no longer to be wondered at. At the same time he reveals His purposes of blessing to his people, and even to the nations among whom they will be dispersed, if these nations would learn the ways of the Lord.

Chapter 13, bringing to mind how God had bound Israel to His heart, announces the terrible judgment with which the people shall, as it were, be drunken; and on the ground of this judgment calls them to repentance. The 14 chap. refers to a famine which took place in the land. The desolation of Jerusalem by the sword and by famine, is again declared. But observe here the touching intercession of ver.7-9; and again in ver. 17-22, the deep affliction of the Spirit of Christ which expresses itself by the prophet's mouth. "For in all their affliction He was afflicted." Observe also another element of their condition pointed out by the Apostle Peter, and by the Lord himself, with reference to the last days, namely, false prophets.

The beginning of chap. 15 is an answer to the close of chap. xiv.; but the instruction and the principles it contains are very remarkable. The Lord declares that if Moses and Samuel (whose love for Israel and faith in intercession for them, were unequalled among all the servants of God who had stood before Him on their behalf), if these two beloved leaders of the people were there, yet God would not accept Israel. Who should have pity on them! The Lord himself forsakes them. From ver. 20 we find the true position of the remnant in such a case. A most touching instruction for ourselves. Poor Jeremiah complains of his lot, among a people whose sorrows he bore on his heart, while at the same time enduring their causeless hatred. We see, ver. 11-14, that he represents the people before God, but yet that the faithful remnant are separated from the mass of the wicked. From ver. 15, they present themselves in this separated position to God, bearing, at the same time, all the pain of the nation's wound, even while asking vengeance on the wicked, the adversaries of the truth. In reply, precise directions are given for the walk of one who is faithful in such a position. The word of God, eaten and digested in the heart, is the source of this position, ver. 16. Instead of sharing the spirit of the enemies and the mockers, who rejoiced in the abominable and hypocritical state of those who bore the name of God's people, the effect of the word in the heart was, no doubt, to separate from this condition of the people, but to isolate, as though he were himself the object of God's indignation, as being himself the people. The word, which revealed the relationship between God and the people, and showed them their privileges and their duties, caused the faithful to judge the state of the people, and to feel all the consequences of this state as the judgment of the Lord. A judgment so much the more terrible to his heart, from his feeling how close a bond of affection and blessing from God, was the normal condition of the people. Vers. 17,18, "Thou hast filled me with indignation," is the prophet's language. In vers. 19-21, the precise instructions of God with respect to this condition, are given. God also addresses Jeremiah as though he were the people whom he thus represented in spirit before Him, and at the same time, according to his individual faith. He says, first of all, "If thou return to me, I will bring thee again and thou shalt stand before me." This open door-open till man shuts it-is always in the ways of God, although He well knows that man will not profit by it. Is this all, while it is called to-day and the door is open, to call on the rebellious people to return? No. There is something else for the faithful to do. "If thou separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." In the midst of the ruin caused by the rebellion of God's people, this is the especial work of one who is faithful, who is imbued with the Word. The desire of his soul being the reproduction of this Word and of the affections of God revealed in it, can he reject the people in a

mass as wicked? That cannot be. Can he accept them in a condition of rebellion, which is so much the worse because they belong to God? He must learn to do that which God does, take account of all that is good, and if it is too late to preserve everything, never condemn that which is of God. The penetrating eye of God never loses sight of this. The affections of the prophet are fixed upon it also. But God has His own thoughts, and He acts according to His own will; He lays hold of that which is precious, owns it, and separates it from that which is vile. This is not precisely the judgment of God respecting evil, but when the judgment is imminent on account of the evil, the energy of the Spirit and the power of the Word lead us to attach ourselves to the good, to discern it, to separate it from the evil, before the judgment comes. If Satan can, he will mingle them together. Those who know how to separate them shall be as the mouth of God. God will do it in judgment by smiting the evil; in the faithful the spirit of God does it, by separating the precious from the vile. The third principle is, that when once separated from the path of the rebellious by this spiritual intelligence, there must not be a moment's thought of returning to them. " Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them." Finally, in this position the Lord will make the faithful like a wall of brass. The rebels, who boast of being called the people of God, fight against His faithful servant, but shall not prevail, because the Lord is with him. Deliverance is promised to Jeremiah. All this, while having its immediate application to the prophet, is most valuable instruction for us, in the principle which it contains to direct us in similar times. Patience is required, but the path is clearly marked out. There is always an open door on God's part. The separation of the precious from the vile makes us like the mouth of God. A positive refusal when thus placed to return to the unfaithful. Such are the principles that God has here established. The Word received in the heart is their source. At the same time, the effect is very far from contempt of the fallen people; on the contrary, the heart of the faithful takes upon itself all the grief of the position in which the people of God, or those who publicly stand as such, are found.

In chap. 16 the Lord teaches Jeremiah to avoid all family relationships with this people, and to cease from all testimonies of interest in what was going on among them. For He himself had entirely broken off with them, and would cause all His testimonies to cease among them, and would drive them out of the land. But after all, through the greatness of the evil which He would bring upon them, He would cause their deliverance out of Egypt to be forgotten in their yet greater deliverance from this evil. For at length God will pardon and comfort His people. But before this He will recompense their iniquity. Afterward, the Gentiles themselves shall come and acknowledge the true God, the God of Israel. Chapter 17- The great thing amidst all that was going on, was to trust in the Lord. He who, failing in this, made flesh his arm, should not see when good came. Meantime, the fire of God's anger was kindled, and should not be quenched. How could a wicked and deceitful heart be trusted! The Lord searches it, to give every one according to his ways. The prophet, in the name of the people, casts himself upon the Lord; and on account of the wickedness of the adversaries who mocked at God's testimonies, he appeals to God. He had not desired the woeful day which he announced, neither was it by his own choice that he forsook the peaceful duties he owed the people to follow God in this testimony. He entreats God, whose terrible judgments were to scatter the people, not to be a terror unto him. God was all his hope in the day of evil. What a picture of the condition of the remnant in the last days; and, at all times, of the portion of one who is faithful, when the people of God will not hearken to his testimony! Nevertheless, it being still called to-day, God, in His long-suffering, opens the door of repentance to the people, and to their king, if they have ears to hear. In chap. 18 this principle is fully

demonstrated before the people (verses 1-10). But the people, in despair as to God, in the midst of their boldness in evil, and in contempt of His marvelous patience, give themselves up to the iniquity by which Satan deprives them of their hope in God. God announces His judgment by the prophet, whose testimony provokes the expression of the confidence felt by a conscience hardened in the certainty and immutability of its privileges, and of the blessings attached to the ordinances with which God had endowed His people, and to which He had outwardly attached these blessings, that maintained their relationship with Him. What a dreadful picture of blindness! Ecclesiastical influence is always greatest at the moment when the conscience is hardened against the testimony of God; because unbelief, which trembles after all, shelters itself behind the presumed stability of that which God had set up, and makes a wall of its apostate forms against the God whom they hide; attributing to these ordinances the stability of God himself. Conscience says too much to allow the unbeliever any hope of standing well with God, even when God opens His heart to him. "There is no hope," he says; "I will continue to do evil; moreover, the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise; nor," he adds (the false prophets having the ear of the people) "the word from the prophet." The warning which this chapter contains, appears to me very solemn. I can scarcely imagine a more terrible picture of the professing people's condition. The prophet asks for judgment upon them. This is in the spirit of the remnant, trodden down by the wickedness of the Lord's enemies.

Chaps. 19 and 20 show us the judgment of Jerusalem, announced in terms that require little explanation; and we have, in chap. 20, a sample of the opposition of the priests, and of Jeremiah's sufferings. But this does not prevent Jeremiah's denouncing the priest himself, and repeating that which he had said of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we see the effect of these sufferings on his heart. He was compelled, as it were, by the Lord to bear this testimony. He has not (and it is the same with the remnant) the willing spirit that rejoices in tribulation by the power of the Holy Ghost. He was the subject of constant mockery; they watched for his halting, so that he would gladly have been silent; but the word of the Lord was like fire in his bones. Alas! we understand all this—the deep iniquity of the men who are called the people of God, the way in which the feeble heart recoils before this iniquity, that has neither heart nor conscience, and how on these occasions the Word is too strong in us to be shut up in our heart. Nevertheless, with all this fear, he had also the consciousness that the Lord was with him, and he again asks for vengeance, which, in fact, is deliverance, and the only deliverance of those who have the testimony of Christ in such a position. This deliverance is celebrated in verse 13. But in 14-18, we see to what a point personal grief may drive those who are subjected to such a trial as this. See the same thing in Job—a picture of the same condition, that is to say, of a soul tried by all the malice of Satan, without the full knowledge of grace (in the sense of its own nothingness, and in the forgetfulness of self). This will be precisely the state of the remnant in the last days. Christ is the model of perfection in the same position. A position which He thoroughly experienced and felt.

Chaps. 21-23. On the occasion of Zedekiah's request, the spirit of God has brought the testimonies together, that were given with respect to all the members of David's family, who presided—so to say—at the ruin of Jerusalem—Jehoahaz (chap. 22:10), Jehoiakim (verses 13-19), Jeconiah (20-30). The judgment of Zedekiah had been pronounced (chap. 21), and after having declared, as we have seen, that the door was always open to repentance, and that blessing always attended a godly walk (21:12, 22:1-5) judgment is again pronounced, and a sentence from

God upon the different kings. Finally (23), the expression of the Lord's indignation against these evil pastors, gives rise to the declaration that He will raise up a Shepherd after His own heart; namely, the true Son of David, the Messiah. The just indignation, and the judgment of God, are expressed in the strongest terms.

Two things attract our attention in chap. 24. First, submission to the judgment of God when He executes it is the proof of intelligence in His Word, of real spirituality. Want of faith leans, not on the stability of the promises, but under pretext of the promises-on that of the ordinances and of the men who enjoy them. Those who submit to this judgment of God upon the unfaithfulness of man, a judgment suited to the enjoyment of these promises, and to the setting aside of ordinances, the stability of which God had not guaranteed; but in connection with which man would, if faithful, have enjoyed the promises; those, I repeat, who submit to this judgment, shall enjoy the full and entire effect of these promises, to which it is impossible that God should be unfaithful. The second thing to be remarked, is that when God would encourage the faith of those who submit to His judgment, being led by this submission to a holy conviction that man has deserved it, God stops at nothing short of the full and entire accomplishment of the promises, which depend on His faithfulness, whatever may have been the unfaithfulness of man. An accomplishment which can and shall be enjoyed, solely by means of a work of God in man, that will bring him into a condition suitable to this accomplishment (see verses 6 and 7). The position of the people at the time of Jeremiah's prophecies, furnished an evident opportunity for the development of these two principles: for the people and the house of David had entirely failed in their faithfulness to God. It is very afflicting, and very humbling, when we are obliged to confess that God's enemies are in the right. The only comfort is, that God is in the right (Ezek. 14:22,23) and that in the end He cannot fail to accomplish His gracious promises.

Chapter 25 closes, so to say, this part of the prophecy with a general summary of God's judgments on the earth, giving it into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar. The immediate application to events already accomplished, does not offer much difficulty; but we shall find a good deal, if we would bring in also an allusion to the last days. Israel, to whom the door had always been held open, is first judged. The chapter begins by announcing the judgment of God upon Jerusalem, because she had refused to hear the call to repentance which had been addressed to her during twenty-three years. And here let us notice the hardness of the people's heart, stubborn in evil, and refusing to bow the neck to God's testimony, in spite of all the pains God took, if we may so speak, to warn them. And indeed it is His own language, "The Lord has sent unto you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened" (see 2 Chron. 36:15). The Lord had always set before the people a full and abiding blessing if they repented; but they would not. The prophet announces that the Lord will bring all the families of the north, under Nebuchadrezzar, against Jerusalem, and against the adjoining nations, all of whom should assuredly drink the cup of judgment that the Lord had mingled for them. Jerusalem should serve the king of Babylon seventy years; and after that, the king of Babylon himself should be judged and punished, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah against all the nations. For having begun with Jerusalem, it should be a universal judgment. That which should immediately happen, was the judgment of the nations around Palestine, and afterward that of Babylon, who was the instrument of their judgment. But the fact that the city called by the name of the Lord, was to be laid waste, implied the judgment of all the nations. Consequently, in the symbolical action of the

prophecy, all the nations connected with Israel, all

those of the world as then known, are forced to drink the cup. But this is expressed in terms that include the nations of the whole earth. The historical application of verse 26, does not go farther than that which happened by means of Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Sheshach, who should drink subsequently to the others. But a principle of universal judgment is comprised in this. The universal evil is developed (verses 29-38). The only question that can be raised is, whether in this ulterior destruction of all the kingdoms of the earth, the expression, "king of Sheshach," has any application to one who shall possess the same territory, or if it is merely Nebuchadnezzar. I doubt its going farther. The picture of universal judgment ends the first division of the

prophecy. That which follows gives details and particular cases.

d In either case, the judgment does not appear to me to go farther than the oppression of the nations by the king of the Gentiles, who is raised up in place of the throne of God in Jerusalem, and his own destruction at the end of his wicked career.

Chapter 26 begins this series of details, with a prophecy of the commencement of Jehoiakim's reign. The people are warned, as being already in sin, that if they repent they shall escape. We have constantly seen this character attached to the prophecies of Jeremiah, as though God said, "To-day, if ye will hear my voice." Circumstances rendered this appeal urgent, for in fact, if Israel did not repent, the house of the Lord was to be like Shiloh. We find that of which God had warned the prophet. They strive against him, but as the Lord had promised, they gain no advantage over him. We see that it is the ecclesiastical party that excite the people against the testimony which God bears to them by the mouth of the prophet. But God turns the heart of the princes and of the people towards Him. There were some, also, who regarded the ways of the Lord. Their intelligence did not go far, but sufficiently so for deliverance; they feared God. We may remark here that conscience laid hold of the word of God in its immediate application. No doubt the evil would go on increasing, and when ripe the judgment would be accomplished (for God does not strike before iniquity has come to its height), and then the prophecy would be fulfilled. But conscience, under the influence of the Word, takes knowledge of principles which are judged by it, even when all is not yet ripe for judgment, and as yet the judgment is not executed (verses 18, 19).

Chapter 27 and 28 go together. Their chief subject is the submission which God requires of them to the head of the Gentiles. But before dwelling on this, I would call attention to the care which God bestows on His people, warning them again at each new phase of their career towards judgment. We remember that Zedekiah brought down this judgment by rebelling against the king of Babylon. At the beginning of his reign the Lord sent His word by Jeremiah to warn all the kings around, as well as Zedekiah, that they must submit. If they submitted they should dwell in their land in peace; if not, they should be driven out and perish. Let us now observe the place which, as Creator of the earth, of man and beast, God gives to the king of Babylon. God has given the nations, and even the beasts of the field, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar for a certain time. God establishes this central and universal power, and the nation that refuses to submit to it would be in rebellion against himself, and should be consumed. Compare Dan. 2:38, which adds the fowls of the heaven to his dominion. All on earth was subjected to this king of the earth—the imperial head taken from among the Gentiles. It was a government appointed of God, who had forsaken Jerusalem, and would no longer protect her unless she submitted to this government. It appears that the kings

of the surrounding countries were plotting with Zedekiah to throw off the yoke of the king of Babylon, and that the mission of their ambassadors was the occasion on which this prophecy was given, God declaring that He would have all submit to this yoke, for it was He himself that imposed it. This fact, that God has committed power in this world to a man is very remarkable. In the case of Israel, man had been tried on the ground of obedience to God, and had not been able to possess the blessing that should have resulted from it. Now God abandons this direct government of the world (while still the sovereign Lord above), and casting off Israel whom He, had -chosen out from the nations, grouping the latter around the elect people and His own throne in Israel, He subjects the world to one head, and committing power unto man, He places him under a new trial, to prove whether he will own the God who gave him power, and make those happy who are subjected to him, when he can do whatever he will in this world. I do not enter here into the details of the history of this trial, they belong to the book of Daniel. We know that man failed in it. Senseless and presumptuous, he ravaged the world and oppressed the people of God, trod down His sanctuary, and prepared for himself a judgment so much the more terrible that Satan will induce him to resist it, and will aid him in his rebellion. Nebuchadnezzar alone answers in all points to that which we have just said. He is the head of gold. God had committed immediately to him the government of the world. Cyrus had personally a more peculiar place, and one more honorable in some respects. But as an empire, the Persians only took the place of one that already existed; and the sources and character of the power continually deteriorated in proportion as their distance from God and His gift increased. False prophets as well as false teachers oppose the truth-in this very point on which God tries His people. They can use all other parts of truth in order to deceive, and appear to have increased faith in them. It is manifest that the secret of the Lord is never with them. But whatever appearances may be, they neither stop nor turn away God from the path He takes. Yet the true prophet's position is a painful one. He may seem for the time to be reduced to silence; for the popular falsehood possesses the hearts of the people. Jeremiah had to go away. Nevertheless, in the combat between truth and error, God often intervenes by a striking testimony. The function of the prophet, with respect to the government of the world and of the people's walk, is always a testimony to the judgment which hangs over unfaithfulness.

Chapter 29. On the other hand, the prophet comforts those who, by the judgment of God, were subjected to the yoke which He had imposed upon them. The Jews in Babylon should dwell in peace, quietly seeking the welfare of the city in which they were captives. The time of deliverance should come. The spirit of rebellion should be punished. Finally, having insisted on the people's submission to the judgment, God reveals His own thoughts of grace. This submission was necessary, because of Israel's sin; for God must maintain His own character, and not identify Himself with the ways of a rebellious people. But He must needs manifest Himself as He is, in His grace. The execution of the judgment, and Israel's ruined condition, brought the truth and beauty of the grace of God into yet greater prominence. Some details of the circumstances that accompany its exercise, deserve our attention, as well as the character which God displays in it, and the extent of its effects. In chap. 30 God commands Jeremiah to write in a book all the words of the judgment which he had heard, for God would restore the people. Now this deliverance found Israel at the height of the distress. This is the first thing presented to the prophet. No day could be compared to this day of Jacob's trouble. It is the day spoken of in Matt. 24 and Mark 13 But in this extremity God comes to the help of His people, who shall be delivered. And now, God having executed His judgment, and acting according to His own counsels in grace, this deliverance shall,

in consequence, be full and complete. Israel shall serve the Lord their God and David their king. The ruin (ver. 12), was complete, incurable, no remedy could heal it. It is God who had smitten His people for the multitude of their sins. Nevertheless, He was with them to save them; and consequently, all the nations who had availed themselves of God's anger to devour Israel, should be themselves devoured. Zion should be rebuilt on her own foundation, joy and peace should be in her dwellings, the governors of the people should be of her children. Israel should be the people of the Lord, and the Lord should be their God. Finally, a principle which we have seen clearly explained is here announced, namely, that judgment should fall upon the wicked; that this judgment went forth to smite the people of God first because they were wicked and must bear the consequence. But wherever the wicked might be, this judgment should reach them. Wheresoever the carcass might be, there should the eagles be gathered together.

Chapter 31. But it would not be Judah only to whom the prophecies of Jeremiah were addressed-that should be restored-all the families of Israel should enjoy this blessing. The Lord should be their God, they should be His people. A few words will suffice to fix the reader's attention on this beautiful prophecy. All the tribes are there, but all in renewed relationship with Zion. It is a deliverance wrought by the Lord, and it is therefore complete. Its enjoyment is not hindered by weakness. It is a deliverance that melts the heart and produces tears and supplications, but which removes all cause for tears, excepting grace. They shall sorrow no more, their soul shall be as a watered garden, they shall be satisfied with goodness from the Lord. Ephraim has repented (for God will cause him to feel that He has never forgotten him). The Lord has always remembered His erring child. Judah shall be the habitation of justice and the mountain of holiness. This shall be through a new covenant, not that which was made when they came out of Egypt. The law shall be written in their heart, they shall all know the Lord, and none of their sins shall be remembered any more. If God should overthrow the ordinances of creation, then, saith He, shall Israel be cast off for all that they have done. Finally, the Lord declares in detail the restoration of Jerusalem. 1 would add that in verse 22, I see only weakness. Israel, feeble as a woman, shall possess and overcome all strength; seeing that strength manifests itself in that which is very weakness. These two chapters give in general the prophetic testimony to Israel's restoration. Chapter 32 applies it to the circumstances of the Jews besieged in Jerusalem; taking occasion from the ruin that evidently threatened them by the presence of Nebuchadrezzar, to announce the infallible counsels of God in grace towards them. Jeremiah had declared that the city should be taken, and Zedekiah led captive. But the Lord had caused him to buy a field, in proof that the people should assuredly return. He points out the iniquity of the people and of the city from the beginning, but now that in despair through sin, their ruin appeared to them inevitable, the Lord declares not only a return from captivity, but the full efficacy of His grace. He would give oneness of heart to the people, that they may serve Him forever. Their relationship to God as His people should be fully established, according to the power of an everlasting covenant. The Lord would rejoice in doing them good. He would plant them in the land with His whole heart, and His whole soul. It was He who had brought all this evil in judgment, and it was He who would bring all the good which He had promised.

Chapter 33 repeats the testimony to these blessings, and dwells particularly on the presence of the Messiah; it announces that the Branch of righteousness shall grow up unto David, executing judgment and righteousness in the land. Judah shall be saved and Jerusalem shall dwell safely. Her name shall be " The Lord our Righteousness." David shall never want a man to sit upon the

throne of the house of Israel (not merely Judah), nor the tribe of Levi, a priest. The Lord's covenant with the heavens and earth shall fail, before this covenant with David shall be broken. However deeply sunk in despair the people might be, the Lord would never cast off Jacob, or His servant David, but would cause their captivity to return and would have mercy on them. With this chapter, the second part of the book closes, i.e., the revelation of the full effect of God's grace towards ruined Israel; a result which should be according to His purposes of love, and perfect according to His counsels.

Chapter 34 On the occasion of renewed iniquity, the prophet announces the certain ruin of the people. Nevertheless, Zedekiah, though carried captive to Babylon, should die there in peace. In the succeeding chapters, we have some details of the obstinate rebellion which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and of all Judah.

Chapter 35 The obedience of the Rechabites is set forth, in order to spew out more clearly the sin of Judah- disobedient in spite of the remonstrances and the patience of God. God does not forget the obedience that glorifies His name. The family of the Rechabites shall never fail.

Chapter 36 furnishes us with another example of the obstinacy with which the kings of Judah despised the call and the testimony of God. Jeremiah was shut up, but God can never fail in means to address His testimony to man, whatever efforts they may make to escape it. Baruch is employed to write the prophecies of Jeremiah, and to read them first to the people, then to the princes, and at last to the king himself. But the latter, hardened in his evil ways, destroys the roll. Jeremiah, by God's direction, causes the same words to be written again; and others also, for he neglects no means to reach and God's ways in this are remarkable. He had broken the oath of Jehovah, and he is judged as profane. It was mainly through the influence of others, for he was disposed to listen to Jeremiah, and therefore mercy is extended to him lay hold afresh of the people's conscience, but all was useless.

Chapter 37 gives us Zedekiah in the same state of disobedience. A show of religion is kept up, and having a moment of respite which excites some hope, the king seeks an answer from the Lord, by His prophet. But the favorable circumstances, through which it might appear that the wicked may escape from judgment, do not alter the certainty of the Word. Jeremiah sought to avail himself of the opportunity, to avoid the judgment which was coining upon the rebellious city; but this only serves to manifest the hatred of the heart to God's testimony; and the princes of the people-accusing Jeremiah of favoring the enemy, because he proclaimed the judgment that should fall on the people by their means-put him in prison. Zedekiah manifests some conscience by releasing him.\* In general, there is more conscience in Zedekiah personally than in some others of the last kings of Judah (see verse 21, and chaps. 10, 28:10, 14, 16). On this account, perhaps, were those few words of favor and mercy addressed to him in chap. 34:5. But he was too weak to allow his conscience to lead him in the path of obedience (comp. chap. 28:5-12). This last chapter gives us the history of his weakness. Nevertheless, in the midst of all this scene of misery and iniquity, we find some scarce examples of righteous men; and, however terrible His judgment may be, God remembers them; for His judgment is terrible because He is righteous. Ebed-melech, who delivered Jeremiah, is spared! Baruch also preserves his life, and even Zedekiah, as we have seen, is comforted by some words of encouragement, although he must undergo the consequences of his faults. The ways of God are always perfect, and if His judgments are like an

overwhelming torrent, as to man, still everything, even to the smallest detail, is directed by His hand; and the righteous are spared. The prison even becomes a place of safety for Jeremiah, and the Lord deigns not only to spare Ebed-melech, but to send him a direct testimony of His favor by the mouth of Jeremiah, that he may understand the goodness of God in whom he had trusted. Besides this, chap. 39 and the following chapters, give us the history of the confusion and iniquity that reigned among the remnant who were not carried captive to Babylon, in order that they should be scattered, and that all should fully bear the judgment which God had pronounced. Nevertheless, if at this last hour, this remnant had submitted to the yoke of Nebuchadrezzar, peace should have reigned in the land, and these few that remained should have quietly possessed it. But some revolt, and the others fear the consequences of their folly. There is no idea of trusting in the Lord. They consult Jeremiah, but refuse to obey the word of the Lord from his mouth. They take refuge in Egypt to escape Nebuchadrezzar, but only to fall under the sword which would have spared them in Judea, had they remained there in subjection to the king. In Egypt they give themselves up to idolatry, that the wrath of God might come upon them to the end. Nevertheless, God would spare even a little remnant of these, but Pharaoh Hophra, in whom they trusted, should be given up into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, as Zedekiah had been.

Chapter 45 gives us the prophecy with respect to Baruch, already mentioned. The xlvi. and following chapters, contain the prophecies against the Gentiles around Judea, and against Babylon herself. We shall find these especial elements in the prophecies that refer to the nations-the judgments are not those of the last days, as in Isaiah, but (according to the general character of the book) refer to the destruction of the different nations, in order to make way for the dominion of one sole empire. It is thus that in the case of Judea, the judgment is even now executed. But there is a difference with respect to the restoration of those nations in the last days. Egypt, Elam, Moab, Ammon, are restored in the last days. Edom, Damascus, Philistia, Hazor, are not. The reason of this is easily seen. Egypt, Elam, form no part of the land of Israel. God in His goodness will have compassion on those countries; they shall be inhabited and blessed under His government. When the people of Israel entered Canaan, Ammon and Moab were to be spared. They were not Canaanites under the curse, and however deplorable their origin might be, yet being related to the family of Israel, their land was preserved to them, although to the tenth generation they could not be admitted into the congregation of Israel (Deut. 33:3). And when God shall put an end to the dominion given to Nebuchadnezzar, and to the empire of the Gentiles, these nations shall again enter into the countries that were allotted them. But although Edom had been spared, and were even to be received amongst Israel in their third generation, yet as their hatred to Israel had been unbounded, they should be totally destroyed in the judgment of that day. Compare Obadiah throughout, especially verse 18. Their land should form a part of Israel's territory, and was, in fact, a part of it, although they themselves were spared at the beginning, as the brethren of Israel; but only, alas! to abuse this favor; so that the judgment would be more terrible upon them than upon the rest. Damascus, Hazor, and Philistia, were a part of the land of Israel, properly so called. These nations disappear as distinct nations, as to their territory. At the close of the judgment on Egypt, God sends words of encouragement to Israel. Israel had leant on Pharaoh, when Nebuchadnezzar had attacked Jerusalem. The Egyptian power appeared to be the only one capable of balancing that of Babylon. But God had ordained the fall of Egypt, who would willingly have taken the chief place this was, however, appointed for Babylon. The country from which they were brought out, would like to prevail over idolatrous corruption and Babylonish

principles; but these were to be in force until the time appointed by God, when God will judge them. Now, Israel having leant upon Egypt, would apparently fall with Egypt; but God watched over them, and they were to return from their captivity, and dwell in peace. God would „judge the nations; He would chastise Israel in measure. His people should not be condemned with the world. The ways of God in government are well worthy of attention here. Grace abused brings down the most terrible judgments; thus it was with Edom. Babylon yet remains. But in Jeremiah, all the judgments are contemplated, in connection with the setting aside of the independent nations; and the establishment of the one empire of the Gentiles-the chief subject of this prophecy. Consequently, the prophet is specially occupied with the historical fate of the empire, as established by God in the prophet's own days. It is Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans which are the subject of his prophecy. It is the judgment of this empire to avenge the oppression of Israel by Nebuchadnezzar, who had broken his bones (chap. 50:17). Nevertheless, the deliverance of Israel at-the time of the destruction Of Babylon, is given as a pledge and foretaste of their complete and final deliverance (50:4-19, 20, 34. See also 51:19, 21). For the destruction of Babylon was the judgment of that which God had himself established as the Gentile empire. This is the reason why-even historically-her judgment was accompanied by the deliverance of Israel and the destruction of idolatry, by a man raised up to execute the righteousness of God. It has not been at all the same thing with the other empires; although, no doubt, they also were set up by the providence of God. But in their case it was not the immediate establishment of the empire on God's part, placing man in it under responsibility. Man, thus placed, has completely failed. He has tyrannized. over God's people, established a compulsory idolatry, and corrupted the world by its means. Looked at as having the dominion of the world, which had been committed to him, he has been judged, and Babylon is fallen. It is important thoroughly to apprehend this truth with respect to this first empire. In principle, the deliverance of Israel results from it, whatever the subsequent dealings of God may have been. See also the character of this judgment (chap. 50:28, 33, 34). The next chapter furnishes us also with important principles, in connection with this destruction of Babylon.

Chapter 51:6. The unchangeable faithfulness of God to Israel, in spite of the people's sins. It was the time of the Lord's vengeance. -When the time that God indicated should have arrived-a time to be known only by those whose spiritual discernment would enable them to apply the prophecy, the elements of which were given clearly enough in these two chapters (especially in the assaults of the nations) then, those who had ears to hear were to leave the city. Moreover, the fall of Babylon was a judgment pronounced upon idolatry. The portion of Jacob, the Lord, might chastise His people, but He was not like the vanities of the Gentiles. After having chastised them, He would bring forth His righteousness in contrast with the Gentiles who oppressed them, and would finally use them as His weapons of war. From verse 25, we see that it is the Babylon of those days which is in question. From verse 29, the historical circumstances that are related, give us a very especial proof of this.

The last chapter forms no part of the book of Jeremiah, properly so called. We find in it events relative to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple. After the remarks we have made: that which is said in it of Babylon will be easily understood.

I recapitulate here the principles of this Book; on account of their importance. The empire of Babylon, in consequence of the unfaithfulness of the house of David, was established by God

himself; and entrusted with the government of the world. But Babylon not only oppressed Israel, but set up idolatry, and corrupted the world. He who should have been a worshipper of the true God, and an instrument of His power, established, as far as he could, the influence of the enemy. God has judged him. The empire which God himself established has been entirely overthrown. This judgment was executed against the pride of man, and against idolatry. At the same time it was the deliverance of Israel. This last consideration gave rise to a declaration on God's part of what Israel was to Him, and what it shall be in the last days. But the subject treated of is the Babylon of that day. Since then, God has permitted other powers to exist, governing the world with universal • dominion, until the final accomplishment of all His purposes. These empires have subsisted according to His will, have been raised up or cast down, as He saw good. But neither of them has held precisely the same place as Babylon. None of them have been formally established in the place of Israel, nor has the destruction of any of them been the occasion of Israel's restoration. The word of prophecy assures us that at the end of the days, the judgment of the last empire will have this effect. The judgment of Babylon has in manner foreshadowed it; as its moral character commenced the sad history of these monarchies, and served as a model to them in many respects, as to the evil that should be developed until the end. But to understand the fundamental principles of this history, and the dealings of God, the place which this first empire held in these dealings must be clearly and distinctly kept in mind.

## The Times of Jeremiah

---

The ministration of the prophets, in the varied exigencies of Israel, unfolds the grace and forbearance of the living God. The periods at which God raised them up, and the consequent character of their service, make the history of each very interesting; but of all the times during which the prophets prophesied, none are more painfully so than those of Jeremiah. It is not in the amount of good done that Jeremiah stands before us as pre-eminent; on the contrary, results of labor are nowhere found so small, perhaps, as from the labors of that prophet. The ministry of Moses was one that told wonderfully on the condition of God's people. He found them under the galling yoke of Pharaoh—he left them within sight of the promised land. Joshua left them in possession. The history of the varied deliverers before the days of Samuel, gives us an account of victories obtained. Each one left some footmarks in the track, to say that he had passed that way. So, afterward, with the prophets. Elijah's and Elisha's days were marked times of God's goodness to an unfaithful people; but if we ask what were the results of Jeremiah's prophecies, we see nothing but desolation and ruin, and, by and bye, lose him himself in the great confusion. At the same time, we see incessant service, unwearied faithfulness, so long as there remained a part of the wreck to be faithful to. Others who had gone before, had foretold what the disobedient and rebellious ways of Israel would lead them to, but it was the lot of Jeremiah to be on the ship when it went to pieces. He warned and warned again of the rocks that were ahead; but Israel heeded not. Up to the last moment, he was used of God to press home on their consciences their sad condition—but without avail; and even after the captivity, he remained to guide the wayward remnant of those left in the land, but only to experience the same obstinacy and determination to be ruined on their part.

The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. Now, this was a period of blessing-of revival. It was in the eighteenth year that the Passover was kept, of which it was said: "And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet." Jeremiah would have his share in that joy. I have often thought how much depends on the start of a Christian; how easily the heart sympathizes with what is around, whether baneful or healthful. To have the lot in early life cast among the fresh provisions of God's house, and mid the energies of his own Spirit, will give advantages to such a soul which are not the common lot of the church of God. Such were Jeremiah's first days, the days of Josiah—he was cradled in blessing—such, too, as had not been tasted in Israel since the days of Samuel. He lamented the death of Josiah. These joys so fresh were of short duration. But there is an intimate connection between the joys of communion and faithful warfare. There will be little of the one without the other. Jeremiah had drunk of the sweet drafts of blessing which had been so richly provided, and he was therefore able to feel the bitterness of that cup which Israel had to drink. The last chapter of 2nd Chronicles, shows how prominent as a prophet he was. His words were despised, and the result, the casting off for a season of God's people. One of the services of Jeremiah during this period, was to break the fall (if I may so express my thoughts) of Israel. Careful reading will show how tenderly the prophet applied himself to the then existing wants of the people; and it is wonderful to see the

compassion of God, as exhibited by him. Jonah regretted that God's judgment did not fall on Nineveh-but the solitudes of Jeremiah were those of the tender parent, Who would fain prevent the calamity befalling on a disobedient child, but failing there, carries still the parent's heart, the parent's tears, to soften the rebellious woes of that child. How often do we, in our intercourse with our brethren, act otherwise. If I see willfulness and disobedience, I warn; I tell the Consequences it may be; I press home with diligence those warnings; all are unheeded, the calamity comes, bad, or worse, than 1 foretold: how ready is the heart then to triumph in its own faithfulness, and the poor victim of his own rashness is left to himself, while in a kind of triumph I tell him, " 'tis all deserved." The heart of Jeremiah could say: " But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." Such hearts, such ministry are needed now.

It is in the book of this prophet, that we have the history of that part of Israel which was not removed out of the land. Jeremiah's service did not close even when the city was taken, and the wall broken down. The heart that-like this prophet's-is true to God and His people, will always have something to do. The special place he held was to seek to draw the people into repentance, to warn; he was unheeded, and the judgments of God reached home. No sooner had the captives been borne away, than quite another field of duty rose before him; and one would have supposed that what had just happened would have made him a welcome guest in the house of the poor deserted Israelites. In chapter 42 we see this new labor that Jeremiah found. The destroying flood had swept away all he had formerly been among, the kings, the priests, the princes, the temple, the vessels: the glory of Israel had departed. How often have we seen, that when services have been apparently disowned, the servant retires. When we have been laboring for an object, we find suddenly all dashed from our hands, like a goodly vessel before the world and to ourselves; our labor is in vain, and the heart faints and grows weary. Never was a more complete failure than that that was before the eye of the prophet. His heart alone remained whole amidst it all; he was ready for fresh service. The remnant muster to him; their confession seems honest, their hearts seem true. "Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us): That the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do" (chap. 42:2, 3). Jeremiah had had experience of the human heart; ready to act as aforetime, he says, "whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it to you." After ten days the answer was given to the same company (verse 9, to the end of the chapter). The leaning of the hearts of the people was towards Egypt. There is something in Egypt, with all its bondage that the heart naturally clings to. The remnant, wearied with the struggles they had passed through, sought for rest to the flesh. "Would God we had died in Egypt!" every now and then oozes from the hearts of Israel. There is something in Egypt to attract all our hearts, something that flesh values; and no wonder, when we can say, "No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread." This repose of death the Lord keep us from The disappointed heart is in danger of turning back here. When the people came to Jeremiah, their words were, " That the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing we may do." God had provision for this time of need. There never was a time when the Lord would not bless them that trust in Him-there never was a place, however desolate or forlorn, where God could not meet His afflicted ones. His word was, " If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up; for I

repent me of the evil I have done unto you. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon," etc. "And I will show mercies unto you, that He may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land."

The prophet's words are despised; and notwithstanding the threats if they returned to Egypt, they are soon gone, once more to contend against the judgments of God. Once more Jeremiah finds himself despised. Unable to keep them by promises of blessing, or to deter them from going into Egypt by threats of judgment, the power of unbelief has set in so strongly, that spite of the warnings, Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, swept the land, and along with the rest Jeremiah himself, into the land of Egypt. But even here we find him with a word from God. The people, once back in Egypt, were soon burning incense unto other gods. When once we get into a current, it will carry us far beyond our intentions. This remnant hoped to reach Egypt, that they might no more see war, or hear the sound of the trumpet, or suffer hunger; but they went into all the idolatry of that people. How often have we seen the same in principle. In all the periods of Israel we shall not find a more hardened state than that into which the remnant sunk; see their reply to Jeremiah, chap. 44:15-19. Here we appear to lose the prophet; and might he not say, "Surely I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for naught."

I think we may lose blessing, if we do not follow on in the track of God's grace to His people; and if we do, we must keep side by side with Jeremiah. Others had their service away in Babylon. God remembered His own there; but in following with this prophet, we learn the inexhaustible grace there is in God, where there is a heart to trust in Him, while we see, at the same time, the evils of the human heart becoming greater and greater as that goodness is put forth.

What varied scenes did this man of God pass through, from the time when with joy he partook of the passover in the days of Josiah, till he saw the utter desolation, which he so pathetically describes in his Lamentations-Oh for hearts like his I " Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water, for the destruction of the daughter of my people."

As we have before observed, those who beforetime had served their generation by the will of God, saw around them the fruits of their labors. In none of them, however, do we see the same measure of tenderness of heart. God had reserved Jeremiah for his day, and had given him the heart for his work-a heart sorely tried, but one that could weep for Israel's woes. This prophet was the expression of God's heart towards Israel too. "How can I give thee up, Ephraim?" was Jehovah's language; and his prophet was there as the proof of God's grace. In looking back on the history of the Church of God, we see a constant raising up of one after another to step in to meet the Church's wants. The Spirit of God acts according to his knowledge of present needs. Sometimes instruments (not marked either for correctness of knowledge, or even purity of walk, I mean when judged by the word as to their associations) have been much used of God In the latter days of Christendom, I doubt not, but that however lavish the hand of God may be in giving hearts like those of Jeremiah, to meet the wants of his saints, the apostasy will be so dark, that labor therein, even of the most devoted character, will scarce leave a trace of itself.

The nearer we draw to the end, will, on the one hand, be the arduousness of service; and on the other, the profitlessness of it, too, to human eye.

## The Lamentations of Jeremiah

---

The Lamentations of Jeremiah—a touching expression of the interest which God feels in the afflictions of His people on account of their sins—will not require much explanation as to the general meaning of the book. A few remarks may, however, be useful, to show the true character of this book, and its connection with the dealings of God, as revealed to us elsewhere. The first interesting point—to which I have already alluded—is that the affliction of His people does not escape the eye of God. He is afflicted in their affliction; His Spirit takes knowledge of it; and, acting in the heart of those whose mouth He uses, gives expression to the feelings He has produced there. Thus Christ wept over the hard-heartedness of Jerusalem, and invited its inhabitants to do so likewise. And here, also, His Spirit not only reproves, and reveals things to come; He gives a form to the grief of those who love what God loves, and furnishes the expression of it Himself. There is nothing more affecting than the sentiments produced in the heart by the conviction that the subject of affliction is beloved of God, that He loves that which He is obliged to smite, and is obliged to smite that which He loves. The prophet, while laying open the affliction of Jerusalem, acknowledges that the sin of the people had caused it. Could that diminish the sorrow of His heart? If on the one hand, it was a consolation, on the other, it humbled and made him hide his face. The pride of the enemy, and their joy in seeing the affliction of the beloved of God, gives occasion to sue for compassion on behalf, of the afflicted, and judgment on the malice of the enemy.

Chapter 2. The desolation of Jerusalem is looked at as the Lord's own work, and not as that of the enemy. Never had there been such sorrow. But this consideration gives room for appealing to Himself. It is a solemn thing when the Lord is forced to reject that which He acknowledges to be His own. But it must be so if the association of His name is only a means of falsifying the testimony of what He is (verses 6, 7).

In chap. 3 we find the language of faith, of sorrowing faith, of the Spirit of Christ in the remnant, on the occasion of the judgment of Jerusalem, in which God had dwelt. Before, the prophet (or the Spirit of Christ in him) spoke in the name of Jerusalem, deploring her sufferings and confessing her sin, while appealing to the Lord against her enemies, relating what He had done in forsaking His sanctuary, and (from verse 11 of chap. 2) expressing the depth of her affliction at the sight of the evil. But in chap. 3 he places himself in the midst of the evil, to express the sentiments of the Spirit of Christ; not, it is true, in an absolute manner, according to the perfection of Christ Himself, but as acting in the heart of the prophet (as is generally the case in Jeremiah), expressing his personal distress—a distress produced by the Spirit, but clothed in the feelings of the prophet's own heart, to bring out that which practically was going on in the heart of a faithful Israelite, the reality of that which was most elevated in that day of anguish and affliction, in which, alas! there was no more hope on the people's side than on that of the enemies who attacked them, and in which the heart of the faithful suffered without hope of remedy, yet much more on account of a people who hearkened not to the voice of the Lord, than on account of enemies raised up in judgment. What has Christ not suffered! That which His Spirit produces in the midst of human weakness, He has

Himself undergone and felt in its full extent; only that He was perfect in all that His heart went through in His affliction.

In chap. 3 the prophet expresses then, in his own person, by the Spirit of Christ, all that he felt as sharing the affliction of Israel, and being at the same time the object of their enmity; a position remarkably analogous to that of Christ. What suffering can be like that of one who shares the suffering of God's people, without being able to turn away the evil, because they refuse to hear God's message; like that of one who bears this affliction on his heart, with the feeling that if this foolish people would but have hearkened, the wrath of God should have been turned away. It was the lamentation of Christ Himself, "Oh, if thou hadst known," etc. In the main, Jeremiah partook of the same feelings. But we see him more as being of the people, and participating in his own person in the consequences of the evil, seeing himself under these consequences with the people, because they had rejected his testimony. This may be said of the Lord on the cross; but we see that this sentiment, a little known in the case of Job, takes the form of a personal prayer, complaining of personal suffering. Jeremiah suffers for the testimony and for the rejection of the testimony. The first nineteen verses of chap. 3 contain the expression of this state. It is altogether the spirit of the remnant; and with the exception of the sentiment I have just mentioned, it is that expressed in many of the Psalms. The prophet speaks as having borne in his own heart the deep grief of that which the Lord had brought upon Jerusalem; but feeling it as one who knew God to be his God, so that he could experience what it was to be the object of the wrath of God. He suffered with Jerusalem, and he suffered for Jerusalem. But the truth of this relation with the Lord, while making him feel the affliction more deeply, sustained him also (verse 22). He begins to feel that, after all, it is better to have to do with the Lord, although, in another point of view, this made it all the more painful. He feels that it is good to be afflicted, and to wait upon the Lord who smites; for he will not cast off forever. He does not afflict willingly, but from necessity. Why complain of the chastening of sin? It were better to turn unto the Lord. He encourages Israel to do so, and while remembering the affliction of his weeping people, faith is in exercise until the Lord shall interpose. It is well that an affliction like this should be felt; the only harm is when it is allowed to weaken confidence in the Lord. The prophet calls to mind the affliction of Jerusalem, and remembering the way in which he had been succored himself, he makes use of the kindness he had experienced, to confirm his assurance that God would show the same kindness to the people. But with respect to the proud and careless who reject the truth, their enmity against God, manifesting itself in their enmity against those who were the bearers of His word, he asks for the judgment of God upon them. Thus relieved in spirit, and his heart filled with the sentiment that, since the evil came from the Lord, that which gave so much depth to the sorrow was also a comfort to the heart, he can return to the affliction itself, measuring its whole extent, which the anguish of his soul prevented his apprehending till he had been able to arrive at its true source. Now, he can enter into details, although with deep grief, yet with more calmness, because his heart is with God. The sense of trouble and distress at the thought of God's judgment falling on those He loves, is not sinful, although, in Jeremiah's case, his heart sometimes failed him. It is right to be troubled and, as it were, overwhelmed at God's breaking, not perhaps the relationship, but His present connection with that which was the object of His favor, that which bore the name and the testimony of God. Christ felt this for Himself; "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour." Only in Christ all is perfect; and if He feels in perfection the profound distress of the object of God's love becoming the object of His judgment, a feeling of unparalleled grief, seeing it

at the same time according to the perfection of God's ways, He can say, " For this cause came I unto this hour; Father, glorify Thy name!" He was Himself the necessary object of all God's affection, and consequently (if the judgment was to glorify God), the object also of a perfect judgment, i.e., of a complete forsaking on God's part. That which is dreadful in this thought is, that the change of relative position was absolute and perfect in His case, according to the very perfection of the relationship. There was something similar in the case of Jerusalem; and Jeremiah, feeling by the Spirit of Christ the preciousness of this relationship, and entering into it as sharing it, he suffers with that which was thus judged of God. Only, although moved by the Spirit of Christ, he must find the equilibrium of his thoughts, he must seek the Lord, to bring Him into the affliction, amidst all his personal grief, and the true but human workings of a heart that was shaken and cast down by the circumstances. He attached himself to Jerusalem, as resting on her position before God, and not solely and absolutely for God and as God Himself, as did our blessed Lord. There was an object between his soul and God (an object beloved also by God), and it was not loved absolutely in God, and with the affection of God. But there was the right foundation, and he finds the Lord, first of all in spite of the affliction, but soon in the affliction itself, and he recovers himself immediately, not from the affliction, but in the affliction, by the power of God. Christ can say, " How often would I have gathered," etc. This was the affection of God. Jeremiah confesses sin, and ought to confess it. But this thought changes so far the character of the feeling (see chap. 1:19, 20). Christ sought for nothing as a resource, as if self was concerned in it. His affliction was unmixed and absolute to Himself alone, more profound, for who could share it! but perfect as being His alone. Thus in John 12, when it is Himself personally (for this Gospel sets the old vine aside as rejected), He cannot desire that the hour of God's forsaking should come; He ought to fear, and be troubled, and He was, therefore, heard. But it is between God and Himself alone. No other thought comes in between-it is wholly with God. Alas! had it been possible, all was lost. But no-it is the absolute submission of the perfect man, who seeks (and seeks nothing else) that the name of God may be glorified, according to God's perfection; that at His own cost, God's name may be glorified. Not now as God, who must necessarily maintain its glory, but as one who submits to everything, who sacrifices Himself, in order that God may glorify His name. For this cause He has been supremely glorified as man, a glorious mystery in which the glory of God will shine forth throughout eternity.

Jeremiah, having now found the Lord in the affliction, tranquilly measures its whole extent. But this is itself a consolation. For after all, the Lord who changes not, is there to comfort the heart. This is the fourth chapter. He calls the whole to mind, and contrasts that which Jerusalem was when under the blessing of the Lord with that which His anger has produced. It is no longer only the overwhelming circumstances of the present scene, but what it was before God. The Nazarites-that which Jerusalem, as the city of the Great King, had been, even in the eyes of her enemies-the Anointed of the Lord, under whose shadow the people might have lived (as we have already seen), although the Gentiles ruled, the Anointed of the Lord had been taken in their pits, like the prey of the hunter. But the afflicted spirit of God's servant, who bears the burden of His people, can now estimate not only the affliction that overwhelms them, but the position of the enemies of Jerusalem, and that of the beloved city. The cup of God's wrath shall pass through unto Edom, who was rejoicing in the ruin of the city of the Lord; and as to Zion, she has doubtless drunk this cup to the dregs; but if she has done so, it was in order that she might drink of it no more. The punishment of her iniquity is accomplished, she shall no more be carried into captivity. All was

finished for her-she had drunk the cup which she confessed she had deserved. See chap. 4:11; 1:18-20. But the sin of haughty Edom should be laid bare. God would visit her iniquity.

The prophet can now present the whole affliction of the people to God, as an object of compassion and mercy. This is an onward step in the path of these deep exercises of heart. He is at peace with God, he is in His presence, it is no longer a heart struggling with inward misery. All is confessed before the Lord who is faithful to His people, so that he can call on God to consider the affliction in order that He may remember His suffering people according to the greatness of His compassions. For the Lord changes not, chap. v. 19-21. The sense of the affliction remains in full, but God is brought in, and everything having been recalled and judged before Him, all that had happened being cleared up to the heart, Jeremiah can rest in the proper and eternal relations between God and His beloved people; and shutting himself into his direct relations with His God, he avails himself of His goodness, as being in those relations, to find in the affliction of the beloved people an opportunity for calling His attention to them. This is the true position of faith, that which it attains as the result of its exercises before God at the sight of the affliction of His people; an affliction so much the deeper from its being caused by sin.

This Book of Lamentations is remarkable because we see in it the expression of the thoughts of the Spirit of God; i.e., those produced in persons under His influence, the vessels of His testimony when God was forced to set aside that which He had established in the world as His own. There is nothing similar in the whole circle of the revelations and of the affections of God. He says himself, How could He treat them as Admah and Zeboim; Christ went through it in its fullest extent. But He went through it in His own perfection, with God. He acted thus with regard to Jerusalem, and wept over it. But here man is found to have lost the hope of God's interposing on His people's behalf. God would not abandon a man who was one of this people, who loved them, who understood that God loved them,- that they were the object of His affection. He was one of them; how could he bear the idea that God had cast them off? No doubt God would re-establish them. But in the place where God had set them, all hope was lost forever. In the Lord's own presence it is never lost. It is in view of this that all these exercises of heart are gone through, until the heart can fully enter into the mind and affections of God Himself. Indeed this is always true.

The Spirit gives us here a picture of all these exercises. How gracious! To see the Spirit of God enter into all these details, not only of the ways of God, but of that also which passes through a heart in which the judgment of God is felt by grace until all is set right in the presence of God Himself: Inspiration gives us not only the perfect thoughts of God, and Christ the perfection of man before God; but also all the exercises produced in our poor hearts, when the perfect Spirit acts in them: so far as these thoughts, all mingled as they are, refer in the main to God, or are produced by Him. So truly cares He for us! He hearkens to our sighs, although much of imperfection and of that which belongs to our own heart is mixed with them. It is this that we see in the Book of Lamentations, in the Psalms and elsewhere, and abundantly, though in another manner in the New Testament.

## Letter to the Editor

---

Dear Brother,-It has only just now been my privilege to look over the 17th part of Present Testimony, and with reference to "No. 23 of that part, I venture to offer the following observations:-In the book of Revelations, which has been my study and delight for many years, I remarked the difficulty which occurs at the close of the book. But I have also found the difficulty entirely removed by placing ten verses in parenthesis-i.e., from the seventh of the twentieth chapter to the first of the twenty-first inclusive, I have long since marked these verses in my book as a " post-millennial parenthesis."-I believe the remaining part of the twenty-first and the whole of the twenty. second chapters to be purely millennial.-I had still some little difficulty respecting the fifth verse of the twenty-first chapter, which appears at first sight out of place, but nothing can be out of place in God's word, and I now see it quite otherwise, this verse (5), as I judge, contains prophecy-not action,-a proclamation made, it may be at the close of the coming age when symptoms of the falling away or final apostasy may " exhibit themselves," and then the promise, seventh verse, " Whosoever overcometh," comes in course suitably to the faithful of the earthly family. This is not a repetition of a similar promise to the seven churches; for here it would appear still more out of place, nor can it be understood as addressed to those who have passed into the new heavens or new earth: for what can there be to overcome there where "dwelleth righteousness;" (2 Peter 3:13)? That the future action (ver. 5) is spoken of in the present tense involves no difficulty,- for very many passages show that such is the style of the Spirit in the prophets; and in the second Psalm the future action is even spoken of in the past tense, " I have set," sixth verse. I may not be rightly dividing the word, but I am looking to the Lord for more light, and in the meantime that the saints may be daily living more in the power of future things. Waiting and longing first of all for Jesus, the " Son from heaven," is my humble desire.

I am truly yours in the Lord, J. M.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir.-At the request of a friend I have been led to examine the Greek version of Psa. 110 ver. 3. I have since pursued a similar investigation in several other languages, the result you may like to notice.

I would, however, remark in the first place, that whereas our authorized English version presents the most accurate rendering of the Hebrew in this passage (as in many other cases), it is capable of very great improvement by a mere change of punctuation, i.e. by placing a colon or full stop at "holiness," and no stop afterward till the end of the verse. And this will be seen to approach very near to the sense of the prayer-book version, which is as follows:-" In the day of thy power shall the people offer Thee freewill offerings with an holy worship, the dew of Thy birth is of the womb of the morning." The next is Luther's, " Upon Thy victory shall Thy people willingly offer to Thee in holy and glorious apparel. Thy children shall be born to Thee as the dew from the morning." The French in Ostervald's edition, " Thy people shall be a willing people in the day when Thou shalt collect Thine army with sacred pomp, Thy posterity shall be as the dew which is produced from the

womb of the morning." In the three following versions, viz., the Septuagint, Syriac, and old Latin (probably the Vulgate), it will be seen the variations are chiefly caused by the ambiguity of the two words *Inv*, which, without points, may be read "with Thee" instead of "Thy people," and *■■■■■* which also without points and with the insertion of ■ before the last syllable means "I begat thee" instead of "thy youth." Thus Sept. "With Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the splendor of Thy saints, I begat Thee from the womb before the morning star." Syriac, "With Thee there shall be glory in the day of power, in the beauties of holiness." From the womb, from the East (or of old), I begat thee a male child. The word rendered "male child" answers to the Hebrew *■■* (tal), dew. The English reader will recognize the sound in Talitha kumi, Damsel, arise. The Latin is a close version of the Septuagint. It may be added, that if the punctuation of the Syriac is to be regarded, which, however, is very doubtful, that version favors the stop placed as in our English Bibles, i.e., a colon at "morning."

## Liberty in Religion: a Serious Warning to Christians of the Present Time

---

(From the French of Adrian Boissier).

Nice, Jan. 21st, 1853.

Dear Brother,-The question of religious liberty, a subject of such general interest but a few years back, has again become the order of the day through the persecutions in Tuscany, and certain despicable interferences which have occurred in France. It is not without unfeigned sorrow that I see that many Christians are quite ready to renew former mistakes, and again to enter upon the same wrong path which we formerly, without blessing or result, followed.

Already has one, a brother in the Lord, a picked man as to endowment and activity, courageously thrown himself into the breach (watchful and intelligent sentinel that he is), to call attention to what is anti-scriptural and anti-spiritual in the project of placing the profession of faith in the Gospel under the protection of Protestant authorities, and of what may disastrously result from the realizing of the project. His warning, alas! will not be better listened to than that which I now make. For myself, I see not what reply can be given to the remarks, presented with so much feeling and logic in the late numbers of *Les Archives du Christianisme*.

The rapid survey of the Count de Gasparin had not misled him when he pictured to himself, as already seen gathering in the horizon, and about to burst forth in a future, not far distant, the tempest of a religious war; and his conscience, as a Christian, acted most correctly when in discussing the question of protection, he re-called the master principle laid down by Paul, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4). Only be it remarked, the Count still remains the eloquent and conscientious advocate of the cause of religious liberty; a cause which, as I think, after the glance cast over the future (to which I have just referred), and the great principle of spirituality, which gives its tone to all that is in the church, ought, in common consistency, to have been entirely abandoned.

It is needless to say that in speaking thus, as also in that which I am about to add, I have in view only

Christians who are members of the body of Christ, and are of that peculiar nation which God forms for Himself from among the Gentiles, since from at first He began to visit them with this object in view (Acts 15:14).

From the moment that we become of that peculiar people, and in proportion as we grow in the understanding and realization of the privileges which pertain to that blessed position, the line of demarcation which separates between the things out of which we have been taken, and those into which we have been translated, daily becomes more and more visible; the judgment we entertain of them assumes a character more precise and distinct; we constantly learn to distinguish better; and among the former things there be principles, institutions, systems which we knew after the

flesh, that is to say,

which we received favorably, loved, praised and propagated, henceforth know we them no more (2 Cor. 5:16). Protestantism, in general, and religious liberty, seem to me most peculiarly to have their place among the things formerly known in the flesh, but which the child of God knows no more.

---

Let there be no mistake here. My thought is not that the Protestant nations will turn renegade, and preserve that silence which becomes only the avowal of weakness and submission, in the face of vexations and outrages to which their co-religionists may here and there be subjected by Roman Catholic governments. I say not either that they will, or that they ought to act thus. This matter is exclusively their own; in it, in my character of child of God, already translated into the kingdom of the Son (Col. 1:13), I see absolutely nothing for me to do. By being Protestant they are not the less nations, and as a child of God, I have been taken out from among the nations.

My attention is never turned towards them, unless it be in the expectation, full of tender and lively affection, if, peradventure, it may be given to me to be, in the Lord's hand, the blessed means of the conversion of one or other of their number. But were I considering how I could obtain facilities for the exercise of my energy as an evangelist, or protection in the celebration of worship, or the repression of, and retribution for, the evil treatment which my brethren may have to endure, I should at once recall the thought that the nations are incompetent for such things, and that my privilege consists in the ability of access to an ear which is ever attentive, full of solicitude, and which is connected with an arm mighty to overthrow the most haughty fastnesses, and to place the abject, when the right time is come, upon an unassailable rock.

Where is now-a-days the enlightened child of God who could consent to say, after reflection and consideration, we, when speaking of Protestant nations? Who could identify himself with them - would be willing to acknowledge his full fellowship with their past and with their present, and to accept their destinies as his hiding-place? I trust that there is not even one such to be met with.

It is superfluous to notice that the "/" here is only used for the sake of facility of expression.

It is now a long while since Protestantism, considered as a body, has become that which Romanism had become many centuries before the appearance of Luther and Calvin. I mean (it has become as) the camp where all was in ruins-the camp in which the adversary has spoiled all-the camp, out of which all they who seek the Lord, should retire towards the tabernacle of the congregation which the Holy Spirit takes care to pitch for the intelligent of every dispensation and of every age (Ex. 33:7; Heb. 13:13.) [See note at the end of this paper.]

If this be the case, the line of conduct which the children of God have to follow in our day is very clearly traced. Let them keep altogether outside of all the discussions, contentions, arrangements, transactions of the nations and of worldly religions, Protestant as well as Romanist. Let them leave to them that are such to debate upon and solve, after their own fashion, the questions which pre-occupy them, the differences which have arisen, or which may rise among them. Let them, as a people that are Nazarites, as was and as still is their Savior, their Head, carefully kept themselves apart, bearing in mind that they are of heaven, and that it is still in heaven that their treasure, life, hope, power and glory are found (Eph. 1; Col. 3)

---

It will be easily seen in what aspect, from the center of such principles, I must regard the question of religious liberty.

For me it is a question as to which the Bible says nothing; and consequently it is a question which cannot be entertained.

Its place is found in the program of,

"Liberty: Freedom from all restraint and law."

For the realization of which Satan, since Eden, has ever been driving, and which will be fully realized by and for him who will be a personification, and as it were, incarnation of Satan, in as much as in all things he will do according to his own will, and will be truly the lawless one.

This is the offspring of philosophy, of human wisdom; it is an offspring which faith will not acknowledge. It belongs altogether to the province of the civilian, the moralist and the statesman. The Christian has nothing whatsoever to do with it; certainly, therefore, nothing as to the redress of its infringement, either with regard to himself or others.

Caesar governs in things temporal with an authority, which, for the time being, is subject to no control whatsoever. He has not, as yet, to give account of the use, or of the abuse of power in his hands. In the supremacy of his power he sends forth decrees, promulgates laws, makes ordinances as to all things which seem to him to be of interest to the jurisdiction of his kingdom, and to demand his intervention.

It is remarkable how, at all times, religion has been that upon which, with a predilection quite peculiar, man seems to have been led to exercise his legislative energy. But a little serious reflection shows us how natural it is that it should be so. Moreover history presents us with Nebuchadnezzar and his decree as to worship for the whole earth; with Darius, and his prohibition of any prayer being made during thirty days to any god whatsoever; none save to himself; and with Alexander proclaiming himself as son of Jupiter, and receiving divine honors. The last successor of these mighty monarchs of Babylon, as the revelation assures us (chap. 13, 17, 19, 20), will not care to repudiate these family traditions. In this, as in all else, he will surpass all that has been most outrageous in his predecessors; religion will be his great, or rather his sole business; and he will make his glory to consist in presenting and obliging himself to be accredited as the exclusive and supreme object of worship, in open opposition to the Most High God of heaven and Creator (Dan. 11:36,37; 2 Thess. 2:4).

The witnesses for Jesus who will have to pass through the dark days of that mournful period, will feel the weight of the religious laws which, in order to attain his ends, this last great monarch of the Gentiles will promulgate (Rev. 11:7; 13:15-17; 20:4).

We ought not then, we Christians, either to desire or to seek the triumph of that which is called religious liberty and equality. From Abel downwards to the witness of the last days, the people of God cannot maintain their position in religion, save at the cost of suffering and by means of faith. They ought not either to expect, or to ask that the world should leave them at ease. It is not for them to avail themselves of any right, for they have absolutely none whatsoever upon the earth in its existing state, where their title and position is that of strangers; for their citizenship is elsewhere (1 Pet. 2:11; Phil. 3:20).

True is it that the hostility of the world with respect to them, varies in its expression according to place, time, and their own measure of faithfulness as to them. At times there seem to be seasons in which the world's aversion is stayed, and the proscription, which it is in its nature to make, gives place to tolerance, to protection, and to favor. But the intelligence of faith is too wary to be deceived by these appearances. For faith is assured that the leopard will not change his skin, and knows that there is an eternal incompatibility, and a war unto extinction between the family which pertains to Christ and that of Belial. Moreover, faith attributes these hours of respite, which are a wonder, not to rights which the world will in future recognize, and upon which it may count for support in its progress, but solely to the hidden counsels and secret ways of the providence of Him whom she serves, and whose return she awaits.

In a word, faith never loses sight of the truth; that it is not for her to fret herself about the laws for religion enacted by the nations, and that her voice is, on no account, even to be heard in the debates to which these laws may give rise among counselors and politicians. Always in full possession of the true and sovereign freedom which is in Christ, faith acts under the legislation of Nebuchadnezzar as Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; as did Daniel under that of Darius and his satraps; and as did Peter, John, and the whole company of disciples under that of the Sanhedrin (Dan. 3, 6; Acts 4).

Such are the sure and infallible traditions which belong to us who are members of the body of Christ. God grant to us to follow them! God vouchsafe to us, even unto the end, to bear in mind that our liberty has nothing to do with the progress of liberalism and with the wisdom of the Gentiles, but that it is entirely subordinate to the cross, and that always and every where, our enjoyment of it results exclusively from the power of faith in Him in whom we are more than conquerors.

(Signed) ADRIAN BOISSIER.

Note.-It seems to have been ever the object of God, since Eden, to magnify His grace and to manifest His glory in a body taken out from among men, and which was to be as His living-tabernacle. Several manifestations have been made in succession with this object in view. The working of Satan and the sin of man, always came across the plan of God, and placed in a state of ruin the body, which, for the time being, was the object of manifestation, and the body ceased to be the habitation of God, and became the camp, which He no longer owned; and from which, while waiting for the execution' of the sentence tacitly passed upon it, those who have spiritual discernment were bound most carefully to keep themselves apart, morally and even externally. We may cite as examples, the human family as a whole, object of a call in. Adam; the family fell in Cain, and Seth and his seed keep themselves apart. The family of Noah was another of these bodies, its fall was in Ham; Shem is separated therefrom. Next comes as a body the whole

posterity of Shem: its fall was at Babel; Abraham and his family have to separate themselves. Then we have as a body all Israel gathered out of Egypt; it takes its place in a state of ruin by the worship of the calf of gold; those who are moved by the Spirit of God are instructed to separate themselves, and to wend their steps towards the tabernacle of congregation pitched outside of the camp, etc., etc.

Such is the outline of what passed in the first creation which is earthly. It seems to me that something analogous has shown itself in the new creation which is heavenly (the Church), whose head is Jesus, the second Adam. At first the Church is commensurate with Christianity; it forms a visible body full of divine life to the glory of Christ; soon the body falls, and the intelligent separate themselves from whatever is not purely Christian. The body Catholic-orthodox began to form itself; but as life was not therein either in sufficient purity or in sufficient abundance for it to be able to reject all false principles, and as the evil is perpetuated in it under a thousand various forms, this body is, from its beginning, a defiled camp, which a mass of intelligent individuals feel urged to come out of, because they will not tamper with evil. Nevertheless, the greater number of the children of God, little advanced in spiritual intelligence, or else withheld by that speciousness of the relentless war which this body-camp appears to wage with heresy, still remain in its bosom.-The evil ever goes on increasing. Yet a little while, and the truth will be altogether extinguished! Then is heard echoing around a mighty cry, " Come out of this pretended Catholic orthodoxy, which is naught else than a salt which has lost its savor, all ye who attach value to the truth as it is in Jesus!" This cry of the angel of the Reformation is heard by them that have understanding to whom the Holy Spirit addresses it; they come out of the camp and go towards the tabernacle of the congregation, surrounding the standard so manfully planted by Luther and his noble assistants. Some children of God, without doubt, still remain in the Romish Church, but they are there only in their, individuality; the assembly of the children of God, His tabernacle, is no longer there.

In our days this tabernacle also ceases from its place in Protestantism. This also has in its turn, become a saltless salt, after having been for a while Le body in which God proposed to glorify Himself. The evil, which in a certain measure was attached to it from its commencement, of which it knew not how to divest itself entirely, and in consequence of which a goodly number of the children of God are constantly forced to separate from it, though the majority of the faithful pursue its course (the evil I say), has developed itself more and more, and has produced fruits even most bitter. In this respect, things move now with such rapidity, that those of the saints who are most slow of apprehension cannot be long without seeing that it indeed is a camp where God no longer is, and to come out of which is the solemn call of the Spirit.

"He that hath an ear, let him ear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches" (Rev. 2:7,11,17,19; 3:6, 13, 22).

## The Lord Jesus in John 1 and 2

---

The Lord may be traced in this scripture, as One who ranges, if I may so express it, through different regions of divine glory, in the calm and perfect sense of this, that they all belong to Him, and are fully and properly His own.

In His intercourse with Nathanael, the Lord Jesus shows Himself to be the One who touches the deep springs that are in man, conversing in power with the spirits of all flesh, re-making man also, re-creating him after His own mind, and stamping a new character upon him, as for eternity. He lets this Israelite know, that He had been with him under the fig-tree, ere Philip had with called him, and that He was there him, re-modeling his mind and character, giving him, as it were, a new condition of being, making him, according to the divine oracle in Psa. 32, " an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile."

It was the Spirit of God that alone could thus converse with Nathanael's soul, and form him anew, as was done under the fig-tree. And thus it is, that Jesus here rises on the conscience of that Israelite in the glory of God; and under the weight and sense of that glory he worships Him.

This is a very wondrous moment. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Jesus, the power which Jesus uses in divine sovereign grace. The Lord Jesus is before us here, as the Jehovah of the day of Gideon. Jehovah addressed Gideon according to His own counsel about him, or as such an one as His own Spirit was making him. "Thou mighty man of valor," says the Lord to Gideon, though at that time he was but a poor man of Manasseh, threshing wheat in his father's threshing-floor at Ophrah. But, in the counsel of God, and by the energy of the Spirit, Gideon was the leader of the host of Israel against Midian; and the angel spoke in divine intelligence to him, or as the One who knew the purpose of God respecting him. So is it here. Jesus addressed Nathanael, as Nathanael was under the operation of the Holy Ghost, imparting to him the character of a guileless Israelite. This operation had been going on with Nathanael in the solitude of the fig-tree, and that operation Jesus was divinely acquainted with.

Jesus was thus visiting the soul as God alone can visit it. He was touching the very springs within, and forming man after a new model. And in this most blessed and wondrous way, we track Jesus through one peculiar region of divine glory, and see him there, in the power of His own Spirit, doing divine work. And He is there, as at home, as One that had title to be there without wrong or robbery. For what, I may ask, of divine prerogative is not His? What region of divine power may He not survey and measure as His own? Be they deep or high, be they where the Spirit of God alone can work, or be they where the finger of God alone can work, where the strength of God alone can be felt, or the wisdom of God alone can enter, Jesus will occupy them all, as all His own. And thus we find Him, as we pass on through this fine scripture.

There was a marriage in Cana, and Jesus is invited. He goes-and He is there in His despised, rejected form, as among men. Man has objects worthier of his regard, and Jesus is nobody in the presence of the bridegroom, and the guests, and the governor of the feast. But, though the world

knew him not, it was made by Him. And accordingly, He touches the springs of nature here, as afore, in the person of Nathanael, He had touched the spirits of men. He re-creates, he re-forms, the material found in the kingdom around, as He had already done with the materials found in the kingdom within. He turns the water into wine, at this marriage feast in Cana.

This was what the finger of God, that once garnished the heavens, alone could do,-the voice of God that once said, " Let there be light, and there was light." But in this, Jesus is seen in another region. He is God still, but God acting in another place or sphere of power, in the kingdom of nature, and not in the secret place of the spirits of all flesh. But it is the same unspeakably blessed God of glory that we track, whether here or there, and Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the stranger on earth, Jesus the guest of the marriage at Cana, is he.

But do we, I ask, delight to see the Lord Jesus thus traversing regions where God alone could find and know His way? Is this sight of His glories grateful to us? With all the grace which the thick veil of His humiliation casts over it, our spirits should have the same communion with the person of Jesus as with the presence of God. For it is God, though manifest in the flesh, we know in him,-and faith, therefore, worships. Man He was in deepest, fullest verity; of flesh and blood partaker; but he was the Word made flesh. And there is no region of the divine glory that He does not tread in the calm, assured power, and conscious right, which alone befit that only One to whom they all belong.

But, again. He purifies the Temple, His Father's house. But He does this as the God of the Temple: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This was building houses as God alone could build them: "Every house is builded of some man, but he that built all things is God." To build by-creation, or by resurrection, as here, is divine architecture, and Jesus is a divine builder: "He spake of the temple of His body."

He had touched, as we saw, the springs of the spirit of man, and of nature, and now lie touches the very sources or foundations of the power of death. And this is another region which belongs to God-part of His dominions. And Jesus, after this manner, as we still track him through this scripture, is still God, God in the mighty strength of God down in the place of death, as before He had been God with the voice or finger of God abroad in the realm of nature, or with the Spirit of God, in the place of the spirits of all flesh. "In John's Gospel," as one has said, " Jesus is God come down from heaven." Nature is not too wide a region for him, the spirit of man that is in him is not too secret a region for Him, or death and the grave too deep or profound or mighty a region. He visits each and all of them in divine grace, divine power, or divine triumph, and leaves every where the same witness that God Himself had been there.

We have, however, another path of the glory of Christ, still to follow in this scripture.

He had been doing miracles; and it is said, " Many believed on Him when they saw the miracles that He did "-but then it is added, " Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

Here is God again. " The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart."

Jesus did not know man, or the springs and energies of corrupt nature, by reason of any fellowship with them, for He had no such fellowship. The prince of this world had nothing in Him. He was "that holy thing" - holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." But still, as this passage tells us, "He knew what was in man." He knew it all, and that it was deceitful above all things. He searched the hearts and tried the reins of the children of men. He knew all men, not one more than another, but he tried the reins; He knew what was in man. He, who by His prophet, had long ago declared that man was deceitful above all things, now, (when He stood in the midst of men) "would not commit Himself unto them."

This was divine acquaintance with man. This was full, radical, perfect understanding of man, after the manner of the divine mind. Jesus was God in His knowledge of man. What Jehovah declared Himself to be by His prophet, Jesus is now declared to be by the evangelist. Jesus knew nothing of revolted man, or of the heart's corruption by sympathy, but He knew it all as God, who searches the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men, to give every man according to his ways; as He does here; for He denies man His confidence, as "deceitful above all things," and thus, according to his ways, unworthy of that confidence.

Here again, then, the Lord Jesus takes the way of God, and ranges again through another region that belongs only to God.

We see Him thus, beloved. God He is, wherever God may be known or tracked. God, in the place of the spirits of all flesh; God, in the kingdom of nature; God, in victor-strength over death and the grave; God, as searching the hearts and reins of the children of men.

Jesus is there where God alone could be; and there, in all the settled ease and certainty of One who knew those regions as His own. In grace unutterable He has known the homestead of the human family, and been an inhabitant of the village of Nazareth-the Son of man, He has lived and walked with the children of men, eaten of their bread and drunk of their cup, knew their toils and their sorrows in all their reality, and at their hand suffered reproach and rejection and death, but He was equally at home where the Spirit of God alone could work, where the voice of God alone could be heard and command, where the strength of God alone could prevail, and where the light or knowledge of God alone could enter and search.

He ranges all the dominions of God, and is no trespasser. There is no robbery of a glory that is another's; it is His own. He is the Former of light, the Creator of the ends of the earth; the One who touches the springs of nature, and they come forth in forms such as His fingers fashion and His voice commands.

This is so; and we can track it all here in this scripture, without doubt or difficulty. But in the midst of all this, there is a thing betrayed, though incidentally, which, in hope of further profit, I will notice.

The Mother, in a general sense, knew the glory and power of the Lord, but she knew not the season or the moral order of that glory; and this is, wherever it appears, a great evil. She said to Him at the feast, "they have no wine," desirous that He should display Himself. She was as one that said, "show thyself to the world" (chap. 7:4). But she greatly erred. His time for this had not come. He will, indeed, manifest His

power in the souls of His elect now; He will, by His Spirit, visit Nathanael under the fig-tree; He will recreate a sinner, and give him a new character for eternity; and He will own such chosen ones, and know them, and address them in their new place, and read out to them, as it were, the writing that is written of them in the Book of Life, as here in His earliest welcome of the man of Cana. He will do all this now; but He will not as yet shine in a glory that the world can appreciate. " My time," says He, " is not yet come." The Mother, therefore, did greatly err. A common error, and never more common than in this day in which we live. " Show us a sign from heaven," was the craving of hearts that knew not the Christ, the Son of God, because the god of this world had blinded their eyes. But Jesus gave them another kind of sign altogether, " the sign of Jonas the prophet." He must be known in humiliation in such a world as this, if known aright. The Mother took the place and part of the world in this suggestion, "they have no wine," and she is rebuked-" Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Her worldly-mindedness is rebuked. Jesus could have no sympathy with it.

Not only, however, is she rebuked, she fails, also, to see the glory that the Lord will display; and this has great meaning in it for us.

He makes the water wine. He supplies the table as the divine Lord, or Creator, of the feast. But the governor of the feast knew nothing of this, the bridegroom knew nothing of it, the guests knew nothing of it, the Mother was not in the secret or the vision of it; it was only the servants who had this secret in the midst of them, and the disciples who had this manifestation of glory made to them.

All this has great meaning in it for us. The Mother lost, in spirit, what she had, in the mind of the world, sought after. And so with us. As far as we are, in spirit, one with the world, so far must we be left without discoveries of the glory of the Son of God, or communion with Him. For He is not of the world; His time for manifestation in it is not yet come; it must be judged and re-fashioned, ere that can be. And according to the moral of such a truth as that, the Mother, on this occasion, is rebuked, and is left without the manifestation of that glory in which the Son could shine and did shine. Those, and those only, who were in the due place, the servants and the disciples, are let into the secret and get the vision; for they filled, morally, the very opposite place of the Mother. She was of the world, but they are nobody in the scene. The governor of the feast had his dignity, the bridegroom his joy, the guests their good cheer, and the Mother a mother's vanity and expectations; but the servants and the disciples are nothing, and seek for nothing beyond what service or discipleship called them to, and they learn the secret of His power, and behold the manifestation of His glory.

What a lesson for us in the midst of these discoveries of Him that was "God manifest in the flesh"! We must awake, we that are sleeping with the world, if we would get more of the light of the Lord.

## Mark 12:1-12

---

IN order to understand this parable, it will be well to consider first at what moment Jesus spake it, and to whom he addressed it.

He had made his solemn entrance into Jerusalem, with the shouts of " Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

On the morrow (ver. 12) he had pronounced sentence upon the barren fig-tree, and had cast out them that bought and sold in the temple, "saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Then on the third day, " as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the elders, and say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Thereupon it was, that "he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard."

The principal terms of this parable may, I think, be explained in the following manner; though I by no means wish to exclude other explanations:-

He who planted the vineyard, is God (Isa. 5:7). The vineyard comprehends two things; the land and the vines which are planted therein.

The land is the land of Canaan or Palestine (Psa. 80:8, 9; Isa. 5:7).

The vines are the men of Israel (Isa. 5:7; John 15:1).

. The fence, the wine press, and the tower, show us that the proprietor of the vineyard had neglected nothing which could make it fruitful (Isa. 5:4). He had protected it against the intrusion of the passer-by and of the wild beasts (Psa. 80:13; Sol. 2:15; Isa. 5:2,5). He had made every necessary arrangement possible that it should bring forth grapes (Isa. 5:2). He had established means suitable for habitation, oversight, and protection (Psa. 61:3; Prov. 18:10; Isa. 5:2).

And then he had let it out to husbandmen, in order that it might receive the care needful and might bring forth fruit. The husbandmen are all those whom God has established as conductors or pastors of Israel in Palestine, as Joshua, the Judges, the Kings, the royal governors of Chaldea and of Persia, and even of the Roman emperors, the Priests and Elders.

Then the proprietor of the vineyard went into a far country, in order to allow the cultivators time to show how they would cultivate the vineyard, and to the vineyard time to produce fruit; in other words, God left his people and their conductors for a time under their own individual responsibility.

The season for fruit is the time at which he judged that the labor of the cultivators might fairly be put to the proof, and what fruit the vineyard had produced be seen.

The servants whom he sent to the cultivators to receive from them of the fruit of the vineyard, are the prophets from Samuel (Acts 3:24; 13. 20; 1 Chron. 29:29) down to John Baptist (Matt. 11:9-13). They have also in principle been sent to the kings and to those who possessed any authority; in support of which, it may suffice to name Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and even John the Baptist (Matt. 3:7-9).

The history which the word of God gives us of these prophets, shows us how they were scourged and stoned and wounded; how they were rejected with opprobrium and were killed (Matt. 23:29-36), and how they were sent empty away (Isa. 5:2; Jer. 2:21; Hos. 10:1).

And last of all, the one only Son, the well-beloved, is the Jesus whom the Old Testament had already pointed out repeatedly in these very terms (Gen. 22; Psa. 22:20; 35:17; Isa. 5:1), and whom the New Testament expressly calls the only begotten of the Father (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9); The beloved (Matt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9. 7; Luke 9:35; Eph. 1:6).

And thus we are come to the moment in which this parable was spoken.

Jehovah had, in his goodness and by his power, delivered his people from under the bondage of Egypt, and had introduced them into the good land, a land flowing with milk and honey, which he had promised to Abraham their father, and after having, moreover, on several occasions delivered them, by the judges, from their enemies who had subjugated them as a punishment for their unfaithfulness, He had at length begun, by His prophets to ask for the fruit of that vineyard wherein he had planted them.

Although that land was his peculiar possession (Lev. 25:23), and He alone was the king of His people (1 Sam. 8:7); He had acquiesced in their desire to be like other nations, and had given to them a king taken from among themselves. But quickly it was seen that neither did this royal power fulfill its purpose. And Saul, that carnal man, and David, the man after God's own heart, and Solomon, the king of righteousness and peace, had been more or less deaf to the words of God addressed to them by the prophets; the kingdom was rent in twain, and the kings, whether of Israel or even of Judah, were, spite of the warnings and threatenings reiterated by the prophets, fallen into such a state of disobedience and of idolatry, that the patience of God was exhausted, and He sent into captivity the men of Israel, and even them of Judah, so that there were left but a few of the poorest of the land to be husbandmen of the vineyards and laborers (2 Kings 25:12).

But, although God had thus withdrawn his glory from the temple and the city of Jerusalem (Ezek. 9-11) and had given the dominion of the world to the nations (Dan. 2:37,38). His goodness and His protection were not withdrawn from His people. He permitted some of His people to re-enter the land out of which they had been driven, and to rebuild the temple and the city, yet under a foreign yoke; He encouraged and warned them by means of His prophets, yet they continued to reject the warnings, and finally the Romans, the fourth of the monarchies to which God gave the dominion of

the world, had, on the one hand, got possession of the land, and, on the other, after a series of overthrows and acts of violence, the Scribes and the Pharisees had placed themselves in Moses' seat (Matt. 23:2) and gave themselves out for the husband men of the vineyard.

It was under these circumstances, the land inhabited by various runaways of the captivity of Babylon, and the calamities consequent thereon, and directed, under the Roman government, by certain Scribes and Pharisees, that John Baptist proclaimed that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and that the king himself appeared, and that, after having, during a while, made preparation for his inauguration in his kingdom, he, at last, entered as king (at least for all those who had the will to receive Him as such) into Jerusalem (Matt. 11:14), the city of the Great King (Matt. 5:35), and purged the temple of God His Father (Matt. 21:12; Luke 2:49).

The moment was then come for the husbandmen to receive the Son of the owner of the vineyard and to yield to him of its fruit. But, instead of recognizing His authority, they asked Him whence it was? Then, not being altogether without discernment, they sent certain Herodians to Him to entangle Him and to ask of Him, is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. After all, recognizing in Him the Heir, they say among themselves, " This is the Heir, come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance will be ours! And when they had slain Him, they cast Him out of the vineyard." The chief-priest, together with the chiefs of the temple and all the council exercising authority in religion, united with Pilate, who possessed the political power, to put to death Him whom they would not that He should reign over them (Luke 19:14); and they crucified Him outside of the city.

" What shall, therefore, the Lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others." He has already destroyed those who put His Son to death; and yet a little while, when the land shall again be beneath the dominion of the resuscitated Roman empire, and shall be anew dwelt in by the descendants of those who dwelt there when the Son was rejected; when they will again, like their fathers, kill the servants that are sent unto them, and will rejoice in their deaths (Rev. 11:7-10). The Lord will destroy those husbandmen (Rev. 11:13); then will he avenge Himself on the vineyard of that land whose husbandmen refused Him the fruit of the vine; but it will be to cast the vintage into the great wine-press of the wrath of God; and it will be trodden outside of the city (Rev. 14:17-20.) Then when the vineyard has been cleansed and purified (Rev. 19:19-21; Ezek. 39:1-16) it will be given to others, to the children of the kingdom who will bring forth fruit, one grain giving thirtyfold, another sixty, and another an hundred (Matt. 13:18-23; 21:41, 43), and Jesus Will then be able to drink with his own of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of His Father (Matt. 26:29).

Such is the explanation of the parable, imperfect and defective doubtless, yet, I think, true according to the principal traits. Let us now pass to certain applications.

Although the position of the Church be different from that of Israel, in that our country is heavenly and not earthly., yet our responsibility is the same as to fruits which had to be brought forth. In the Church also, God has done everything which was necessary in order that it might bring forth fruit; in the Church also He established at the beginning cultivators, that is to say, apostles, overseers, and servants (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 4:1-4; 12. 28; 1 Tim. 3:5; 1 Peter 5:2); but soon also, when he sent messengers to ask for fruit, those who loved to have the pre-eminence received them not (3 John, 9, 10) and at Pergamos, Antipas was put to death (Rev. 2:13). They heaped up teachers to themselves according to their own lusts (2 Tim. 4:3). Persons who had no

calling of God sat, of their own will, so to speak, in the seat of the apostles, and even despised the authority of the only-begotten Son, the well-beloved of the Father, and lorded it over his heritage (1 Peter 5:3). All this assemblage will, ere long, be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord (Rev. 3:16). In the meanwhile, the child of God who has ever so little spiritual discernment, will recognize such persons, in whatsoever position they may be, by their fruits (Matt. 7:16,20), and he will refuse to recognize their authority with the very same care which he will display to recognize that of the true Head of the Church, and to obey Him.

As to the political order of things, the application of the parable is yet more striking. Pontius Pilate, who delivered up Jesus; was at Jerusalem the representative of the Roman empire, and though he might wash his hands, he is not the less, before God, as well as that which he represented, morally responsible for the death of the Heir of the kingdom. They killed Him to take possession of the inheritance; their authority is then that of the usurper, and all the powers which are the successors thereof, whatsoever they may be, remain in the same position; time has brought with it so much the less of change, in that we know that the Roman empire, though lost to view for a time, will appear in force again; in every case; if the existing powers deny their Romish origin, there remains for them, according to the word of God, no foundation whatsoever. The child of God will assign to each thing its place, and will bestow on each thing its name.

Will he then deduce as a consequence, that he must not recognize these authorities, must not yield them submission? He might have done so, if God had not taken care to give us in His word directions of another tendency, " Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation...For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.... For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing" (Rom. 13:1, 2, 4, 6).

But how reconcile this with that which we have just said above, that the powers which exist are illegitimate? To do so is not very difficult.

Every power which exists is ordained of God, not only in the sense in which it is said, that not one sparrow falls to the ground without the leave of God (Matt. 10:29), but also in a more positive sense, because all the powers which actually exist form part of that power which God expressly accorded to Nebuchadnezzar, and which passed from the Chaldeans to the Medes, and to the Persians, then to the Greeks, then to the Romans; in this sense all existing powers have been positively ordained of God.

But, it may be objected that the Roman empire, however legitimate at the commencement, can only have enjoyed the privilege of being legitimate up to the moment when God Himself resumed His rights in the world, by sending his son to take possession of the vineyard. This is true; and it is precisely thus that we enter into the application of the parable. Evidently, from the moment when Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified, his authority, legitimate as it was before, became illegitimate, and that of all the successors of the emperor. Tiberius has continued illegitimate in itself, and in respect of those who exercise the authority; and it is in this point of view that God will call them to account; for He will destroy the husbandmen and will give the vineyard to others.

But it is otherwise, looked at from the position we are in, from the position the Church is in. For them that love God, all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28), and the magistrate is the servant of God for their good (Rom. 13:4). They know that all that happens to them, all the circumstances in which they find themselves placed, and particularly the powers under which they live, are of God (1 Cor. 11:12; 2 Cor. 5:18), and they yield Him thanks, therefore. In particular, they give thanks for His having placed them under the authority of magistrates, who are not a terror to good works, but to the evil (Rom. 13:3), and they are subject to them not only for wrath's sake, but also for the sake of conscience (Rom. 13:5).

These are things which every pious soul feels, even though it understands them not; but every position in which there is zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2) has its dangers; we should grow in knowledge (Col. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:18). I pray God that He may deign of His goodness and by His spirit, to make these lines subservient to the advancement of some in the knowledge of the truth, as to those matters to which they refer.

(Signed) Steven Van Muyden.

Etudes Scripturaires, 24 June, 1852.

## Matthew 13

---

In the chapter which precedes, Jesus passes sentence upon the Jews; for he was come to gather fruit, and had found none.

First. He must needs sow. He no longer recognizes the Jews as Jews: He sows for all, Jews and Gentiles. The six other parables present us with the forms taken by the Kingdom of Heaven in its various phases.

The six parables form a whole; the three first speak of the Church in the fullest sense of the word, of the Church as a thing seen, its exterior, of the kingdom. The three last speak of what the Church is inwardly, as hidden in the world and even in the kingdom.

1. The bad seed in the midst of the good: tares-error disseminated.
2. The great tree. Hierarchical system-of Rome, Greece, England, Protestants, etc.
3. Leaven. Diffusive doctrine, which spreading everywhere, in the end, leaves naught but corruption.
4. Ridden treasure. The Lord Jesus gave Himself for its purchase. He values it-for Him the Church is a treasure. Every Christian whose thoughts are as His Master's can appreciate the Church.
5. Pearl of great price. The moral beauty of the Church which is discerned only by Jesus, and by those who are spiritual of the children of God.
6. The net. The draft of fish presents Christendom.

Those who know how to discern between the good and the bad fish are not men, but angels. It should be noticed that it is never men (children of God), who are to be occupied with the cutting off of the wicked. Another thing altogether is the means of doing this. Their occupation is with that which is good: that they ought to discern. It is the duty of the angels to be occupied with the bad-to take them and put them apart for the judgment. The angels are occupied always with the bad: men with the good.

"Kingdom of Heaven" is found but in Matthew. When the Lord is come, the kingdom must become the Kingdom of GOD; it was so in a sense, during His life on earth, but now that the Messiah is rejected, the kingdom can only exist in mystery, therefore it is called Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of God gives the idea of the government of God in the hands of the Messiah.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the government of God in the hands of the Messiah whilst He is in heaven.

## My Soul, Come Bless the Lord

---

My soul, come bless the Lord,  
And praise His holy name:  
Forget not all His benefits,  
Nor Him from whom they came.  
Complete in Him thou art,  
In whom God's fullness dwells;  
All principality and power,  
He, Head of all, excels.  
In Him you're circumcised,  
Or in the flesh you'd be;  
Not circumcision made with hands,  
But Christ's has set you free.  
Buried with Him art thou;  
And risen with Him too;  
For God who raised Him from the dead,  
Is known by faith to you.  
With Christ your life is hid  
In God; then do not fear;  
When Christ appears, then we with Him,  
In glory shall appear.  
My soul, come bless the Lord,  
And praise His holy name;  
And ne'er forget His benefits,  
Whose love is e'er the same.

## Nehemiah 8:13-18

---

"And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law. And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.

"So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner."

## O Precious Savior, Unseen Friend

---

O precious Savior! unseen friend!  
By faith discern'd within the veil,  
Thy boundless love can never end,  
Thy sympathy can never fail.  
My weary soul delights to rest,  
While passing through this dreary  
Calmly reposing on Thy breast,  
Tasting the joys at God's right-hand.  
Secure within the living ark,  
Shut in by hand and power divine,  
I share Thy Father's children's park,  
And find their joys and sorrows mine.  
In our deepest untold sorrows  
In Thee a full response we find;  
Thy loving pity freely flows,  
We learn Thy sympathizing mind.  
And in our joys Thou hast a part,  
For naught were joy apart from Thee;  
Thy joys, O Lord, rejoice our heart,  
And their full tide we long to see.  
We long Thyself, O Lord, to greet,  
Thyself the Morning Star to see,  
When all Thy gather'd ones shall meet,  
And be forever, Lord, with Thee.

## Obedience

---

The presence of God, in blessing, supposes obedience to exist in those to whom He is present. For the presence of God gives a light that makes all that is in it manifest, and the impotency of evil rebellion in His presence must render those that are disobedient miserable. In the light which at once claims all for God, themselves manifestly in rebellion and independence of the God (whose claim is known, is felt to be just and right), there must be a sense of collision, unsuccessful but strong-willed collision, and thereby misery. Obedience is supposed when God is supposed to be present in blessing. It must be so, for otherwise He would not be God; nor the creature, however high it be, a creature still. But more than this. For the blessing which a God of mercy and compassion found for sinners supposed a perfect obedience: a perfect obedience on the part of the Lord Jesus Christ-such an obedience as there was no room for ere sin entered; and perfect obedience on the part of the receiver of the blessing, even the poor sinner. The obedience in neither of these cases is, or could consist in the same details as man in Eden ought to have observed, but while differing, necessarily differing, in the thing enjoined, it is in both cases perfect obedience.

Man in Eden ought not to have touched a certain tree. He cast off obedience and did eat of it. The Son of God became obedient unto death, the death of the cross, when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree-the just one for the many unjust. We poor sinners have to submit to the righteousness of faith; and if any is found before God not having Christ for righteousness-eternal condemnation will be the fruit of this disobedience on the part of the sinner. There is no question, whatsoever, of whether the lost sinner can get blessing in any way save that of perfect obedience; He cannot. He must either have Christ, and Christ alone, for foundation, or be lost; be lost, not merely because of Adam's transgression or his own walking in sins, but also because being a sinner he is not obedient to the faith. God is glorying Himself in proclaiming the praises and excellencies of what Christ has done for sinners, and the sinner will none of it.

But further, obedience to God and to Christ is necessarily the introduction of the soul into a new condition-the spirit of obedience. The conflict in man against the gospel has more causes than one.

The claims of God; a man's moral state and habit; the way that grace, as being light, discovers these things: the humbling, pride-staining character of grace; the fact that it, while it supposes obedience on the part of the receiver, supposes obedience in a way so different from that which nature in Eden suggested, "I partake of God's goodness while I do not disobey," was then the thought, whereas now it is, "I partake of free grace if I receive God's promise of mercy through the work of atonement offered by the Lord Jesus." All these things, and many others, enter into the causes of hostility to grace. Dire necessity is the sense which breaks down many a heart. "What can I do to be saved?" and there is a ready answer of grace even to this bitter selfishness; "Believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved." But whether the heart is broken down consciously, or whether (found of those that seek Him not), the light enters, as it did with Paul,-the

soul that has the light of life and grace as it is, is at once in a new state.

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of the Lord Jesus. But the revelation of this to the soul puts it not only into a new position; it was darkness, it is in light-it was in nature, it is in grace-it was in death under Satan, it is in life under Christ; but also puts it into a new condition or state. For life, life in and from a risen Christ, is not merely a position, it is a new condition-a new state of being. And there are habits, and ways, and sympathies (joys and sorrows, and communion too), a character and hopes-a life natural to this new condition-this new state of being.

## Ordinances

---

With the Apostle Paul, there was a great question between faith and ordinances-but he never surrendered the right of the one to the pretensions of the other.

In the former dispensation, ordinances abounded. The soul, so to express it, was only on the way to salvation then; but now we are called to enjoy accomplished, perfected salvation, to know it by faith.

Accordingly, all the ordinances of the house of God in this age are celebrations, and not helps. They are made to celebrate our redemption, and we triumph in them B instead of being helped by them. Baptism celebrates our personal salvation, and the supper in the midst of the assembled saints tells of their redemption by blood, the blood of the precious Lamb of God. But so in like manner, other ordinances-the covered female and the uncovered male, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the midst of the gathered saints, have voices likewise that are heard telling of salvation. And so outside or abroad in the world, all our service (being the service of love and gratitude), and the prospect of our souls (being in expectation and desire, and not fear), with equal certainty and clearness, tell the same mystery of full deliverance. We wait for the Son from heaven who has delivered us from the wrath to come.

All, in a certain sense, though in a different way, celebrate salvation. The ordinances of God's present house may remind us of the lame man who took up his bed and walked, as soon as Jesus had spoken the word of healing to him-for, in token of perfected health and strength, we hold up what once helped, and strengthened, and sustained us.

## Parables of the New Testament

---

The sower (Matt. 13:3), is the result of the word sown in the heart, with the forms of evil which hinder its bringing forth fruit.

The tares (Matt. 13:24), gives us the history of the kingdom of heaven during the absence of the Son of Man till his return-the harvest included. Or, the result of the sowing by the Son of Man in the world, at the close of man's carelessness, who allowed Satan also to sow.

There is a better circumstance to remark in the parable of the seed in Mark: they immediately receive it with gladness; but this immediately is not for the conscience.

The mustard-seed (Matt. 13:31) is the outside appearance of power taken by Christendom.

The leaven (Matt. 13:33), dissemination, in the limits permitted by the counsels of God, of an external doctrine.

These three last parables were spoken before the world.

The hidden treasure (Matt. 13:44).

The three parables which follow give thoughts of Christ communicated to his disciples.

The hidden treasure.- Christ buys the world, which in itself is worth naught, in order to have the treasure which God had hidden, and which He saw there.

The pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45).- The Spirit of Christ apprehends the moral beauty which God has set in the Church, and will have it at any price.

The net (Matt. 13:47).- The result of the gospel in gathering things of every kind, good and bad, which are separated, and those which are good are put into vessels.

In the parables of the "tares" and the "net," it is the angels who separate the good from the bad, in giving effect to judgment; it is they also who put that which is good into the vessels and into the barn.

The lost sheep; the lost piece of money; the prodigal; (Luke 15).-The grace of God, which saves a sinner, is far more precious than the justice of God, which would recognize a just person, if such there were.

These parables of "the lost sheep," "the lost piece of silver," and "the prodigal son," shew us the grand principle of action of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The first is the Son, the Good Shepherd, who seeks and saves the lost sheep, the poor sinner.

The second is the Spirit acting by the Truth.

The third is the effect of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and the reception, by the Father, of him who is thus brought back.

The first two are pure grace, inasmuch as they speak of the sovereign action of God on an object which is entirely passive.

The third is the manifestation of that grace in the career of sin.

The pitiless servant (Matt. 18:28).-The Jews, refusing grace to the Gentiles, have remained under their own guilt; or -

The grand principle of pardon to the individual;

Prophetically; the Jews having been pardoned the death of Christ but, having resisted grace to the Gentiles, suffer the consequences of the rejection of Christ. Paul said, when speaking of the Jews, " Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. 2:16).

The householder (Matt. 20:16).-The principle of grace and divine sovereignty, applied to the labors of the faithful when considered as servants-the reward.

In order to understand this parable, chapter 20:16 and chapter 19:30 must be compared together. The parable of chapter 20 is a guard against the abuse which the flesh would make of what, Christ had said of the recompense for giving up all that a man has, at the end of chapter 19.

The fig-tree cursed (Matt. 21:19).-This is an historic fact. It is a judgment of the Jewish nation, as a tree, to bear fruit.

The two sons (Matt. 21:28).-Those who pretend to a righteousness of their own in contrast with sinners.

The men of the vineyard (Matt. 21:33). The conduct of the Jews toward the prophets and Christ, and the divine judgment thereupon.

The marriage of the king's son (Matt. 22). Invitation addressed first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. In Luke 14:16, the poor are introduced in contrast with the rich; but, to be recognized as a guest, we must of necessity put on Christ.

The unfaithful servant (Matt. 24:45).- The ministry of the Church as to its responsibility, and a warning, that, to defer the thought of Christ's return, leads to unfaithfulness and judgment.

The ten virgins (Matt. 26) -While Christ prolongs his absence, the whole Church loses the idea of his return and slumbers; but the cry of his return breaks its slumber, and those who have the Holy Ghost are separated from the others. The judgment depends upon the lack or possession of grace.

The talents (Matt. 25:14). - This parable judges responsibility according to the use of gifts received.

In this parable, in Matthew, that which specially has prominence is the sovereignty of God; in Luke it is more peculiarly the responsibility of man (Luke 19:18).

The piece of new cloth put into the old (Matt. 9:16). - Jesus gives two reasons why his disciples did not fast: the first is, his presence with them; the second, that it is impossible to give new force to old habits and old traditions.

The good Samaritan (Luke 10) is the spirit of grace, which, acting in us, makes every one to be our neighbor. The Priests and Levites were the persons who should have represented God, but love was wanting.

Jesus perfectly did so.

The servant found watching. (Luke 12:35, etc.) -The Church, if faithful will be set over all that Christ has. Faithfulness during the absence of Christ rewarded with the enjoyment of all that he inherits.

The barren fig-tree (Luke 13).- It is Christ who stays the judgments of God on the Jewish people by his intercession; but, his labor being without response, He leaves the people to the course of the judgments. The fig-tree being rejected, the mustard-seed takes its place. Jews-Church.

The unfaithful steward (Luke 16).-Man having lost by his unfaithfulness the right to dispose of the creatures of God, yet still enjoying the power of doing so, is invited, by grace, to the mansions on high, which are God's.

The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16). - The rich man casts the light of the world to come on the circumstances of the present world, in order that we may judge morally.

The importunate widow (Luke 18). - God, who apparently delays, executes judgment in the end, for those who wait on him. This specially applies to the Jewish residue in the last day. When Christ comes, man will not expect to find him at his return an avenger.

Jesus the true vine (John 15),-Jesus takes the place of the Jewish nation, as the true vine (Isa. 5).

The door and the shepherd (John 10).-Jesus, fulfilling all that God had said of the Messiah, enters by the door, which is himself, and which is set forth as the sole way of entrance: thus he becomes the door for all His sheep.

## Thoughts on Philippians 3 and Mark 10

---

In the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians we have a striking illustration of the effect produced, by the Holy Ghost, in a soul which was indwelt by Him. As to the outward walk, what a brilliancy does He give! What stability before God! What true liberty! For the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the soul; and the soul perceives Him so clearly, that all that is not Christ is rejected as being opposed to Him.

It is important to remark the contrast which exists between such a one and the man who is not full of the Holy Ghost, though he may be, or may seem to be, powerfully drawn toward Christ Jesus, or may even be as truly a convert as were the disciples. We shall see this contrast connected, in succession, with righteousness, the cross and the glory, if we compare Phil. 3:4-11 and Mark 10:17-40.

In the history given as in Mark 10:17-27, we see a man whose position is in contrast with that of the Apostle (in Phil. 3), which shows, in a striking manner, the effect produced by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle had left all for Christ. Advantages, in which a Jew could boast, he had had beyond what the young man referred to in Mark 10 possessed. He had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, the most celebrated Rabbi; he was a citizen of Tarsus, a city renowned (if we adopt modern phraseology) "as a university," he had been well trained in all the acquirements of the day. Moreover, he was privileged in having led a blameless life, as he tells us in verse 6. All this was very precious to him as a man, so long as he had not seen Christ. All that a man can pride himself in, Paul possessed. If any thought that the flesh might be gloried in, Paul could show that he had more therein than they. But Christ, in glory, revealed Himself to Paul, and then he could say, "what was gain I counted loss that I might win Christ."

What was the state of Paul's soul? "I must gain Christ; this is all I have to do, my whole sole business; everything else found in my pathway is -but loss." Such is the effect produced by the Spirit of God in the soul which possesses Him. The Apostle is troubled by nothing that he meets on his way; he sees, as clear as noon-day, that all that is not Christ is loss. He sees Christ in the midst of every set of circumstances. Are they circumstances of suffering? So much the better, there will be the more of Christ. Christ is there; he sees Him by the help of God. In comparing this with Mark 10 the contrast is seen, namely, of a man who has not the Spirit: for this chapter presents us with one in circumstances similar to Paul, but not full of the Holy Ghost. He is portrayed, however, as a man of a character altogether lovely; but Christ was not his object, and natural loveliness availed naught.

Yet his character was such that it attracted the attention of the Lord. Jesus loved him (verse 21). He also was, as to the law, blameless;-a Jew, he supposed that he was to have eternal life by the law. His thought as to Jesus was, "That is the man who can tell me what I must do in order to inherit eternal life." The pure, excellent and perfect character of the Lord had convinced him that the knowledge of the most excellent commandment might be learned from Him; and he hastens to Him. He was ardent in his desire to know what he had to do, and he drew near to Jesus with all

possible respect. " Good Master" (Jesus received not this praise from one who regarded Him only as a man), he even kneels before the Lord. There was something very lovely in the character of him who could say (and the Lord admits it as truth) " All these things have I kept from my youth up." But the Lord puts r-his heart to the proof, in order to make manifest what are the motives which sway it, and He does so by means of the cross-" Go and sell all that thou hast, and come take up the cross and follow me." However lovely and estimable the young man may have been, he does not take up the cross. When the state of his heart is in question he has no will for what is Christ's. He looked for righteousness in the law; and Christ, present with him, succeeds not in engaging him in another course. He said not, as Paul, " I suffer the loss of all things, and do esteem them but dung-that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ; the righteousness of God which is by faith." Such was the effect produced by the Holy Ghost in Paul by the revelation to him of a Christ in glory. Paul saw Christ and said, " That is my righteousness, I make no count of my own." He desires not to have a human but a divine righteousness. We cannot have both; for if God gives me His righteousness, I do not present to Him that which is of myself.

Now, suppose that I had kept all the law and am without fault; such a righteousness would not be that of God, but that of a man. The law of God requires that man shall love God and his neighbor,-and that is what man does not do; but even supposing that I had kept this law in its fullest extent, I should only have a human righteousness, whereas I have a far better righteousness in Christ, even that of God Himself. Does the law demand that I should give my life in order to glorify God, and that, too, in behalf of worthless sinners? [Of a truth I should not know how to obey such a commandment]; but Christ has done so; He could say, " I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do"-and He was obedient even unto death, the death upon the cross. The manner, too, in which Christ gave himself up on the cross altogether exceeds all that we could have done, even if we suppose that we had the power to fulfill the law. Christ has glorified God as man, and is now glorified with God. It was thus that Paul saw Him; and he said " That is the Righteousness which suits me well."

In how amazing a manner has God been manifested in. Christ Jesus! By faith I see Him on the cross, and I say to myself, I cannot do without that glorious work, for from the moment that righteousness is of Christ it is no longer of me. Paul, when he saw Christ, had this thought -" Behold in heaven the One who has communicated to me a divine righteousness;" and his expression necessarily is that I may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by faith, the righteousness of God.

So long as we seek a human righteousness, it is evident we do not know the righteousness which is of God. Paul having seen the glory of God, stops not before he has said, " I shall be there where Christ has the right to be. He is entered into heaven with a divine righteousness. There is my place too: all else is but dung, and dross, and loss. Yes, all else is for me loss."

If Christ is thus before our eyes, all that is not Christ is an embarrassment. We must win Christ. Faith having once apprehended the righteousness of God, can no longer put up with the righteousness of man; there, a needs be to faith to walk in a more excellent way. The riches which the young man valued had no longer any attraction for the heart of Paul; he had seen Christ; His

righteousness, the end and prize of the heavenly calling.

In Mark 10:25, Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Great was the astonishment of all; and they said, "Who then can be saved!" Jesus concealed not the truth, "It was impossible with man, but all things were possible with God!" As to man, however excellent may be his pretensions, it is impossible; he loves money; he is ambitious; to cut the matter short, if man's ability to save himself is in question, Jesus Christ declares it is impossible. But let us suppose that we have left all, as Peter said, "Lo we have left all and followed Thee;" and in truth they had, by the grace of God, really followed Jesus. The hearts of the disciples were really attached to Jesus, affection was really awakened in them towards Him, they had done that, grace helping, which the young man could not make up his mind to do; even as the Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, there is no one who has left father or mother, etc., for my sake and for the Gospel's, who shall not receive in this present life a hundredfold with persecution, and in the world to come life everlasting.-You have been obliged to break, for my sake, ties here below: well, you shall find the same, stronger and, more perfect, among the children of God and, at the end, eternal life." There are souls who have apprehended these things, and who have set out, and that sincerely, as pilgrims with Jesus; but on that road we have to follow Jesus, and Jesus has passed by the cross: we shall meet then that which will fully put us to the proof. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him." We may say to ourselves, perhaps, what a blessed thing to have Jesus immediately before us! But the disciples were amazed: we desire to be in the way with Christ and to follow Him, but we are ignorant of what the costs may be; the disciples walked in it, and they found what the difficulty was: if Jesus went to Jerusalem, it was to be put to death there. The Jews would crucify Him, yet go thither He would. His disciples were filled with fear as they followed, because they had not the Holy Ghost; still they forsook not, as yet, their Master, yet they were amazed and in trouble.

Jesus is the good shepherd; He leads forth His sheep, He walks before them and the sheep follow Him. The disciples were afraid as they followed Jesus, Jesus led them to the cross. The cross is on the road which leads to glory. Well! that was just what Paul desired. The disciples were amazed and afraid; Paul's state (Phil. 3) was far different, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection... being made conformable unto His death." Instead of being frightened, Paul thought, "I shall be partaker of the sufferings of Christ! I shall, then, have much more of Him; I shall die to sin, to the world; I shall be much more conformed to the likeness of Christ, and all that destroys the flesh destroys that which hides Christ." It was no imaginary danger;

Paul's trial was at hand-the alternatives of the question were life or death; death was before him, but he saw that it was the means of having more of Christ; so that he said, "I willingly take all that, for it is Christ." He had no desire to have sufferings, but to have the fellowship of His sufferings, to be made conformable unto His death.

For us the cross is light in comparison of that which Paul had to suffer. Nevertheless, it is the cross which takes from us all that which hinders our realizing Christ in glory. What a contrast between the disciples, amazed and afraid when going up to Jerusalem to the cross was in question, and the apostle Paul, who gloried in everything that could communicate to him anything more of Christ. He

knew that in passing through death, he should die to death. When Christ died, He died not as to communion with the glory of the Father. On the contrary He therein only realized that He had done with the guilt which, for our sakes, pressed heavily upon Him, done with the world which was a desert land-land of drought where no water was. Death was to Him to depart and enjoy, in His Father's presence, eternal blessedness; for us, death is not aught else.

Therefore, as Christ said, " Father, into Thy hands I commit my Spirit," so Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." If death gives us more conformity to Christ, we need not stop to consider what suffering the flesh may find therein; we find our profit in it, because it is death to all that is not Christ, and we glory in it because it makes us more like to Christ. Is the cross before me? Good! I shall have more of Christ: the energy of the Spirit makes me say.... " if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection." I see Christ in glory; well, I desire to be as He is and to be with Him. I desire to possess Him just as I see Him, and if to gain that, or a fuller measure of it, I must pass through death; to me to die is gain. Where there is the energy of the spirit, there is light, and a single eye which makes us judge that Christ is worth all, and that all else is worth nothing: and this purifies the saint's heart.

In Mark 10:25, we have James and John asking of Jesus to place them one on the right and the other on the left. They desired a good place in the kingdom. James and John had faith; spite of the dangers which they saw on the road to Jerusalem, they believed that Jesus would have the glory and the kingdom, and they said, " At all events give us a good place." But about whom were they thinking? About James and John. Then Jesus speaks to them of drinking of the cup, and again sets the cross before them, subjecting them to the will of the Father, even as He Himself was obedient thereunto. Here, we have a step in advance: the question is of glory; but the Holy Spirit has no fellowship with this " Self." The heart is not delivered from it until the Spirit has guided our thoughts to Jesus. So was it with Paul, in whom we find altogether another thing than "myself"-(I will labor hard to have a good place). Paul is occupied with Christ more than with. Paul: " That I may win Christ." 'Twas the Spirit who thus set Christ before him. The power of the Spirit had so directed his thoughts to Jesus, that Paul is, as it were, lost in Jesus. The effectual presence of the Spirit crucifies Egoism and gives us freedom of thought about ourselves while on the way; it occupies us with but one subject-Jesus: to be conformed to the pattern and to look to Him, is all that we have to do, and this purifies the heart. Paul labored more than they all; and therefore, in a certain sense, according to man's thoughts, he has a title to the most excellent place; but he did all, just because he did not seek such a place, but in seeking Christ alone. If he win Christ, what a righteousness! If there be sufferings by the way, well, it is but conformity to Christ; if death, 'tis gain; for we look for the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our vile bodies, and render them like unto His own glorious body.

Paul thinks not of himself; the Spirit fills him with Christ Himself, and all that conceals from him Christ and His worth is rejected. The Spirit gives clearness of view and repose to the heart, through the knowledge of the righteousness of God. Then we desire to have Christ, to possess Him, and we find what is the way thereunto. To Jerusalem and the cross! No matter; it is the cross of Christ, and Christ on the cross and Christ with the cross, but it is naught less than the divine righteousness which we have in Him.

In Mark we have the young man who would not abandon his riches and take up the cross, in order to have heaven; then the disciples following Jesus in fear, yet following. In Phil. 3, we see Paul following the Lord without fear and with joy, whatsoever sufferings might be His, because he loved Christ as Christ, for His own sake. The important matter is for each of us to have Christ in himself, which gives a pure heart and a single eye; and to have Christ so entirely "our all" that all our business may be to possess Him and, in view of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, to count all things but dung and dross. Again, approved by Him and filled with Himself, we shall be in peace according to the righteousness which God Himself has given to us.

## Psalm 23

---

There is nothing more difficult to man than to be satisfied with God. Even a spiritually-minded Christian would find it hard to spend three days alone with God. What a void he would feel! what need of intercourse with others beside God! Brotherly intercourse is, indeed, good in its place; but the Lord would have us able to enjoy Him alone, and to lean on Him alone. To accomplish this, He permits us to find in our path many things that break the heart, and reveal the nothingness of all that is not Himself. He would have us satisfied with the thought, "Thou art with me" (ver. 4), instead of leaning on any one else. That which renders it so hard for us to be satisfied with God, is the weakness of our faith and the lusts of our hearts, which lead us to seek a thousand things beside God.

Jesus took, in His ineffable grace, that place before God which He would have us occupy before Himself. Therefore, though He is in reality the Shepherd (as we see John 10), He became one of the flock, as we see Him in this psalm. He was willing to be our forerunner in the rough path we have to tread, and thus to know, experimentally, the difficulties of the way; and while in this rough path He could say, "I shall not want. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." He could say this, in a terrific pathway as far as the flesh was concerned: in the path of humiliation unto death: because Jesus knew how to be satisfied with God alone. "THOU ART WITH ME."

This it was which smoothed the path for him; a table was prepared for Him; GOD, AND GOD'S WILL, were, so to speak, that which was spread upon it, and which was His meat, unknown to the world; meat which was His delight and the restoring of His soul.

He was satisfied in the Father. "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." Not that He despised His disciples-far from it He loved them with the greatest tenderness, and as a man, He would have desired to be surrounded by them during His sufferings, "Tarry ye here with me." But HE WAS ALONE in His anguish, and said, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance (Psa. 42). Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for THOU ART WITH ME."

It is impossible for the soul which walks thus, leaning upon God alone, and rejoicing in Him only, not to find the path smooth, and to have to say, even after a weary and trying day, "Thou makest me to lie down in green pastures," for if the soul has received refreshment FROM GOD, and has been satisfied WITH GOD in the midst of trying circumstances, it will find all to be green pasture and still waters.

What the Father was to Jesus while treading this path, Jesus is to us now. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the father: so he that eateth me even he shall live by me."

## Psalm 23: a Psalm of David

---

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

## Psalm 84

---

THE leading thought in this psalm is that of " the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts." We see that, from the beginning, God thought of, and desired to have a tabernacle. Therefore God sheaved Moses a pattern of the tabernacle on the Mount. Moses says, in the song concerning the deliverance of Israel, and the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation; He is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation" (Ex. 15:2). But God's thoughts were, that He would make an habitation for Himself-to be with man. At the end of the ages, after the millennium, this desire of God's will be accomplished, as we see (Rev. 21:3), "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them."

The word "tabernacle" always implies the dwelling of God with man; thus David, after saying, " How amiable are Thy tabernacles," adds, " my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Yea the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young." This it was that occupied David's soul, this providence of God, who prepares a place of rest for every creature; and he says by faith, " Since Thou hast prepared a nest for the swallow and the Sparrow' Thou hast prepared one for me too," and he adds, "Thine altars, O Lord of hosts!" Here was the nest, or resting-place he sought. "Thine altars, O Lord of hosts!" and truly worship is the rest of the soul.

There is but one man who had no place of rest, as Jesus said, " The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." And if we have now a nest, a resting place in God, it is because Jesus has been on this earth for us, and without rest.

Ver. 4. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thine house; they will still be praising Thee." Blessed are they (not who visit, or who pass through, but) who dwell in Thine house. And it is impossible to dwell there without ever praising Thee.

But in another sense, we are not always in the house; we leave it for service as the swallow leaves her nest in search of food for her young; but there are ways (ver. 5) leading to the house; these ways are often stony, thorny, and irritating to the flesh; but they are the ways, and he whose heart is in the house, will prefer the rough road that leads thither to the easy path which leads away from it. For instance, the way for the early Christians was hunger, peril, persecution and death, or the valley of Baca (ver. 6); that is everything sad, but they made it a well. It is thus that all difficulties are changed to him that is in the way; they become fountains. " The rain also filleth the pools." Not only are the ordinary means of help given to him that is in the way, but rain, or the direct help of God comes in, in the midst of the desert.

Verse. 7. " They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." There are in the Christian's path (as resting-places), trials, out of which flow fountains which lead him from strength to strength.

Verse 9. " Look upon the face of thine anointed." We may always, in all confidence, present to God His anointed, or Christ, and thus comfort ourselves as to what we are in ourselves.

Verse 10. " A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Many children of God rest satisfied to be at the threshold; indeed many remain outside, while we are called to enter and dwell in the house. Yet, if our unbelief, or the lusts of our heart, which seek something besides God, hinder our entrance, we have at least " the door," for Christ is the door," and the door alone is better than all that is in the world.

## The Revelation of Jesus Christ

---

[The following paper is from the remaining Manuscripts of a beloved brother (T. T.) who now sleeps in Jesus. From the numbering of the MS. it appears that the introduction is missing, which gives the paper a fragmentary character; but its pointed moral bearing is worthy of all regard. By it, "he being dead yet speaketh."-Ed.]

Jesus Christ's revelation-His unveiling of things. It is His revelation, not man's speculation. It is not a hidden thing to be revealed, but what is now revealed: the very actions themselves are shown out.

Which God gave unto Him.

Power belongeth unto God; and He has set up Christ over everything; all rebellious powers must be subdued, and Christ must be supreme, and the development of this is opened in the Revelation.

To show unto His servants.

In the Epistles of John, there are specially the Father, the Son, and the children: but in the Revelation, there are God, Jesus Christ, and His servants. God and Jesus Christ are here seen judging and rewarding; and men are seen according to their works: but it is to the servants of Jesus Christ that the things are shown.

And He sent and signified it by His angel.

The ministry of angels is much used in the exercise of the powers herein revealed, and the angel is sent to show them. When the power wrought by the Holy Ghost in the saints, in comforting and teaching them, in sustaining their life or in giving life, is opened up to the saints; then it is by the Holy Ghost that it is shown. " He shall glorify me, for He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." And so in the Epistles of John, in which testimony to the Father and the Son is given, he says, " You have an unction from the Holy One and you know all things." " Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit " (1 John 4:13). In the Acts of the Apostles, the ministry of angels is often exercised, but always in a distinct sphere from that in which the Holy Ghost wrought.

When circumstances here were dealt with, or power wrought in connection with those circumstances, then the ministry of angels is seen.

When the person of Christ, or truth relating to Him, was the subject, or when powers were wrought in connection with Christ and the truth, then the Holy Ghost wrought, and not an angel.

When Christ shall be displayed in His glory, then His angels will be with Him; and so when the disciples looked steadfastly towards heaven, when" Christ was taken up, then two men stood by them in white apparel, and they declared the return of Christ to be thus seen again.

But on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were endued with power from on high to speak the word of Christ, by which many should be saved, then the power exercised was by the Holy Ghost, and not at all by angels.

When Christ appears in glory, then every eye shall see Him, and. He will be accompanied by angels; but now while in the heavens, He is known Only to the redeemed, and it is by the power of the Holy Ghost that testimony to Him is given, or blessing in Him is wrought.

In Acts 4, when Peter gave testimony to Christ, then he was filled with the Holy Ghost. The world was here to be convinced of sin, for not believing on Christ, and no angel is used for this; and so Peter was filled with the Holy Ghost, because it is the Holy Ghost that convinces the world of sin for not believing on Christ.

When their prayer to God was, "that with all boldness we may speak thy word"; the answer was given in the power of the Holy Ghost: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

But when it was not the opening of the mouth to speak the word of God, but the opening of prison doors, that they might stand and speak in the temple, then the angel of the Lord acted. After they had passed through the prison doors, and entered the temple through the ministry of an angel; then again they needed the Holy Ghost that they might speak the word when there; power in this was beyond the angel's power. And so, when speaking the word in the temple, whither they had come through the ministry of an angel, who also told them to speak that word, they do not associate themselves with the angel as a witness with them, but they join themselves and the Holy Ghost as the witnesses. " We are His witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that believe."

When Stephen saw the heavens opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, this being connected with life, he was then filled with the Holy Ghost.

When Philip was directed as to his mere journey towards the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza., then the angel of the Lord directed him; but when the Sword of life was to be brought to the Ethiopian, then the Spirit said unto Philip, " Go near and join thyself to this chariot."

In the case of Cornelius, when the angel of God came to him he does not tell him the words whereby he might be saved, but tells him to send for Peter, and that he would tell him, because the Holy Ghost was to act with this word, and, therefore, it was beyond the province of the angel to speak it, and it should be spoken by one in whom the Holy Ghost dwelt and by whom He wrought.

When Peter was delivered from prison, and that his chains fell off and the iron gates were opened, then the angel of the Lord acted in this ministry to deliver him from the hand of Herod. But, in the case of Barnabas and Saul, when it was not a ministry in reference to chains and iron gates, but a separation to the work of preaching the word of God, then the Holy Ghost acted, in directing that they should be separated to the work, and also in sending them forth.

The case of Elymas, the sorcerer, differed from that of Herod, inasmuch as Elymas gave direct opposition to the word of God, and sought to turn the deputy from the faith. And the glory of Christ being immediately concerned here, Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost in pronouncing judgment

on him-and also in this judgment, when pronounced in the energy of the Holy Ghost, in the course of a pure evangelist ministry-it was for a season, and mercy was remembered in the midst of judgment.

In the decrees that went out from Jerusalem, when there was a question in them as to being saved by circumcision and keeping the law of Moses; then the Holy Ghost acted with the Apostles in maintaining the truth.

When the question about Apostles, was as to the preaching of the word, then the Holy Ghost directed them. "They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia"-so as to going to Bithynia, "the Spirit suffered them not."

At Corinth the Lord spake unto Paul. In this case it was not energy or leading in immediate reference to the truth, as when by the Holy Ghost, or particular direction, or deliverance as to circumstances, as when by the angel of the Lord, but the protective hand of the Lord Himself abiding with him. So, also, when at Jerusalem, and his life was in danger, the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (chap. xxiii. 11). The protective hand of the Lord was in this.

When in the shipwreck, the angel of God appeared to Paul, saying, "Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Here it was a question about Caesar, and as to the people in the ship; it was not a promise of life in Christ, by the Holy Ghost, but preservation from the sea-in this the angel was used.

Things which must shortly come to pass.

While the servants of Jesus Christ are under the pressure of the things around them now, they need to have their hearts strengthened in the testimony of the things that must shortly come to pass, and to see things now in connection with their results. Men may speculate as to the probable results to be expected from present appearances: with such things the servants of Jesus Christ have nothing to do: He has made known to them the things that must shortly come to pass. There is no power to interfere with any one of these things here shown, they all must come to pass. The servants of Jesus Christ must be patient under the troublous things: they have no means of averting them, but it is only a question of a little patience, and all shall be happy and still. The evil will not take long to ripen, and then it will be cut down.

Unto His servant John.

It is in the character of a servant that John is looked at when this revelation is shown to him. He who was eminently the beloved disciple leaning on Jesus' bosom, was also eminently the servant of Jesus Christ and the witness of the love of God, testifying of the Father and the Son, and suffering tribulation in the world: such specially was John; and he is here again eminently the servant, and made the witness of judicial power. This is important, that it was to one who had been proved very faithful in the ministry of the grace of God, that this revelation of the judgment of God was shown.

Who bear record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, in things which he saw.

Unto him that hath shall more be given. John as a servant was true to what was entrusted to him as such: "He bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, in things which he saw." "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life: for the life was manifested and we have seen it and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That, which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." Such had been the testimony of John as a servant: and with this testimony there was also a witness against the love of the world and against Antichrist.

In the Revelation, the servants of Jesus Christ, also the world and Antichrist, are seen in their actings, and in their ends; and as the love of God, and the eternal life, specially marked this first testimony, so the reward of the servants of Jesus Christ, and the judgment of his enemies characterizes this other testimony in the Revelation.

The words of this prophecy.

There are two expressions: 1st. The Word of God; 2nd., The words of this prophecy. The first has more special reference to his previous testimony, relating specially to the person of Christ Himself. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The Word was made flesh." "That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and which our hands have handled of the word of life." "His name is called the Word of God."

The other expression-the words of this prophecy, takes in things in their relationship to Christ; the things which His servants have to encounter in their testimony to Him, and the things connected with their portion in Him, as here brought out in this book. - Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.

God had great purpose in this book for the servants of Jesus Christ. When the church was sinking in weakness, and the world rising in power, God looked upon the servants of Jesus Christ, and gave Him this revelation to show them the things which must shortly come to pass, and Jesus signified it to His servant John, having sent by His angel.

This light was not to be put under a bushel. "Blessed is he that readeth." The servants of Jesus Christ must serve Him in reading this prophecy, and they will have blessing therein. The servants of Jesus Christ must hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, and they will have blessing in it.

We here see the character of the scene and circumstances in which we are working; the results of labor for Christ, and also the results of the toil of the men of this world, with its certain evil character throughout the age.

The servants of Jesus Christ are here shown the length to which Satan's power would be allowed to go; also the mischievous ways in which he would exercise it, but the entire setting aside of it in the end, and the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and of his servants.

For the Time is at Hand.

The evil is so fast ripening that we must be ready to stand against its increasing power; and the purposes of God in blessing will so soon be accomplished, that the time of patient endurance will speedily close. The servants of Jesus Christ should keep this much before them.

John, to the Seven Churches which are in Asia.

Such is the form in which the servants of Jesus Christ are addressed-the seven, churches. There should be corporate character in our service, in each part of the field of labor. A perfect fullness of united testimonies for Christ. The saints in each place striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

There is another aspect also, of the servants of Jesus Christ, in which any individual may serve, whether there be a church or not; all that is addressed corporately to the church, is also addressed individually to him that hath an ear; and all the fullness of the promises are made to such in the character of him that overcometh.

Grace be unto you and Peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.

In the epistles of St. Paul, " Grace and peace are from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ," for there the portion of the church in the Grace of God is specially looked at. Ministry of Grace to the church is the great object of the epistles; and God our Father and our Lord Jesus. Christ are presented in their special relationship to the saints.

But in the Revelation, when the servants of Jesus Christ are looked at as serving Him, in the midst of opposing powers, then we are ministered unto by Him which is, and which was, and which is to come. In verses 4-6 we have the aspect of the servants of Jesus Christ in this prophecy-the prophecy presents them in the connections here introduced.

In verse 7 we have the aspect of the world in this book.

Things and people around us are seen to rise and fall. Some are seen in their beginning, some in their progress,- and some in their end; but in all confusion and disorder, grace and peace are ministered unto us from Him which is, and which was and which is to come. The servants of this world are dependent on short-lived transient sustainers; the servants of Jesus Christ have to do with Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; they shall abide and their fruit shall abide.

And from the seven spirits which are before His throne.

The seven spirits which are before his throne are also the source of grace and peace to the servants of Jesus Christ.

In the churches addressed by the epistles of Paul, grace and peace are from God the Father, and from Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost the comforter is dwelling in them, and so he abideth forever. But another ministration is presented to us here-not in us, but before the throne-the place of Almighty power. As Comforter, He proceeds from the Father; He dwells in us, and shows us the things of Christ. Because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The seven spirits are before the throne, the place of power and dominion; and thence, in Divine power, there is a ministry of grace and peace to the servants of Jesus Christ in the world.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Grace and peace are also ministered to the servants of Jesus Christ from Him as their Master, as first giving them an example that they should walk in His steps; then as their forerunner; and then as supreme over all the powers, surrounded by which they are serving Him.

When here in the flesh, He specially took the place of the faithful witness.

In resurrection, He is the first-begotten of the dead, our first-fruits.

He will soon be manifested in glory as the Prince of the kings of the earth.

While in these characters, He is the faithful man exalted in glory; yet as God over all, He ministers grace and peace to us.

We are the servants of Jesus Christ, as knowing Him in all this great and blessed range; and grace and peace are ministered to us from Him, according to what He thus is, that we may be sustained in HIS testimony, in His life, and in His dominion.

We are then led into communion with Jesus Christ in His work for us, in His goodness, and the ascription of glory and dominion to Him as blessing us thus.

Unto Him that loved us.

Christ begun with us in love. All that He did, flowed from His love. His love, from the beginning, marked His course toward us, while it never ends; for having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. He never departs from His first love toward us; and He is jealous that we should not do so toward Him.

And washed us from our sins in His own blood.

In His death, Christ showed His great love to us: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

It is through His work for us in dying, that we have our standing before God as cleansed in Him. In this is our present blessing.

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

The perfection of this blessing will be enjoyed in the day when He shall take His kingdom, and the saints reign with Him, as His priestly ministers of blessing.

Great is the sphere of His actings for us; and in this we should have communion with Him; in that which is past, present, and future: all is blessing in Him.

So far we have the servants of Christ in enjoyment in Him-His goodness toward "us"; but now others are brought in-" every eye" and "all the kindreds of the earth"; and this will be in sorrow-" they shall wail."

Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him: even so, Amen.

When the coming of Christ. is spoken of in reference to the world, then His coming with clouds is mentioned; or at least, when His coming with clouds is mentioned, then His coming is spoken of in reference to the world.

" I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13,14).

The coming of Christ with the clouds of heaven is here connected with His dominion and kingdom, and all people, nations, and languages serving Him.

" And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30).

This prophecy is one specially Jewish; and His coming to the world will be immediately in connection with His appearance to Israel; and it is the gathering of Israel from their dispersion that He is here promising, when " He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, to gather his elect from the four winds."

Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64).

This was spoken to the high priest, and in reference to those around Him then.

They also which pierced Him.

The Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the people and Gentiles of the latter day, will be found in the beast and false prophet, with the kings of the earth and their armies.

All the kindreds of the earth.

The terms  $\phi\upsilon\lambda\eta$  and  $\gamma\eta$  which are so often used in Jewish connection, are both used in this book with a very wide range through the nations.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

As Christ's servant, mind not other powers: He was before them, and He will be after them. What He begins, He will also finish, and none will stay His hand; for He is the Almighty.

I John who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

With this verse the first division of the book opens, as alluded to in ver. 19-"Write the things which thou hast seen." And it is important to see that it is not only as servants of Jesus Christ, but as suffering servants that we are contemplated here.

The tribulation is Christ's, as well as the kingdom and patience. See Col. 1:24, "And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" (τὸν θλιψενω τὸν χριστοῦ).

The present power of Christ's kingdom, connected with those days of tribulation and patience, is important here. It implies His right, and also the sustaining and controlling power that is exercised now, until His kingdom and patience will be followed by His kingdom and glory.

As the servants of Christ's kingdom, tribulations are our portion now-His tribulations; but when suffering for His name's sake, we must take it patiently. The servants of Jesus Christ cannot expect that the assertion of His rights, will be favorably received in this world; neither are they to expect a deliverance from these tribulations, but to exercise patience in them.

"Was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Here John had the tribulations of Jesus Christ, because it was for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ that he was in this isle. They who are companions in tribulation may not be suffering in the same place, or in the same way. And so says the Apostle Peter, "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." But it is a comfort that it is the tribulation of Jesus Christ, and associated with his kingdom and patience. " Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters; but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

But then while we are in Christ's tribulation, we are also in his kingdom, though in his patience too: and so the power of the kingdom, as to Christ's title, and the controlling hand of God, and the hope of the saints, are all presented in this prophecy.

That which is present is kept in connection with the beginning and the end. In this is the triumph of the servants of Jesus Christ. Very wholesome it is for His servants to have communion with Him in the beginning and the end; but poor, miserably poor, is that service which has its beginning short of Him, or its end in what will pass away. This leaven of carnal service, Christ's servants must watch against; and know the exceeding preciousness of what begins in Him, and the abiding blessedness of what ends in Him.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

■ κυριακη ■μερα, the Lord's day is opposed to ανθρωπινη ■μερα, man's day.

In the Lord's day, the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ are embraced as well as the kingdom and glory, and this is the difference between κυριακη ■μερα, the Lord's day, and ■μερα Κυριου, the day of the Lord. A judgment and controlling power is now exercised by the Lord, while man is exercising his judgment, and putting forth his power. In the day of the Lord, He will be manifested. Now He is hidden, and therefore John was in Spirit, in the Lord's day: for it is not apprehended by flesh and blood.

When the mystery of Babylon was revealed, then he was carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness.

When the bride, the Lamb's wife, was shown to him, then He was carried away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain.

When the door was opened in heaven, then immediately He was in the Spirit.

So also in regard to the Lord's day, for Christ is not manifested now in His kingdom and patience.

They shut up John in the Isle of Patmos; but here he got enlargement of Spirit in the Lord's day, in which not only in his hope he was ministered unto, in the future manifestation of Christ's power, in the day when He shall be revealed; but also in his present place of trial he was ministered unto in the present power that now acts in judgment and control, but both are connected here.

And heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.

This voice had reference not to the day of Christ's manifestation in glory, but to His relation at that time to the churches, while much that is in it reaches on to the day of glory. He heard the voice behind him: The power of this voice, and of the things seen in connection with it in the churches, as also the things seen in reference to the world, as to the actings of the Lord, give to the present time the character of ■ κυριακη ■μερα.

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

In this great voice as of a trumpet, the Lord proclaims Himself as supreme. We know of nothing before Him, and of nothing after Him.

And what thou seest write in a book, and send it to the seven Churches that are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

The Churches are here first addressed collectively; for the things seen immediately relate to all, as the light of the world.

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.

In these seven golden candlesticks we see what the churches should manifest themselves to be in the world-for we should not show out the evil of our own flesh, but mortify it; and show out what we are in Christ.

In these seven golden candlesticks the evil of the flesh is not seen at all, or any peculiarities connected with places -but all pure and rich as gold, and shining as candlesticks in perfect order.

In their purity and value they were golden.

In their purpose, as the lights of the world, they were candlesticks. In their perfection and order, they were seven.

The voice that spake was Christ's voice; but the first thing seen when his voice was uttered, were the seven golden candlesticks, for it is in the churches that He shows Himself.

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man.

The churches are here seen, not in their heavenly calling, but as showing heavenly lights in the world, and Christ in the midst of them as the Son of Man; not only to sustain them in this service, but to judge them also as responsible to do what they were set up for the purpose of doing.

Christ is here seen, not in relation to the world, but to the church. He is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, doing what He does in reference to them, even though on the things outside them in some measure.

Clothed with a garment down to the foot.

The first thing noted is the priestly character of Christ in the midst of the churches, for He is their sustainer as well as their judge; and He judges them on the responsibility they are under, because of sustaining power in Him.

And girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

The girdle was also a part of the high priest's dress.

In these two things here enumerated in reference to priestly character, we do not find positive and immediate service in sustaining and presenting the churches in perfectness. This is so as regards the church above, but not as regards the churches below. They are set up in a dispensation with warnings of failure.

Still these emblems of priesthood are first noted.

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.

In this He is as the Ancient of Days-for He is Alpha, and He is here in the churches as judge.

And His eyes were as a flame of fire.

In this judgment of churches the secrets of hearts are searched out; and the works are judged in connection with the affections of the heart.

It was not so in Christ's judgment of His disciples when he chose his apostles; and therefore Judas got in: but in this judgment the secrets of hearts are at once brought into account in everything; which is very momentous for us in our church service now.

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.

Pure and undefiled in walk; he could bear no taint of the pollution of that woman Jezebel (ii. 18).

With perception of the most hidden evil, yet untainted in walk by any evil.

And his voice as the sound of many waters. Comprehensive power.

The whore who sat on many waters did not possess power, but was sustained by it; but not so here-his voice was as the sound of many waters, his word with power, combined and comprehensive (see Ezek. 43:2). I think there is in this more the character of majesty than of judgment or positive power.

And he had in his right hand seven stars.

Ministerial power for the church.

And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. Judicial power (see chap. 2:16; 19:15).

And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. Glory (see chap. 10:1).

And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead.

In the person of the Son of Man as thus in the midst of the candlesticks, He is seen in His judicial power toward the churches, and that in which he will act toward the world; and therefore terror took hold of John.

With the sword of his mouth he will fight against those holding the doctrine of Balaam, and with it also he will smite the nations. Compare chap. 2:16 with chap. 19:15.

In His detection of the ways of that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, He acts, as having His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and in going forth against the nations He is so displayed. Compare chap. 2:18, 23 with chap. 19:12.

He is seen in the midst of the churches, in character not now applied to their circumstances, as in having His face as the sun shining in its strength; this is definitely applied in its circumstance in chap. 10, when He sets His right foot on the sea and His left foot on the earth.

He is seen in the midst of the churches, not only in the characters in which He immediately acts towards them, or in which He will act, but also in those in which He will act on the world in which they are set up; and therefore the terror of this display.

But while in the fullness of His person He is thus presented as in the midst of the churches, yet to that individual servant who thus beholds Him He gives the purest evangelist presentation of Himself.

And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

In this He presents Himself purely as our Savior. The might of His right hand is on us without fear unto us; for us there is no death because He ever lives, having once died, and now has power over death, such in our own immediate communion with Him He is to us, but as in the midst of the candlesticks we must know Him as there: He is in the midst of the candlesticks in characters that would terrify us to death, but for our personal fellowship with Him in His life. We must know Him individually as our life; or our corporate earthly dispensational place would be one of terror when we see Christ in His relationship to it, because of its responsibility to Him and failure in that responsibility.

The churches have been set up as golden candlesticks, but the gold has become dim, it has, been mixed with that which is not gold, and the light has been impure.

Write the things which thou hast seen.

The seven golden candlesticks, with one like unto the Son of Man walking in the midst of them, were the things that he had seen. That is, the churches set up in purity, to shine as the light of the

world, with Christ walking in the midst of them in anxious care, having priestly garments, yet the manifestation of his person, being judicial as well as sustaining; dealing with them, not only as their sustainer, but as their judge; and this not only in corrective judgment, but in destructive judgment also, towards those that got in among them to hinder their testimony by corruption and deceit. As such toward the churches He would be known to us, while personally our Savior.

And the things which are.

In "the things which are" are included the actual state of these churches which had been set up in the purity and responsibility of golden candlesticks-the things which are unfolded how far they acted in that responsibility, and the dealing of the Lord with them accordingly.

In this He acts both as sustainer and judge. He owns all that is of Himself and disowns all that is not; He separates the precious from the vile, and gives blessings to any faithful individuals.

This occupies chapters 2 and 3.

And the things which shall be hereafter.

In these things the world is brought in. Chapter 4 commences with this portion of the Revelation. "Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which shall be hereafter;" and here we have embraced every creature that is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

His immediate connection with the churches is noted here, and that in power towards them in blessing, as having the seven stars in his right hand.

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write.

While He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, He takes a very special cognizance of each.

The responsibility of the churches is addressed in the angels of the church, as being the-expressions of power ministered from His right hand.

These things, saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

As there is something special in the practical condition of each of the churches, so Christ presents Himself in a special aspect to each, meeting that condition, in all the fullness that is in Himself.

This fullness is presented in the things seen in chap. 1. All the exigencies that would arise were provided for from the beginning; so that when they arose, it was only to present that in Christ which was set up in Him from the first.

John saw Him walking in the midst 'of the seven golden candlesticks, and holding the seven stars in His right hand. In this His watchful care, yet with judicial power, He here presents Himself to the church of Ephesus, because their love was growing cold. His power is seen in exercise of care for them, holding the seven stars in His right hand; and He Himself, in careful interest, walking in the

midst of the seven golden candlesticks, yet ready in judgment to remove a candlestick, if the light did not shine in purity, there finding what occupied Him in those pure expressions of His light. In the things of Ephesus, iniquity was abounding, and their love was growing cold; but He calls them into fellowship with that which is pure, and His interest in it. The golden candlesticks, Himself walking in the midst of them, and holding the seven stars in His right hand.

He would also thus lead them to consider not only what they do, but how they do it, because of the consciousness that His eye was upon them.

An authoritative tone of haughty judgment without love, is the result of losing the sense of our responsibility as servants in these things. Yet Christ speaks not here of either assumed authority or haughtiness, but approves of the judgment; but He cannot endure the departure from love.

I know thy works.

This is the first statement as to themselves, made to each church. They are all assumed to hold the place of servants; and therefore He is taking cognizance of what they are doing, be it right, or be it wrong; the same word is spoken: "I know thy works." In His claim on us as His servants, He tells us that He knows what we are doing.

And thy labor and thy patience

This combination of labor and patience is very needful in service, while active in the positive services you yourself do, yet patient in things you may suffer. See 2 Tim. 4:5. Also as being unwearied in service. See Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:58.

And how thou canst not bear them which are evil. This, too, is a commendation; only it was accompanied by failure in love, for which nothing could make amends, in those who were giving light for Christ.

It is good to be righteous in our ways; but Christ will not own as His servants those who, while rigid in acts of righteousness, fail in love: "these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.

Ephesus-Those who said they were apostles, and were not.

Smyrna-They who said they were Jews, and were not, but were the synagogue of Satan.

Pergamos-They who held the doctrine of Balaam.

Thyatira-That woman, Jezebel.

Philadelphia-They who say they are Jews, and are not; but do lie.

The Epistles to those churches in which there is no commendation, have no allusion to these special deceitful workers; as,

Sardis-Which had a name to live, and was dead.

Laodicea-Which was lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold. Satan raises up these special emissaries of mischief, where he finds faithfulness in Christ's servants most to prevail.)

This, too, is a commendation for righteousness.

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.

There is much painful toil and trial of spirit in these works of righteousness, and disallowance of evil; and this, too, is commended; only, while we see the commendation, let us also see what follows, and take warning.

Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

While righteousness disallows that which is evil, love goes out after that which is good.

While strong in our testimony against the false assumptions of evil persons, our hearts might decline in their warmth of affection toward Christ Himself; and get more occupied in that which is to be condemned in bad people, than in that which is to be loved in His own saints: and of this He says-I have it against thee.

Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen.

In the Epistles to the churches at Pergamos and at Thyatira, He commences His allusion to their faults by saying, " I have a few things against thee"; but in declension in love, the Lord does not speak of a few things, but "Remember from whence thou art fallen." The magnitude of this declension in His servants is a great one indeed.

And repent, and do the first works.

It is quite possible to have much activity in service, and that in toilsome, trying, and righteous labor, and yet to have love wanting; and when this is so, the word is " Repent." Continue no longer in such a course as this, but "do the first works"; that is, works of love. See 1 Thess. 1:3.

Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

No righteous labor in testimony against evil, can compensate for the absence of love in those that are

Christ's lights in the world.

The law gave a testimony against sin; but it was accompanied with blackness, and darkness, and a tempest. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and He is the Light of the world: in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. There was no life in the law. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him; but he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

It is very important to see how much righteous zeal against evil was in this church; and that while Christ commended it, yet He could not continue them as His light while works of love were

wanting.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

He still commends their abhorrence of that which is evil; for while He would bring us back to that from which we have declined, He would equally preserve in that wherein we are right. There is failure in testimony where love is exercised at the sacrifice of true righteousness, as at Thyatira; and there can be no true testimony in acts of righteousness in the absence of love, as at Ephesus.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The churches are addressed as corporately responsible; but then they fail to act in that responsibility; and then individual responsibility is brought in.

No individual can say, "How can I act out as Christ's servant, when the churches are so heedless of His words?" for the answer is, "If the churches do not act out, then do so yourself." If love has failed in the church, see that it does not fail in you; and if the church does not repent, see that you yourself do repent, and then the promise is made to you.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

While the epistles are in the first instance addressed to the Churches corporately, and afterward made applicable to individuals, this is not the way in which the promises are presented. They are at once presented to the faithful individual, "To him that overcometh."

The several promises to him that overcometh are the subjects of detail in the four last chapters, where we see that the future glories of the Church, when taken to the Lord, are the subjects of promise to the faithful individual now, in the corporate failure of the Churches now.

Ephesus.--Compare chap. 2:7 with chap. 22:2.

Smyrna.-Compare chap. 2:11 with chap. 20:6, 14.

Pergamos.-Compare chap. 2:17 with 21:7.

Thyatira.-Compare chap. 2:26-28 with chap. 19:11-16, and chap. 22:16.

Sardis.-Compare chap. 3:5 with chap. 19:8, 14.

Philadelphia-Compare chap. 3:12 with chap. 21:2.

Laodicea.-Compare chap. 3:21 with chap. 20:4.

I do not say that there is no promise made to him that overcometh that is not verbally expressed in the four last chapters, but it is a very positive witness of the exceedingly blessed place of individual faithfulness, while in the midst of corporate failure that the promises to him that overcometh, embrace within them those things which are the chief glories of all the saints in the closing chapters.)

The individual who is faithful in the midst of corporate failure now will have his portion in corporate glories by and by.

Man at his fall was driven out from the paradise that was in Eden, lest he should put forth his hand and take of the tree of life; but now, in the new creation, the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God, is the portion of the faithful in Christ Jesus.

And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write; These things, saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.

This presentation of Himself, He also takes from the things which John had seen.

When John fell at His feet as dead, he was restored by the words, " Fear not, I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death."

This same presentation of himself is made to the Church at Smyrna, to draw their thoughts away from those who can kill the body and after that have no more that they can do.

There is a much deeper question of death, and from it there is entire deliverance in Him; the other is a light affliction and but for a moment.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich.

Tribulation and poverty, as the results of faithfulness to Christ, are very precious badges in his servants. With the present trials of them He has sympathy in saying "I know"; but to the deeper blessings He leads on in contrast by saying, "but thou art rich."

And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

While Christ knows in sympathy the trials of His servants with their deeper blessings: so does he also know the false assumptions of wicked people and their real state.

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.

It does not follow that, because the Lord knows the tribulations and poverty of His people, and sympathize with them in it, that, therefore, he is about to deliver them from it now in the flesh: he assumes it to be their portion, but says, "Fear not." These words from Him tell us at once how harmless the suffering is, while at the same time they warn us against the weakness of the flesh.

Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried.

The Lord would keep us from sudden fear, by telling us the things before they come to pass (see John 16:4; 1 Thess. 3:4).

He would also lead us away from thoughts after the flesh, by showing us the source of the trouble in our spiritual enemy. While as a matter of fact, men cast them into prison, yet men are lost sight of in it, and the devil is presented as doing it. It was under his agency it was done. And then there was a great end in it all " that ye may be tried." " That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ " (1 Peter 1).

And ye shall have tribulation ten days.

If tribulation is the portion of the faithful, they have this consolation, that it cannot last long: he who allows the tribulation, also measures the period of it.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

All the associations of life with a natural man are followed by death: With a saint, the order is the reverse: resurrection-life is life from the dead. He who has eternal life has passed from death unto life. We mortify the deeds of the body and live. If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. It is in this same order of association that the faithful are sustained in reference to them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

Some of the richest promises come in to meet us in the places of greatest trial in the flesh.

He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Such is the promise to the faithful individual who hateth his life for Christ. Life in the flesh at the surrender of Christ would be indeed a curse; but Christ is in Himself all blessing, though at the surrender of all things.

The men of this world have death, and death the second death. The faithful in Christ, who die with Him or for Him, have all in life.

We have no promise of deliverance from trial in the flesh; but we look on to our great deliverance in Christ.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write; These things saith he that hath the sharp sword with two edges.

This sharp sword is presented in this book in the aspect of positive judgment, as to its exercise. "I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (ver. 16). "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations" (chap. 19:15).

The servants of Christ are led into fellowship with Him in this, that they may be righteous in the disallowance of evil-in not owning that in His church which He will smite and judge.

I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is.

This is not said in the way of censure but of sympathy: it refers to the world: and they were not of the world. If there is anything peculiarly trying and difficult in the circumstances in which we are, He takes cognizance of such things, and lets us know it.

And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

The Lord never loses sight of the trying circumstances under which any fidelity towards Him is shown.

It is very precious to see in what apparently little things the Lord makes great recognition of the faithfulness of His servants.

"Holding fast His name"- "Not denying His faith." Things which the humblest believer, in the place least thought of, and making very little show, would be found in. We would say it is but a very little

this, that one of Christ's servants should not deny His faith. Well be it so. He can own faithfulness in a very little; only let it be faithfulness to Himself. That which in itself is a very little thing, may have some special testimony in it, because of the circumstances of trial under which it is done. This is never lost sight of by Him.

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

We are answerable to Christ as His servants, not only for what we hold ourselves, but for what the people hold who are amongst us.

Those who held the doctrine of Balaam were not persons merely walking inconsistently, who made a profession in words, and walked contrary to it, but their sin was that they held a false doctrine—the doctrine of Balaam. They maintained as a doctrine what would stumble the children of God in their wilderness pilgrimage, what would associate them with idols, and cause them to indulge in sinful lusts. Such was what Balaam taught, and such was the doctrine which these persons held.

The doctrine of Christ will keep us in His way; all other doctrine will stumble us therein.

He who has fellowship with those things which are ministered to the idols of the heart, eats those things which are sacrificed to Idols; and then to hold this as a principle is to hold this doctrine.

The word is whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. But then when things are sought after, and indulged in that are not at all to the glory of God, and cannot be, and this is maintained as a doctrine; and not as a failure and a sin to be repented of, and a thing to be given up: then the church is chargeable for those it has among them. Covetousness is idolatry; and they who would justify it, hold the doctrine of Balaam. "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith." When the faith is erred from, then an idol is set up: such is the result of love of money; but when such is justified, the doctrine of Balaam is held.

A man may make his belly his god, and he may do this in minding earthly things, and he holds it as a principle, and thus holds the doctrine of Balaam (see Phil. 3:18, 19). All the apostle could do for such, was to shed tears over them, for they were enemies of the cross of Christ, and their end was destruction.

And so idolatry is connected with fornication in the doctrine of Balaam: because it is the flesh bowing to some false object, and getting the gratification of its own lusts thereby.

In the special character of the church is that of a chaste virgin for Christ, having ardent affections, but pure towards Him (see 2 Cor. 11:2; Matt. 25:1; Rev. 19:7; 21:2).

Our bodies are Christ's members, and they cannot be made the members of a harlot.

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the

Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body: but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:15-18).

It is thus that their sin is put in contrast with every sin. And so when the decrees were given at Jerusalem, in which offense to the Jews and to the Gentiles and to the church of God was to be avoided, the prohibition in reference to the Jews, was from things strangled and from blood, for Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day. The prohibition in reference to the Gentiles, was from things sacrificed to idols; so that if any of them that believed not invited a saint to eat with him, he might eat what was set before him, asking no questions for conscience sake; but if any man said, " This is offered in sacrifice unto idols," then for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake, he should not eat it, for the earth is the Lord's (not the idol's), and the fullness thereof." But the prohibition in reference to the church, was from fornication, and therefore here it is not " conscience, not thine own, but of the other," but their own conscience in its fullest sense.

It is well here to observe the care of the Spirit of God to keep us from temptation in our services for Christ. When Timothy is directed how to: intreat old men, young men, old women and young women, it is added in the latter case "with all purity,' for he should "flee youthful lusts."

When Titus is directed what he should teach to the aged men, the aged women, and the young men, he is not told to teach the young women, but to teach the aged women, that they may teach the young women.

When the elect lady and her children are addressed in an epistle, the Holy Ghost chose the elder to do so; and also under that designation, all they that love the truth are associated with him in his love to the elect lady and her children, in the truth and for the truth's sake.

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

The moral force of the evil in this doctrine is, that Christ hates it: that is enough: they who hold doctrines that Christ hates, should not be among His servants seeking to know and do what He loves.

Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

When the Lord has anything against us, then His word to us is, Repent. He leads us into fellowship with His own mind, that we may in all things walk therein. He says, "I am coming unto thee, and I will fight against them." He does not say, "I will fight against thee," but "I will fight against them": and we should not have them in the church against whom we know that Christ is coming to fight.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The individual call is again repeated; one single individual can take to himself what is said to all the churches. Christ will commend any faithful servant that holds fast His name, and does not deny His faith; and He will specially own it in circumstances of great opposition: but He has it against any individual servant of His, to have with Him, those holding the doctrine of him who taught how to stumble God's children in their course, turning them to idolatry and to lust, or any doctrine which Christ hates. Any faithful individual should know that he should not go contrary to the mind of

Christ, by joining himself with those with whom the Lord will fight.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.

The faithful are here led away from the sin of Baalpeor with its results in judgment, to the divine blessings of the true Israelites-the bread from heaven-the memorial of which was reserved in the ark and brought into the holiest, where he that overcometh shall have his portion.

And will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

All names connected with our circumstances or condition in this world shall pass away. If any man be in Christ-creation is new-old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new-and so the name given to him. The conception of this blessedness is only known to him who is the possessor of it, as made partaker with the Spirit of God. Now are we the sons of God, but the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. There can be no fellowship in the things of God between any save those that have the Spirit of God.

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.

The character in which the Lord here presents Himself, is one to meet the necessity of the church, though, this necessity being evil, He does not allude to it until He first commends what is worthy of being commended. His eyes are like a flame of fire to search the hearts and the reins (see ver. 23); and therefore the name of prophetess is of no avail, if there is not also a heart answering thereto.

His feet in their purity contract no defilement from the evil which His eye discovers, or which He acts in judgment upon.

While presenting Himself in character to meet the evil of the church, He yet approaches that evil in a gracious recognition of all that was good.

I know thy works, and love, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

When owning what was to be commended, the first thing that the Lord mentions is their love. It is the most precious manifestation of Christ in His servants. At Ephesus, where they had departed from their first love, they are commended for their "labor" *κοπος*; but at Thyatira, where their love was pre-eminent, they are commended for their service-*διακονια*. It was in this church, where love was foremost in their works, that faith is also noted; so at Thessalonica, "Your work of faith and labor of love"; at Ephesus it was not so. Where love was wanting declension is marked, but where love prevailed, there all was in progress; at Ephesus, they are all called to do the first works; at Thyatira, they are commended that the last were more than the first.

Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

While the church at Thyatira was abounding in love, they failed in the exercise of strict righteousness: at Ephesus it was the very reverse, showing us the danger we are in of so holding one part of the mind of God as to neglect another, and specially in the maintenance of both righteousness and grace.

Where love abounded, He says, "I have a few things against thee"; but where love was wanting, though acts of righteousness were there, he says, "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent." And here we see the force of the teaching in 1 Cor. 13, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," &c., &c. Yet it is important to see, that in the greatest extent of love, evil should not be tolerated. "Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good."

Our responsibility to Christ extends itself to His servants. Whatever affects them should be of concern to us.

It is unfaithfulness to Christ to sit quiet and do nothing, while a false teacher seduces and corrupts His servants.

The servants are His, and in faithfulness to Him there should be a righteous interference. This would be called a controversial spirit to act in, and contrary to love; but Christ finds fault with those whose love He commended, for suffering a false teacher to draw his servants aside. There is no amount of positive service on our own part that would warrant a passive acquiescence when Christ's servants are drawn away from Him by any. That woman Jezebel might say they were her servants; but Christ claimed them as His, and His claim is the warrant for any who serve Him to act on.

Christ's servants should be an easily recognized people, and the special care of those who own Him.

That woman Jezebel.

Jezebel of old was not one of the people of the Lord; she was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians.

When Ahab married her, he then went and served Baal, and worshipped him. He surrendered the authority which was proper to him as the Lord's anointed, and yielded it up to Jezebel, who as the woman, and his wife, should have held the place of subjection; and therefore we read of "Jezebel's table." Jezebel should have had no table, it should have been Ahab's table. Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, while four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of the groves ate bread at Jezebel's table. She was characterized for her whoredoms and her witchcrafts.

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

The church is responsible for suffering the seduction of Christ's servants by that woman Jezebel, while at the same time he waits the hour of judgment as regards herself, giving time for repentance. As regards her effect on the servants of Christ, the church should give no time at all; as regards her own repentance the Lord does give time, but Jezebel is unrepentant. But while he

gives her time for repentance we should not give her time to seduce.

The lengthening of the Lord's time to repent, only made the evil of the church the greater, in their continuing to suffer the seduction of Jezebel to go on. The Lord shows us that His long-suffering with those in an evil course, is not because He makes light of it, but because he gives time to repent; and then judgment will • come.

Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Evil will never be allowed anywhere. In the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, He suffered the judgment of sin in making atonement; the servants of the Lord endure judgment in His chastenings; and the world shall endure judgment in its condemnation. But in chastening it is, " If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world " (1 Cor. 11:31,32).

And I will kill her children with death.

There are two classes spoken of in reference to Jezebel, Christ's servants whom she seduced, and Jezebel's children. Of these latter there is no hope at all: Christ makes no claim to them at all. Of the one He says, "my servants," of the other He says, "Jezebel's children." The church, is not held responsible for suffering Jezebel to teach her on children, but for suffering her to teach Christ's servants. Her children were unconverted people, who did not know Christ at all. But His servants, who owned Him, and were hindered from serving Him through the seduction of Jezebel, became at once the responsible charge of the church. Of Jezebel's children He says, " I will kill her children with death." We should distinguish in those who are connected with false teachers between Christ's servants who have been drawn aside; and the unconverted people who do not know Christ, having nothing in them better than this false teaching.

And all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts.

The judgments of the Lord will prove that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, and that no false pretenses can escape Him.

And I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Jezebel's children will be killed with death, for they are not God's children; but none of those that are Christ's will be killed with death, though their works may be burned, and they themselves suffer loss; but this is individual-" every one of you,"-whether they be works of love, and faith, and patience, on the one hand, or on the other hand, a suffering of that woman Jezebel, or a yielding to her in all cases, whether in reward or suffering loss, it is I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

There are two things commended here. The not having this doctrine, and the not knowing the depths of Satan, as they speak. There is much blessing in, while being wise concerning that which is good, in being simple concerning evil; to stop our ears from hearing of evil. We should keep

false doctrine at a distance from us, when once we know it to be such: if the things to be known are the depths of Satan, it is good that we should not know them.

He says, I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

Consistency in holding what we have, is the thing urged in a time of declension and failure. "Continue thou in the things thou hast learned." It is by holding fast what we have already, that we shall be kept in the ways of Christ. False doctrine will oblige you to give up something that you have already got, and this you cannot do: the point of safety is in holding it fast; and that as waiting for the coming of the Lord, as connecting all results with that day.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

The servants of Christ have their conflict now in keeping His works, when others are doing their own will. They have their place in patient service now; by and by they will rule: we keep His works now, and then we shall rule in His dominion, our place will be, not among the nations whom He shall rule, but with Him in His rule over the nations: the powers of darkness now being exercised over the nations (see chaps. 3:10; 11:18; 13:7; 18:3); but the saints taken out from them (chap 7: 9).

And I will give him the morning star.

Christ Himself is the morning star (see chap. 22:16). He Himself the portion of His people; and they in union with Him participating of Him, and transformed into His likeness.

He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

It is well always to have in mind how individual these epistles to the churches are. If the church is commended for its love, so will any faithful servant of Christ; and if He cannot own it in the church, He will own it in the individual, and make the promises to him that overcometh his portion; so of his faith and patience, and his progress in devoted service, the last works being more than the first. But that which is the failure of the church, is also the failure of the individual servant. He should feel himself responsible for not suffering Christ's servants to be seduced by that woman Jezebel. Not 'only should we be active in our own services for Christ, but we should seek to hinder the effects of false teaching on others, and seek to deliver them from it. But at such a time, we should be very watchful to hold fast what we have. When seeking that others should let go what that woman Jezebel has taught them, we should see that we ourselves let go nothing that Christ has taught us.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars.

Christ tells this church what He had when about to tell them what they had not. The evils here alluded to were in the heart of the Church itself.

I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.

It is not like Pergamos, "Thou hast there them that hold," etc., or like Thyatira, "Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel"; but the evil is immediately personal, "Thou art dead."

There is no commendation at all to the church corporately. There are no particular evil persons alluded to here; but the fearful state of the church itself is dwelt on. A name to live is of no use, for Christ has the seven spirits of God, detecting, and yet providing for that the absence of which they detect.

Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain; that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Christ gives up nothing in the church that savors of Himself; even as He owns nothing that does not.

When death had set in on the -Church, yet while there were things remaining and ready to die, He says, Strengthen them. And to this, I think, he applies Himself as having the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.

There is a manifestation of death coming in, in not keeping what we have got. There is an awakening call to the sense of what had been received and heard, together with a call to hold it fast, and repent. They were letting go what they had received and heard. In other places Satan had been introducing error: but here he was taking away the truth. "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide in you, you also shall abide in the Son and in the Father."

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

It is only in the energy of life that we can watch and wait for the coming of the Lord: "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:3-6; see also Luke 12:35-48; 21:34-36).

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

The few, in contrast to those that were dead, are marked by undefiled garments. The energy of life will, always be in a clear course. The Lord would not come as a thief on those who had clean garments; for He associates their hope with their present walk. "They shall walk with me in white." So also this association is marked in the reverse order in the Epistle of John, where our hope of being like Christ is connected with purifying ourselves now. 1 John 3:2,3, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels.

To the faithful individual the promise is sure. Christ will not be ashamed of him, when those in the midst of whom he may now be, shall be all disowned.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

To have a name to live while dead, is a testimony that is very individual.

To be watchful and to strengthen things remaining and ready to die, is a service very worthy of any individual servant of Christ. To remember how we have received and heard is very personal to each of us. To walk with undefiled garments is never unheeded by the Lord, wherever any one is found doing so; and to such a one the promises are made.

And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia, write; These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.

He leads them into fellowship with Himself; and power for service in increased blessing. The key David pertains to the earth; it is now used in opening doors for service as in Acts 18:9,10. The keys of the kingdom of heaven open the blessings there to the heart and conscience: the key of David opens the opportunities of testimony to the people in the earth. This latter key Christ did not give to his disciples, as he gave them the keys of the kingdom of heaven; but he has it, and opens the door, and no man can shut it.

They are commended for having a little strength: strength is our portion in Christ, as His servants, and we are responsible for having it, and not weakening and wasting it, while we are also dependent on Him for it. He will give us an opportunity of using in service the strength we possess. We here see the strength first, the open door after. Christ's servants in the possession of strength: and then Christ Himself opening the door.

And hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

The open door is also connected with our personal faithfulness to Christ Himself, in regard to His word and His name.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

While it is the Lord who opens the door for ones so it is He who shuts it against another. He will make false people to be ashamed of their own pretensions, while conscious of, and acknowledging the righteous stand of the true servants of Christ.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to by them that dwell upon the earth.

The character which Christ gives to His word now as the word of patience, is very needful for us to mark. It is in the patient keeping of His word, walking by faith, and waiting His time, that the endurance of His servants is manifested. The seed on the good ground brings forth its fruit with patience, because under the same trying circumstances, as those of the seed of stony ground, and the seed among thorns, only in the one case there are those who are not offended by tribulation or affliction for the Word's sake; and in this is their patience: neither are they choked by the deceitfulness of riches, or by pleasures or cares, while temptations to all these things have to be endured.

This hour of temptation is, I believe; the strong delusion sent in judgment on those who received not the love of the truth: from it Christ will keep his own people, manifested as such by keeping the word of His patience; as the Apostle marks the contrast in 2 Thess. 2, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

While it is very definitely told us that we have need of patience, it is also told us that it is but for a little while, "Behold, I come quickly;" and on this, a call to increased steadfastness is founded, "hold that fast which thou hast": and in doing so we are led into communion with the result, "that no man take thy crown."

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out.

He that has a little strength now will be a pillar by and by; as they that keep their garments clean shall walk with Christ in white. There is a connection between our position of faithfulness to Christ now, and our place in glory hereafter. They are not of those things that we brought with us into this world, and that we shall not carry out, but they are of the things freely given to us as in Christ; and these we shall not lose.

And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

Permanence is marked by Christ's writing. The glory of that which is written is according to the word now kept.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The individual blessing of what is said unto the churches is ever repeated. To the faithful individual the open door is given. In him a little strength is owned. Whatever other people may do, one faithful man may keep Christ's word, and not deny His name. False pretenses will be brought to nothing in the presence of a faithful servant of Christ, while Christ's love to such a one shall be openly manifested. One godly man can keep the word of Christ's patience, and knowing that a crown is his portion, he must hold fast that he has.

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

Christ presents Himself here in connection with the value of His word, and as having all true standing flowing from Him as the beginning.

The very opening expressions in reference to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in chap. 1, are those which are set before this church, in its miserable state.

If any testimony comes in save Christ's testimony, or any beginning is owned save in Him, the result will soon show itself.

I know thy works; that thou art, neither cold nor hot.

A profession of Christ without a full consciousness that all we have, and all we are, is of Him alone, will show itself thus in being "neither cold nor hot." This is what Christ will not endure.

I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

It is most dishonoring to Christ that He should not be everything with those who own Him to be anything: and this He will assert in the strongest way; such being disgusting to His heart, and not refreshing.

Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Want of zeal towards Christ springs from thinking that we have something in ourselves without Him. In any state save what we are in Christ, we are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. He must be our beginning in everything: all that we had, and were before we got our place in Him, is as dung: there we could not be rich and increased with goods, and have need- of nothing: yet this is what many say who yet profess His name.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.

Christ presents Himself to them as the full source to meet them in all their misery, as poor, uncomely, and blind. When He rebukes because of a false assumption, it is as having that in Himself which supplies real blessings.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.

These epistles are addressed to none who are disconnected with Christ's name as in the church. The solemn responsibility to testify for Him in service, is ever declared in tender love.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The individual access of Christ to the heart, and the comforting communion with which lie refreshes, are here urged.

The churches of Sardis and Laodicea, where nothing was approved of in the churches, are the two where the faithful individuals are looked after; at Sardis the "few names," and at Laodicea "if any

man."

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.

Where there were those who said they were rich, and would thus reign as kings without Christ, after exposing their poverty and misery, with His fullness to meet it, He here presents His throne as the portion given of Him together with Him, to him that overcometh.

Christ's throne could not be the object of hope to any save those who are rich in Him.

When he humbled himself here, His Father was all fullness to Him; and now in humbling ourselves He is all fullness to us.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches.

It is a very individual evil to be lukewarm and neither cold nor hot. In such a state Christ says to any of us, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. It is in what we have in Him and from Him that any of us are rich. If others who confess His name are not true to Him in this, let not that be an excuse for any one who has an ear to hear.

If others who are lukewarm towards Christ, are ready to expose their own shame, because of not being clothed in His white raiment, let our righteous habits given testimony that we hear his reproof of the evil, and that we are partakers of blessings in Him.

If the lukewarm servants of Christ are very dark in their spiritual perceptions, let not that be an excuse for any faithful individual; for him there is light, and he should walk therein.

If there were not two or three meeting in His name, that He might be in the midst of them, he will yet enter into him who hears His voice, and will sup with him. And to reign with Him on His throne is the portion of him that overcometh.

## Sifted As Wheat; or Simon Peter

---

How good and precious is it that we have at all times the Lord to look to; for if our eye had always to be fixed upon self, not only should we not advance, but we should be thoroughly discouraged, by the thought of the evil within us.

We confine ourselves to the idea of this evil, and thus deprive ourselves of the strength which can overcome it.

The nature of the flesh, and the blindness of man's heart are worthy of remark. What foolish things come between God and us, to hide from us that which we ought to see; how strangely, too, do the thoughts of the natural heart follow their natural course (even when the Lord is near us), and deprive us of the consciousness of the most striking things, which have a sensible effect around us. We find this presented in the portion before us.

The Lord Jesus was about to accomplish that work which can be compared to no other; He was on the point of bearing the wrath of God for us poor sinners; He was in circumstances which ought to have touched His disciples' hearts. He had just spoken, in the most touching terms, of the passover which He desired to eat once more with them before He suffered; He had told them too that one of them should betray Him. All this ought to have rested upon their minds and have filled their hearts. But they? They were striving among themselves which of them was the greatest!

To us the curtain is withdrawn; and when reading of this fact, we can hardly understand how they could be busied with such things; but we know what was then about to take place.

How many things have power to turn even us, who have more light than they from the thought which then filled the heart of Jesus! Such is the heart of man in presence of the most serious and solemn things.

The death of Jesus should exercise the same influence on our hearts as on the disciples'; it should be precious to us.

The Lord is with us when we are gathered two or three together; and yet we well know the thoughts which then pass through our hearts and minds. Here we see the same thing under the circumstances most calculated to touch the heart. Jesus tells His disciples that His blood was to be shed for them, "the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me at the table, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed," and they inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. One might suppose that they would think of nothing save the death of their gracious master, but no! "There was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." What a contrast! But, alas! if we examine our own hearts we shall find these two things generally brought together, namely, real feelings which bear testimony to our love of Jesus, but also, and perhaps within the same half hour, thoughts which are as unworthy as this strife among the disciples. This shows the folly and vanity of man's heart; he is but as the small dust of the balance.

The Lord, ever full of gentleness and meekness, forgets Himself in His care for His disciples, and says to them, " He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that cloth serve." He knows how to teach them, by His own example, what the love of God is; and at the same time He shows them, the grace which is in Him, and all the faithfulness for which they are indebted to Him. It is as though He had said, Ye need not raise yourselves; my Father will raise you." "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Instead of being irritated by the abominable conduct of His disciples, He shews them, that if there is no grace in men, there is grace in one man, that is in Himself.

This grace is perfect in Jesus; and He places His disciples in it, whatever they may have been toward Him. He has fixed them firmly in the principle of grace, instead of the folly of the flesh which had just shown itself among them, as though He had said, I am all grace towards you, and I trust the kingdom to you.

We are put under grace, and its voice is always heard. It assures us, that, notwithstanding all our weakness we have continued with Jesus, and that He gives the kingdom as His Father gave. it to Him. Nevertheless the soul which is to enjoy these things must be exercised. The flesh must be made manifest to us as men; and therein we see the needs-be of all the trials we pass through; but Jesus enables us to persevere, because we belong to Him. If He says to His disciples, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, ye shall sit on thrones," etc., etc. He takes care to show them what the flesh is.

"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He does not say, "Thou shalt not be tempted; I will hinder Satan from sifting thee." No nor does He do it. We see here that God often leaves His children in the presence of their enemy, whom He does not destroy; but, even while thus in the presence of the enemy, He watches over His own; as we see Rev. 2:10, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Peter might have said to the Lord, " Thou canst hinder my being thus sifted," as Martha and Mary thought Jesus could have hindered the death of Lazarus; and, truly, He who can give the crown of life, can shelter us; but He does not do so, that we may be tried. Satan desired to have Job to sift him like wheat, and God permitted him to do so; and this happens to us also. We often say within ourselves, "Why has he dealt thus with me? Why has He put me in such or such a crucible?" Ah, it is Satan who desired, and God who permitted it.

Things often occur which we cannot understand; such things are intended to show us what the flesh is.

When God is about to use a Christian in His work, He takes the one who has gone the farthest in the path of trial. Thus here it is said, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you," the danger is presented to all; but He adds, speaking to Peter, "I have prayed for thee," for thee in particular, for Jesus distinguishes him from all the rest, because he had taken a more prominent position than the others, and was thus more exposed, though they were all sifted at the death of Jesus.

The Lord then says to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." He was not going to spare any of His disciples the sifting; but Peter was to be the most severely tried, and, therefore, the best to strengthen his brethren. Notwithstanding all this, Peter is full of self-confidence. "I am ready to go with thee, both unto prison and to death." But Jesus replies, "The cock shall not crow this day, before thou hast thrice denied that thou knowest me."

The flesh acting in Peter had only power to carry him up to the time of trial, and there failed; for Peter denied the Lord Jesus, even in His very presence. He might have seen his Savior, if his heart had not been turned away from Him. Jesus was looking at him; and yet he denied Him to the maid, saying, "I know Him not." He had been warned; but the Lord would not allow him to be kept by divine power at that moment, because he needed to learn by experience what he was in himself.

If we notice all that Christ did, we shall see how He was watching at this time over Peter. His grace (so to speak) went out to meet him, and took care of Him all through the temptation.

The first thing that Jesus tells him is that He has prayed for him. It is not that Peter's repentance led to Jesus' intercession; but the intercession of Jesus brought about Peter's repentance. "I have prayed for thee," and "Jesus looked on Peter."

As to Judas, he denied the Lord; and, when his conscience was awakened, he killed himself. No sooner was the crime committed than all confidence fled, and he went and killed himself. But here, the effect of the prayer of Jesus was to preserve faith at the bottom of Peter's heart, so that when Jesus looked on him, he was broken down.

The first thing to remark is, that the Lord had prayed for Peter; and the second, that He always remembered His disciple-and as soon as the cock crowed, Jesus looked on him, and Peter wept bitterly.

It is in this way the Lord deals with us, He prays for us, and allows us to go into temptation. If He conducts us when in: it, He also bids us to pray that we enter not into temptation: but God permits all this because He sees the end of it.

If Peter had been conscious of his own weakness, he would not have dared to show himself before the High Priest. This trial was the natural consequence of what he was in the flesh; but it was God's purpose to use him, and even to put him in a prominent position in His work. The cause of his fall was self-confidence; the flesh was actively present.

God did everything well for him; and Peter saw what was the power of Satan's sifting. The other disciples, not having the same fleshly strength, fled at once. They had not so much confidence as Peter; but God left him to struggle against Satan, and Jesus prayed for him, in spite of his fall, that his faith should not fail.

The moment Peter fell, the eye of Jesus was turned upon him. That look did not give peace, but confusion of face; Peter wept; he went out, and it was all over. He had learned what he was. There was his failure-the sin was committed, and could not be undone; it could be pardoned, but never blotted out. Peter could not forget that he had betrayed the Lord; but Jesus made use of this fall to cure him of his presumption.

It is the same with us. We often commit faults which are irreparable, from too much confidence in the flesh. When there is no possibility of correcting one's faults, what is to be done? The only resource is to cast oneself on the grace of God. When the flesh is too strong, God often permits us to fall, because we are not in that precious state of dependence which would preserve us.

Jacob had too deeply offended Esau not to dread his anger; yet God did not leave him in his brother's hand, but gave him enough faith to carry him through the difficulty.

God wrestled with Jacob, and the latter prevailed; but he must have felt within his heart what it is to have had to do with evil. God would not allow him to be given over to the hatred of Esau; and at the end of his course Jacob could say (Gen. 48:15,16), "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day; the Angel which redeemed me from all evil," etc.

When God tries the heart in this way, He sometimes leaves it in Satan's hands; but He never leaves the consciences of His 'children in the enemy's hands. Judas' conscience was in Satan's hands, and, therefore, he fell, into despair. Peter's heart was in his hands for a time, but his conscience never. Therefore, instead of despairing, like Judas, the love of Jesus, expressed in a look, had power to touch his heart.

Directly grace acts in the heart, it gives the consciousness of sin; but, at the same time, the love of Christ reaches the conscience, deepening the consciousness of sin; but if this is deep, it is because the consciousness of the love of Christ is also deep.

Perfect as was the pardon of Peter, he could never forget his sin. Not only was he fully forgiven, but his conscience was in the Lord's hand when the Holy Ghost revealed the fullness of the heart of Jesus to him. His conscience had been so fully purified, that he could accuse the Jews of the very sin he had himself committed under the most solemn circumstances.

"Ye denied the Holy One and the Just," were his words. The blood of Christ had fully cleansed his conscience; but if the question of his strength in the flesh was raised, all he had to say of himself was, I have denied the Lord; and, were it not for His pure grace, I could not open my mouth.

Jesus never reproached Peter with his sin in those conversations He had with him. There is never the question, Why hast thou denied me? No; He does not once remind him of his failure: on the contrary, He acts according to that expression of love of the Holy Spirit, "I will remember their sins no more." Jesus had forgotten all. But there was one thing He had to show Peter; it was the root of the sin, the point where he had failed. Satan's temptation, with his own want of love, had been the cause of his fall, and had destroyed his confidence; but now, his conscience being touched, it was needful that his spiritual intelligence should be formed. Peter had boasted of more love to Jesus than the rest; and Peter had failed more than all.

Then Jesus said to him, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Where is now Peter's self-confidence? Jesus repeats three times, "Lovest thou me?" but He does not remind him of his history. Peter's answer is, "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." He appeals to Jesus, and to His divine knowledge; "Thou knowest that I love thee." This is what Jesus did for Peter, and that after his fall.

Jesus had foretold his failure; and here He asked him, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Peter can say nothing, save that he has learned his weakness, and that he has loved Jesus less than

the other disciples. The relationship between Jesus and Peter is all of grace; he had no resource except to confide in Jesus, and now he could be a witness for him; he had felt the power of a look of Jesus.

Peter seems to say, I confide in thee, thou knowest how I have denied thee; do with me what seemeth thee good. Then we see Jesus sustaining His disciple's heart, lest Satan should rob Him of his confidence, and saying, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." What enabled him to strengthen his brethren? His denial had so taught him what the flesh was, that he would no longer bind himself to anything; he knew that he had nothing to do save to trust God. Whatever his own incapacity to resist Satan, he could appeal to the grace of Him who knows all things. The knowledge that he could confide in Jesus, was that which made him strong. It was after reminding Peter of the utter incapacity of the flesh, that the Lord confided His sheep to him-"Feed my lambs"-and it was not till then that he could strengthen his brethren.

The flesh has a certain confidence in the flesh, and this is often the folly into which we fall. It is then necessary for us to learn ourselves by conflict with Satan; every Christian has to learn what he is through the circumstances in which he is placed. God leaves us there to be sifted by Satan, that we may learn our own hearts. Had we enough humility and faithfulness to say, "I can do nothing without thee," God would not leave us to this sad experience of our infirmity. When we are really weak, God never leaves us; but, when unconscious of our infirmities, we have to learn them by experience.

If a Christian does not walk under a constant sense of his infirmity, God leaves him in the presence of Satan, that he may there be taught it. It is then also that he commits faults which are often irreparable; and it is this which is the most sorrowful part of all.

Jacob halted all his life. Why was this? It was because he had halted, morally, during one-and-twenty years. He wrestled mightily, yet he must have been conscious what a feeble creature he was in the flesh, although God did not leave him to struggle with Esau.

We need never be surprised if the Lord leaves us in difficulty; it is because there is something in us to be broken down, and which we need to be made sensible of; but grace is always behind all this. Christ is all grace, and if He sometimes appears to leave us to learn our weakness, still He is grace, perfect grace, towards us.

It was not when Peter turned his eyes towards the Lord that Jesus showed Himself to him; as to communion, indeed, this is true, but it was before his fall that Jesus had said, "I have prayed for thee," for it is always grace which anticipates us.

Jesus sees what Satan desires, and leaves us to that desire, but He takes care that we should be kept. It was not when Peter looked at Jesus, but when Jesus looked on Peter, that the latter wept bitterly. The love of Christ always precedes his own; it accompanies us, precedes us in our difficulties, and carries us through all obstacles. While it leaves us in Satan's hands, that we may learn experimentally what we are, it is always near to us, and knows how to guard us from the wiles of the enemy. Here we see the perfect goodness and grace of the one who loves us, not only when our hearts are turned towards him, but who adapts himself to every fault in our characters, that we may be fully and completely blessed according to the counsels of God.

All this should teach us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due season. When I feel cast down and grieved in thinking of myself after a fall, I ought not then forthwith to seek comfort, however natural that may be: No; it is not that which I am to seek, but rather, and first of all, the Christ who is there; I have to learn the lesson which God has traced for me.

If, in the midst of painful circumstances, you say that you cannot understand the teaching, God knows what it is, and He leaves you there to be sifted, in order to bring you by this means to a deeper knowledge of Him and yourself; He wishes to show you all He has Himself seen in you, so that we ought not to shrink from this sifting, but rather to seek to receive the precious teaching which the Lord offers us through it; and thus we shall obtain a much deeper knowledge of what He is for us.

We must learn to yield ourselves to His mighty hand, till he exalts us. May God give us to know Him alone If we had only to learn what we are, we should be cast down, and sink into despondency; but His object in giving us a knowledge of ourselves and of His grace, is to give us an expected end.

One can say then, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

## Similarities of Jude and One Part of 2 Peter

---

The similarity of the Epistle of Jude and one part of the Second Epistle of Peter, has attracted the attention of, I may say, all critical and most (even attentive) readers of scripture. All manner of speculations and methods of accounting for it have been resorted to and discussed, to which I shall not now direct the attention of your readers. My increasing conviction is, that any one reading the word of God, with the help of the Holy Ghost, will know far more of it than any learned speculator. Such a one, in virtue of the way he takes it up, has not the key to, scripture, and misses the proofs even of its divine authorship which shine out with unhindered brightness to one taught of God. It must be remembered that science on points of learning has no occupation where things are not obscure, and hence lives in doubt and darkness. Where a thing is clear and certain there is no use for it. My object will be here rather to notice the peculiar character and object of the epistles. I will only add this remark: the little attention I have been able to pay to the wanderings of the human mind, has convinced me that the blessed word of God has not only furnished direct truth from Him which is its most sweet and gracious Object, but it has met all the errors into which the working of the human mind about God had led it. When once one becomes ever so little familiar with these wanderings, the corrective analogies of scripture statements, the way in which the manner of teaching the truth meets them all, cannot fail to strike the mind. Infidels, who did not fail of course to find them out, and who had no sense at all of the holiness and grace which shines in the word and assures the simple mind who is its Author, and occupying themselves with mere external circumstances connected with it, alleged they were borrowed from Egyptians, Alexandrian Jews, and I know not who else. Grave and serious men-as Gale's "Court of the Gentiles," and the like-sought to show that the Gentiles had borrowed them from the Jews. I do not myself believe either to be correct. Noah and the first patriarchs had a large knowledge of God as then revealed in creation, judgments and testimony; of promises, warnings, sacrifice, etc.: and as to the early events of divine history, they were much more familiar with the details than we are. But man did not like to retain God in His knowledge, and idolatry was set up, and with many traditions of these early times preserved, and various deeds of wickedness which made the mighty men which were of old the "men of renown" of after-ages, as scripture speaks, preserved in their memory, an immense system was established, in which shreds of ideas of the true God, mental speculations about Him, facts as to the deluge, its character, causes, and author, dim remembrance of Paradise, vivid recollections of wickedness before the flood, and of the persons spared in it, the greatness of men's rebellion exalting the men of renown into gods (while yet they are treated as reprobate, so as to puzzle mythologists), the sun, moon and stars brought in, peopled by the imagination with a personified existence of the departed great ones; a knowledge that the serpent was the cause of the evil and of knowledge, yet therefore worshipped as God, hence the flood looked at as vengeance, yet mixed up with the serpent having to say to it; the deification of the ark itself as a preserving mother connected with the earth itself as the womb of nature and of all things; and all this mixed up with the most degraded and degrading superstitions that corrupt human nature could indulge in, practiced, yet mystified into abstract notions-all were used by Satan to obscure and confound the mind, and leave to conscience, which he could not help, some

possible, shady, Tartarus and Elysium, or the transmigration of souls, and, as Paul declares, some unknown god to be declared to them. The whole process is exactly depicted in Rom. 1. Volumes of heathen mythology may be read-the whole result is there depicted. It is the, most perfect picture of it all, not a moral element of it lost. Now this to me is divinely perfect; it knows, judges the whole scene, and dismisses it with that just estimate, leaving the mind free to appreciate in the clear atmosphere of the true God's presence, and breathing that pure air, all that grace and truth can reveal in the person of Jesus Christ, and the gospel of His grace, to enjoy the truth. This is merely a striking example of what scripture is in this respect. I do not believe that there is a maze of falsehood (sometimes with elevated approximations to truth in the way of knowledge, but never to any relationship of man with God), not an error by which Satan has deluded man and kept him thus from God, which is not met in the word. We may have more need for this than we are perhaps aware of. My conviction is, that the world-for the non-entity of infidelity cannot satisfy it-will fall back into delusions of mystical and mythological idolatry in a way very little suspected. Men will have no need to believe this. It may be a mental speculation for some, an image for the imagination for others, a habit acquiesced in by all; the power of Satan riveting the delusion on the mind. It has a hold which is not faith, but which is power over the mind of man. How many believed the golden image in the plain of Dura was a God? How many refused to bow down to it? And when once set up, acquiesced in, when for mercenary motives men have bowed to it, and thus their moral power is lost; when power enforces it, amusements and ease, and national associations or hopes interest in it men ready to accept it, explaining it by mental subtleties connected with the mysterious power of nature, and, having abandoned conscience and the true God, having lost His safeguard, - Satan's network is complete, and the superior influence he exercises over their mind, besides the apparent wonders he may work, binds them without escape to that which they do not perhaps, believe nor love: they cannot,-but are entangled in--like from interest, while they despise and fear. Allow me to make a, remark here. One may ask, How should the blessed word of God occupy itself with all these horrible perversities. We have to be simple concerning evil, and wise concerning that which is good? Surely we are. And this is exactly what scripture has happily made men comparatively, wherever it has been received. These miserable horrors have died down even from society as a system, and been forgotten. Thank God it has! It has been a deliverance of man even outwardly in relationship with God. And it is one of the perfections of scripture, that it has done it by the revelation of good, so as not to enter into, though briefly judging, in its moral character, the evil it met with in the world, and, as I have already said, has thus left the mind free to be occupied with good. God forbid that the saints should get out of this blessed position. It is just their special blessed privilege from God; and I believe the word to be their complete arming in every aspect, supposing always the strength and aid of the Holy Ghost- grace working in the heart. And see how wise in this is scripture, that is, our God in His word. When this kind of evil is met with, it is discovered and judged. A man versed in the mischief, finds it alluded to, judged, guarded against by the form of some truth. The simple saint gets the truth itself in all its power, and never learns the mischief at all. The moment one has learned it, it is condemned and shown to be false. Man, in reasoning would have displayed-developed-all the evil to answer it, and filled the mind with it; but He who is goodness and light can dispel evil and darkness according to the perfectness of His divine wisdom, by the display of Himself, yet in such sort that no one but must see they are opposite to what he does display, if the mind has them before it: yet he who enjoys the good and the light has no need to turn to the other to know light is light, and goodness good. The measure in

which God does touch on these confines of darkness is the measure in which in grace it is needed by men. Now the light of Christianity-I do not say its living power merely-has banished all these specters of evil in their obvious and direct power; or rather they are become specters, furnish the materials for mythological dictionaries, classical lore, and learned speculation, Asiatic researches, Egyptian hieroglyphics, pantheons, or the newest raised winged bulls of Nineveh, to be gazed at in a museum. The public mind knows it only thus; and hence the saint's mind has no connection with it. But it was not so when the scriptures were written, the public mind was full of them, though philosophers began to speculate and to scorn, and many to be weary of them. Still habits were all formed on them. When Paul healed an impotent man they were going to offer him sacrifice • and the dignified silence of Barnabas set him up to their minds as Jupiter; and the fervent discourse of Paul established him in their eyes as Mercury. If he was stung by a viper, Nemesis (vengeance) would not suffer him to live; and when he received no harm, they changed their minds, and said lie was a God. As to the mass, this system was connected with power, and when they saw power, they still attributed it to what were devils, and not God; and so imbedded was this in their mind, that even speculative minds, the novelty-hunting Athenians, thought he was a setter forth of new Gods, because he preached Jesus and the resurrection, taking the last, I suppose, for a goddess. And so did this seek to encroach, through man, on the divine work to spoil it, that the spirit of Pythoness will announce Paul and Silas, the instruments and servants as those of the Most High God, not speaking indeed of Jesus, but accrediting herself by associating her testimony with them. And your Simon Magus would purchase this preferable power which threatened to eclipse his own, the hollowness of which he knew well enough to be surprised at the reality. The power of Satan was met by something like itself, only true and divine. When the mind now pries into the evil then prevalent, it discovers the allusion. Scriptures-do take up the fables of idolatry which were then clothed with the energy of Satanic power, and alludes to and judges them. They preceded the judgment pronounced upon them, and the forms in which truth was expressed so as to condemn them, and deliver the enslaved mind. Jewish ceremonialism was a laborious system to preserve by most gracious care some men at least in the knowledge of the true God, and that knowledge by them, when the degradations of abominable idolatries were carrying all before them, till the true Light and promised Seed should come. God would not have a second deluge; the world is reserved for fire. He would have something preserved amid the moral deluge with which Satan had overwhelmed the mind of man. The truths were from the beginning, many of the great facts recorded, scripture notoriously before the record of them; the corruptions man's first effort, the remedy wrought out for them in clothing the truths in certain positive revelations, judging, and preserving from, the corruptions, God's gracious and merciful interference. That is the real history of the world; at least for my part I do not doubt it. Hence, while the truth as revealed is enjoyed by saints historically as to creation and all God's subsequent ways with men, and in fine the light itself in Him who created, in whom grace and truth came, those who pry into the old evil, now a matter of learned lore, find in scripture the allusions and reference to it. The forms of truth there meet the corrupted truth and corruptions which Satan had entangled man in. And as the universal mind was familiar with these things then, even the New Testament alludes to them. But here a distinction is to be made when the full blaze of divine light shone out in Christ to form the new thing. There was need of naught but that,-God himself fully revealed. Truth, grace, power, all in actual exercise, what was a Simon Magus or an idolatrous speculation. It faded into its own nothingness before the light. We know (for we all have knowledge) that an idol is nothing. The shadows in every sense

fled away. The life was the light of men. What could even (to say nothing of the blaze of truth) a cast-out devil or a silenced oracle do, save make its votaries rage against those who wielded a power which would not own it, and which, absolute, universal and inexorable in its claims as the true God must be, would brook no fellow (whatever grace it might act in), receive no conciliating homage from what it came to destroy - against those who overthrew delusion and destroyed power (every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God), delivering man from under Satan's thralldom maintained through both: which dealt indeed with Judaism as the depository of truth as long as any fear of God was by the utmost patience to be hoped for, but then judged it as sinking into the common level, as associated, in its enmity to the power it would not acknowledge, with the idolatry it had been a witness against? But, alas! for men were still the depositories of truth, and the Lord to give it its full heavenly character was gone on high. This revealing energy of good gradually declined. The truth doubtless remained the same. Blessed be God! It is written truth, but the vessel of its living manifestation lost its conservative energy. And the power of the enemy began to creep in there where the power of deliverance for others ought to have been found. And remark, here the Church's energy and power is in grace, in God. If it is only a delivered, it is a weak body. It must be a delivering one to be a preserved one, because that is the power of God's presence in Christ, and in Christianity. Mark the humblest gathering of saints, or an individual Christian: If there is not energy of positive testimony which acts on others, there is decline. God in grace cannot be inert in testimony in a world of sin. It would be a contradiction in the very terms.

Hence, in the decline of Christians, we find constant allusions to all manner of kinds of evil. lost sight of, so to speak, in the light of the earliest promulgation of Christianity. Take the Epistles to Timothy, those of John, even the Colossians and Galatians already, Peter, Jude. False teachers, corruption, apostasy, anti-Christ, Anti-Christ, begin to appear in the waning light of the Church. This decline of the Church is the capital source of the evil, but not the only form it takes. The delivering power once enfeebled, the old suppressed evils rise again, modified perhaps as it would be to meet the case, but the same-human corruption and self-will, idolatry or heathenism, Judaism bereft of all that was of God in it, speculations into the ways of an unseen world. This divides itself into two great branches. First, man's relationship to God as such, which was corrupted in heathenism and set right, though without a full revelation of God which man could not have borne in Judaism, and with a full revelation perfectly set right in Christianity, a point often lost, sight of, yet insisted on by the Apostles in their preaching among the heathen or where heathen were; and secondly, the special relation in which revelation set men with God, and especially Christianity as superseding all others by its public light, that is, the responsible position of the Church on earth as set of God in the place of testimony-to keep and witness the good thing. One related to the government of the world, men, Jews, Christians as walking responsibly on earth right on to the end, connected with sin and righteousness as such before God (of course including and judging by the light of Christianity and the rights of Christ now). The other, to the special responsibilities and failure of the Church, as established as a witness on earth of the heavenly things she had in connection with an exalted Savior on high.

This then gives a double current of testimony as of evil. On the one hand, the departure or apostasy of the Church, as a professing body here below, of course making way for the other evils, while a special one within itself; on the other, heathenism (in whatever form of development)

Judaism, revolt of man against God, corruption. The latter, between man and God; the former, between the professing Church and its peculiar judgment. I cannot now enter into St. Paul's view of it. You will find it in 2 Thess. 2 in its prophetic character, the power of evil working, and in 2 Tim. 3 its moral character. On part of this I may touch another time, if I can, the Lord permitting. I may notice also here the testimony of John, which views it in connection with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fruits and character of divine life, as manifested in man, in Him and so in us, as that which thus doubly tested the true knowledge of God. But I must confine myself now to Peter and Jude. Now Peter takes up this whole question in connection with man's relationship with God, of course in the light of Christianity,- the government of the world: Jude, the relationship of the Church with God and Christ, as the responsible vessel of testimony in grace.

Common evils were before the eyes of both-evils connected with the rising up again of the power of old corruptions and perversions of truth, freshly preserved even from the time of Noah himself; but they are treated in a different way. Peter speaks of sin against God; Jude, of apostasy from the place in which any had been set. There were three great principles of evil at the time-mental speculations into an unseen world (and the powers of nature and production), what seemed humility, but intruded into things it had not seen, vainly puffed up in a fleshly mind, this connected with the alleged evil of matter, whence prohibitions to marry, to eat meat, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. It is commonly called gnosticism. The second was Judaism, the third heathenism; all opposed to Christ, all coalescing; gnosticism forming the link between heathenism and Judaism, and of all of which the elements will be found in the corruption of Christianity which calls itself the Church, and have made of it, looked at in man's responsibility, the great power of evil in the world.

Redemption by the work of the Lord, and regeneration by the word, are clearly stated in the First Epistle of Peter. But it is not my object to unfold this here. The Christian is seen, as the scattered Jews had been, a pilgrim in the midst of the world in which he is a stranger. He is not seen as so often in Paul's Epistles risen with Christ, and sitting in heavenly places, but as walking on the earth, though begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance reserved in heaven for him, and be kept by the power of God for its revelation in the last time. Hence, also, there is little development of doctrine in Peter-much direction how to walk. The revelation of Christ will bring the full deliverance. Till that time they were to hope to the end, having the loins of their mind girded, and sober. Hence while the great fundamental truths of salvation and eternal life are clearly stated for the salvation of souls, we have the government and dealing of God with men and saints in this world. If a man loves life, and would see good days, he is to behave so and so. Who would harm them if they followed what was good? If they suffered for righteousness sake (compare Matt. 5:10) they were happy, they were to sanctify the Lord of Hosts, and not to be troubled. It was not a warning not to grieve the Holy Spirit, but as pilgrims and strangers to refrain from what warred against the soul; under evil to be patient, as Christ had borne everything. They are not looking to join Christ in heaven by resurrection, but Him to come for deliverance. Meanwhile the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ear open to their prayers. Blessed and consoling truths I but which evidently regard saints down here, and God's government of the world. So we have Noah saved through the judgment of the world by water. The gospel has been preached that men may be judged or live. The time was come that judgment should begin at the house of God, clearly on earth. The righteous are with difficulty saved across

the dangers and harassments of Satan's power-what shall be the end of the sinner and the ungodly? Still they are to commit their souls in well-doing to God as to a faithful Creator. Hence, though the full declaration of the Father and of the Spirit is found, yet, generally speaking, God is spoken of as God having to do with men as a Creator-Governor; and Christ is Lord-not Son-which indeed he is not called in the epistle. This but spews its perfectness; everything is in its place and divine order. It falls in with the preaching of Him who announced that God had made that Jesus whom they had crucified both Lord and Christ. As such he is presented here. Still the truth is plainly there. Blessings are demanded for them from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Second Epistle goes farther on into the evil than the opposition of an ungodly world and a need of chastisement to the Church. Apostolic care was soon to fail; and he would put in writing, for their after-security, what would put them on guard against other forms of wickedness than a hostile world. The Kingdom still is the limit of their hope, save in the one word at the horizon-" the daystar arise in your hearts." The power and coming was what He had declared, and he desired their abundant entrance into the kingdom. The mount of transfiguration had confirmed the prophets in their testimony to that manifested glory which men could see, which Peter and his two fellow disciples had seen on earth; and the prophets prophesy of events on earth, though they testify to Christ's ascent to heaven, as does the apostle also (1 Peter 3:22). But this righteous government goes farther than the kingdom. The wicked, who trusted in what eye could see and what to man's willfully deceived heart was stable, would be met by a judgment which will set aside all that dust can trust in: the day of fire and perdition of ungodly men, when the whole goodly scene of an adorned world will melt under the fervent heat of the fire which God's wrath has kindled. He who can create can destroy, and He who has destroyed all form and comeliness can create anew, and will-new heavens and a new earth, where sin will not be. The flood had, once and for a time, in vain cleansed a polluted world from its horrible defilement, and left but a memory of the guilt and the catastrophe as a warning to rebellious men. In vain. Nature renewed its order, and man his sin, and he willingly believed that it had been so from the creation, and would be so yet onward. That Christ should come was mocked at. Here we are evidently in questions of the judgment of the world-of men. It is a scene which runs through from creation to the fiery judgment of the world then formed, at the very end of its eventful history, man righteous or wicked before God-the world the scene of the display of His government. Only the last days, which then He will have to say to, were to be characterized by mocking at the coming of the righteous Judge closing the day of patience, and bringing in the day of judgment.

Now, in this scene two classes are brought in-the righteous and the wicked-only a peculiar character is given to the form under which, as regards Christians, the wickedness would flow in. False teachers bring in heresies of perdition, denying the Master who bought them. It is not the Lord here in the sense of Jesus our Lord; it is He who by purchase has a title over all men. The head of every man is Christ. It is not all, that God has power over all men, all flesh; Christ has power over all flesh, and that by right of purchase as well as creation. This they will resist. It is not a question of abandoning church privileges, but a denial of divine rights which' judgment will settle, and of which the melting of the whole scene when man has figured in his own eyes with haughty pretensions, while He also could put them to the proof, was away, would be the final confusion-the close of the scene in which such folly would be displayed. Hence he recalls the great instances and examples of similar judgments. The angels sinned: they are down in chains of darkness reserved to judgment. Noah, the preacher of righteousness, was spared,-the world of the ungodly

destroyed; - Sodom and Gomorrah overthrown for an example to the ungodly-and righteous Lot delivered. The Lord then knows how to deliver the godly, and to reserve the unjust to a day of judgment to be punished-till then! patience and godliness.

The great characteristics of the evil are human will, shown in haughty pretensions and rejecting authority-the restraint of God on the soul gone-the Lordship of Christ was denied by them, rejected; and, with it, haughty rejection of all authority came in; with this the will which cast off what was above it, indulged itself in the vile gratification of its own fleshly lusts.

But this was brought in by covetous false teachers using feigned words. This was in connection professedly with the way of truth, so that it was evil spoken of. Thus we see in Peter the evil connected with the church, characterized by rejection of Christ's Lordship, self-will and lust. It is wickedness, though it has sprung up in connection with the truth. And it is wickedness looked at in the presence of a God that judges the earth, and has given solemn proofs of it, and reserves the angels for it-a faithful Creator that will preserve the souls of the faithful across it all; and judgment is looked at as reaching on to the dissolution of the elements of this visible creation. God is a God of judgment, and, though slow to anger, wickedness will be punished. This excludes the mere idea of special apostasy. Angels sin; the world is ungodly; Sodom and Gomorrah live ungodly, and judgment awaits them, or has been executed; and so it will on these despisers of Christ and all Lordship. Every hope of nature will perish in nature's dissolution under God's hand.

I would add, in passing, that this makes clear a passage which has often perplexed people-preaching to the spirits in prison. It relates only to those of the time of Noah. Peter speaks of Christ's Spirit in the prophets. The believers were a little flock-so was Noah's family. Christ was present only in Spirit-so He was in Noah's time: yet those that despised it were in prison, and such would be the portion of those who slighted the testimony of Christ by the Spirit now. They would be reserved in prison for judgment. So it was with the Old Testament saints then dead. Promises had been announced to them, not possession given; so that, as walking as men on earth, they were thereby subject to judgment accordingly; and, if the testimony were received, live according to God in spirit as saints were called to do now.

A God judging walkers on earth, and looking for righteousness-at last a new heaven and new earth, wherein it dwelt; such is the testimony of the Holy Ghost by Peter.

I now turn to Jude. Here we shall find the Church and the falling away from its standing, the leading subject of the Spirit. He was giving diligence to write of the common blessed subject of their edification, but was forced to turn to write on evil coming in. The Church itself the witness of good in the midst of, and thus against, evil was becoming, by its decline and this subtle secret work, the vessel itself of mischief. It is not teachers bringing in pernicious ways, so that the way of truth should be evil spoken of. Men were crept in unawares amongst Christians themselves-who were ungodly, turned grace into lasciviousness; they denied the only Lord God; (the word Lord is the same word as the " Lord' that bought them, not the usual one, and means the absolute authority of a master over his slaves). In Peter it is the master that bought them. Here the dominion and absolute authority of God as such and Christ's Lordship with it. They are the same class as Peter speaks of, but there they were covetous teachers of wickedness, here creepers into the church-got in among the saints. They were in their love-feasts, feasting with them fearlessly; and these were the objects of judgment as testified from the beginning of the world, from Enoch's

witness, who, caught up to God in heaven, testified to the world what was coming on it from the Lord, through the ungodly, whose proud speeches had spoken loud against Him. The evil Enoch spoke of, was this ungodliness and resistance against the Lord of those who said "Our tongues are our own, who is Lord over us?" Jude shows how it comes in. The Church which, in a certain sense, was delivered out of the world, having in its bosom these creepers-in possessed of this Spirit, was in danger, as a body on the earth, of departure from its standing as all who had gone before it. It had been set outside the world, to spew the goodness and holiness of God, and not merely the one God's sole authority, but the Lordship of Jesus Christ. If this let in what denied it and lost its first estate, the only remedy was judgment and not another witness. Hence apostasy and leaving their first estate is the point pressed here, not the fact of wickedness.

The angels are not simply such as sinned-they left their first estate and kept not their own habitation; they are reserved for judgment, as Sodom and Gomorrah, going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example. It is not here the rescue of any remnant, but the simple judgment on their leaving nature's path. So, though Israel were redeemed out of Egypt, God afterward destroyed them that believed not. The evil then was not maintaining their original standing. This might be natural evil, as Cain; or religious, as Balaam; or openly rebellious, as Core. When it took this character perdition comes in. They are twice dead, naturally, and by apostasy, after profession; they had no real fruit; what apparently they had, withered; they were clouds, but they had no water. The judgment will be executed against them when the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints; but they were creeping into the Church then. Hence, as it was connected with the present dispensation, the Church as a witnessing body on the earth, He does not talk of the day, nor of dissolution of the elements, but of the Lord's coming, which will judge the apostates of this present time. Farther, Peter, speaking of the judgment of the world, speaks of Christ's being revealed to it, and on to the melting of the present frame of things by the fire of judgment. He does not speak of Christ's coming with respect to the saints, save as mocked at by the scoffers. Jude, dealing with the Church and the apostates of this dispensation, brings in the Lord with His saints- judging them; but, when addressing directly his salutations to the saints, it is their going before Him; that is his ground, because he was dealing with the Church's portion-"now, unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty!"

This inroad of old principles of evil, known from angels downward through the solemn judgments of the flood, and of Sodom and Gomorrah were in view of both Peter and Jude. Peter applies it to the judgment of men and the world by God; Jude to the witnessing body's ruin and the apostasy of these not kept of God through the evil creeping in to the Church, as the place of holy witness in and to the world. Peter ranges over the whole scene of creation, from the angels' sin to the final dissolution of the elements into their primeval chaos, to be renewed into " a new heaven and a new earth"; and tells of a righteous sovereign God of judgment, who would not bear with sin, and cannot brook rebellion. Christ was set forth as Lord; but in judgment He tells of a faithful Creator, who ever spares and delivers the righteous, and has proved He will so that He may be trusted. Righteous and sovereign title, and Christ's position in it, characterize the testimony of these epistles-God and the world are in view, and God in righteous judgment.

Jude comes down to a nearer and closer scene; evil men have crept into the Church, and, corruption once in, the place of witness becomes the scene of the power of evil. The old evils

arise, but, as taking their new birthplace in the Church, they give to these engaged in it the terrible character of apostasy. The flesh, great pretensions within the Church, ending in hard speeches against the Lord Himself; and then that judgment by His coming, of which the Lord of old had spoken by the mouth of Enoch, the ancient prediction of judgment, finding its objects in the apostates from the last resource of grace. Their present character the New Testament unfolded. It was creeping into the Church for this purpose. The extent to which the imaginative part of gnostic heathenism had gone, the way it had linked itself with Judaism; the way it had left the prints of its defiling footmarks on nominal Christianity, on what has the public place of the Church, few I believe are aware.

The philosophic Jews believed that the stars were animated beings, which was Sabaism.

The influence of heathenism on the Fathers., particularly of the Alexandrian school, was frightful, no one can doubt that such as Origen and Clement were largely tainted with it. The inroad of the old evils into the western and less imaginative, and therefore more orthodox Christendom, was more plodding Judaism as to its character. Still it did not escape the inroad of evil. There is the worshipping of saints and angels; there is the forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats; there is pretended human righteousness by works and ordinances; there is really the Lordship as well as the grace of Christ widely denied; that is, the elements of Judaism, Gnosticism, and heathenism, are all there- their development checked, but there, and characterizing the system-the mass having cast off the Lordship of Christ really altogether. This element is restrained, but ever ready to burst out when God's restraint is taken off.

What a deliverance Protestantism was in respect of all this, people are little aware. But that, alas, has lost its moral force; it has turned to infidelity. The light that is in it is become darkness on one side, where it had cast off the old Judo-heathenish Gnostic system; and on the other, where it retained some elements of this, having lost its vital power, it is returning to it again, as the dog to his vomit, to plunge itself willfully, and therefore hopelessly, into the evil which God is about to destroy, because nothing but judgment remains. The masses, when mind is active, you will see, I doubt not, turn to rationalist infidelity; the upper orders and governmental powers to be under the influence of Judo-heathenism. Still, as yet, God holds the reins, and there is One, who, if He shuts, no man can open; if He opens no man can shut; and in the energy of His grace, it is our part in all wisdom, for the days are evil, to assert the Lordship of Christ, the spiritual holiness of His name in the world, and the perfectness of His redemption, gift of a God of love when no good was in man, and perfect in reconciling us to Him. The written word, the great unchanging sure rule, where God Himself speaks; pointed out as the safeguard in the last days, when the pretensions of the Church, which contradict Christ's Lordship, (for I have a lord not a lady over me, and cannot serve two), and corruption, are rising up, waiting daily for Him who shall present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

I have but sketched and roughly, I am quite aware without any false modesty, the great principles of these epistles, but I trust I have done it sufficiently according to the truth, to enable saints in reading them, to avail themselves of what I have said as a help, as far as it is such. If it awaken them to a sense of the dreadful character of the evil which is coming in, apostasy letting in the aggravated and more subtle flood of old evils long ago set up by. Satan, and make them feel that they have really to do with the enemy, it will be really useful. Only let them remember, that while

walking quietly through the world subject to the powers that be, as of God, not expecting men to harm them if followers of that which is good, happy if it is for righteousness or for Christ they suffer, they should be in nothing terrified by their adversaries, an evident token to them of perdition and to themselves of salvation and that of God. That if Christ's Lordship be denied, covertly by setting up the Church's authority, or openly, they believe he is Lord and with power to maintain His Lordship, even all power in heaven and in earth. Our part is to keep the word of His patience, and our security and joy with Him will be complete.

Critical persons have been struck with the similarity of the subjects of part of Peter and Jude. It could not be otherwise, these are the expressions of the evil they were combating and which was then creeping in; the part that most strikes critics, the heathen were all thoroughly familiar with. The spirit was dealing with what was before them. The way of dealing with it was quite distinct. The great public examples of judgment also were equally before and known to all; but Jude quotes an instance (Israel) to his purpose which Peter does not, and Peter refers to final dissolution; Jude to Christ's coming with His saints. What must have been common the testimony as to it is perfectly independent.

## To Be Doing and Not to Be Doing

---

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

All the teachers who merit the name of Christians, are agreed upon the point that there is nothing of greater practical worth than Christian diligence in the redeemed.

The shades of difference found among them chiefly consist in the manner of stimulating the children of God thereto, and in the nature and motive power of the action in question.

We know that there are in the redeemed, here below, two principles of action which are opposed one to the other; that of the flesh and that of the spirit of adoption. The flesh never willingly keeps quiet, even if the body itself is at rest. And yet there is such a thing as rest according to the Spirit. It is never without danger that the Christian follows the thoughts of the flesh, either in getting into action or in keeping still; but the danger is infinitely enhanced when he does either the one or the other, induced thereto by thoughts which have the sanction of religion. It is always well for the energy of the Spirit of God to subject the flesh, and to oblige it to keep still. Then only is it that faith acts in love and according to the will of God, that is, according to scripture.

The heart of the wise discerns the times, and knows what is right. The spirit of adoption seeks the will of God in retirement, by prayer and in the study of the word. He is sure to find and to recognize what the will of God is, who has the sincere desire to do it, and desires nothing but it. But in seeking that will, we often find that faith and spirituality are more largely taxed by the study to be quiet, than by the having somewhat to do.

For them that are spiritual, there is a time to be doing and a time of cessation from doing-of rest and hope. But the flesh cannot bear the latter, for it has neither the will nor the ability to subject itself to the will of God. There is a time to act and a time to think-" a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together." The Holy Spirit leads us as well to rest, to prayer, and to meditation as to action. The Christian is neither a Sisyphus nor a vagabond Jew: he is a stranger, who, passing through the world, stays not, save at the resting-places which the Lord has prepared for him. And herein he only accomplishes the will of the good Shepherd who conducts him, and guides, nourishes, refreshes, and tenderly cares for him. " I will both lay me down and sleep in peace: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety" (Psa. 4:8).

The only happiness of the children of God consists in doing the will of the Father. If, at least, the heart is under the control of the spirit of adoption and of son-ship, Jesus incessantly provides them with occasions, means and strength to do that will, even as by the Spirit, he inspires them with the desire to do it. But if the Christian is deficient in intelligence, he will hourly run the risk, whether he is in action or at rest, of only following his own notions. That which we, above all things, need is a filial and spiritual apprehension of grace.

If it is said to me, "We must do, do, do," no principle of action connected with faith or love in me is awakened. It is but a law which stimulates the flesh, and thus encourages me to sow to the flesh.

The reaping will, naturally, be of corruption.

But if, contrariwise, the love of God and my Father, or the grace and privileges of my heavenly calling in Jesus Christ be recalled to my soul-liberty is given to me to desire, to think, to love, and to act according to God, or if it be so, to be still according to God. It is the love of God toward us which is the sole spring of faith, and the circumstance which gives to faith its activity. Touch this spring, originate a movement there, if you desire to awaken in the saints divine or truly spiritual action. It is thus that we find exhortation set forth in the word by the Lord, and we have but to follow it, if we desire to be indeed his disciples. All the exhortations of the New Testament flow from the love of God, who has loved us and given us redemption, adoption and glory. How could we live, progress, and run toward the goal of our heavenly calling, if we were not nourished, abundantly and incessantly, • with the grace of God, in Jesus Christ which is to us-ward.

The Lord Jesus Himself has said, " Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed (John 6:27). Here the chief point in question is His flesh, given for the life of the world. That is, faith in the love of God is the sole true source, the only point to set out from, and alone the circle in which Christian activity unfolds itself. The work of faith, and labor of love consists, at bottom, in believing in the Son and in abiding in Him. In believing, I work for the nourishment which is unto eternal life. Whether I eat or whether I drink, whether I am in active service, or whether I am in repose-from the moment that I am in communion with the Author and Finisher of faith, I labor for the nourishment which is unto eternal life. Without Him we can do nothing, however laudable, in appearance, our activity may be. It is the Spirit which quickens; the flesh profits nothing. Moreover, constant mention is made of the fruit of the Spirit, and of the reaping of the Spirit, because, by our union with Jesus, " we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6).

Now I will suppose that the father of a Christian family, thinking to act according to the Lord, devotes himself to the teaching of his children the best means of gaining gold and silver, or that he instructs them in the works of art, of the sciences, and of the fantasies of man's imagination. Such a father may, perhaps, do much, and acts through a lengthened period, with intentions most praiseworthy according to the world. But what fruit will be thence gathered, by himself and his children, in this life or in the life to come? We have no need to make the essay. Solomon, the most mighty and the most successful of men, made the trial, and after possessing all that a heart in nature could desire, he tells us, " And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was -my portion of all my labor. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had -wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun" (Eccl. 2:10, 11). What a sad admission for an old man, who yet knew the Lord. "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labor;

man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after. I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given, to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be-made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit." (Eccl. 1:1-17).

Let us reckon carefully. Put aside from among all the fruits of our activity here below such as are really fruits of the Spirit, that is to say, those only which will abide unto eternal life and which will be reckoned to us before the judgment-seat of Christ. How many a loss shall we not then sustain? Our best intentions, our strongest resolves, our most boasted enterprises, our greatest efforts to attain these will be all mowed down as stubble. If these fruits grew not in the garden of faith, they will not endure the trial by fire; it will consume them. Yet, shall we see in that day, some souls who were, perchance, simple and of no repute here below, crowned there on high, with the abiding fruits of the Spirit. Many a thousand fine sermons will be burnt up; and poor, pitiful prayers, by tens, will then glitter like the stars, forever. God recognizes and rewards only blessings apprehended and realized by faith in Christ Jesus. All this is a matter of spiritual intelligence and of communion with God.

The word speaks to us of "fruits of the Spirit," contrasting them with "works of the flesh." Provided that he who sows and he who reaps does so only in the Spirit, he shall receive a reward, and shall gather fruit unto eternal life. All else will be burned up.

Christ has chosen us, even us also, as I judge, that we may bring forth fruit, and that our fruit may abide. But Jesus is not the vine whence grow our speculations, our resolutions, or our plans for campaigns here below. These thoughts of the natural man have no relationship with the branches of the true Vine, which draw from Christ alone their sap, their leaves, buds, flowers and fruit.

Lastly, "The Day" which draweth near will make known what the work of each is. It is therefore well and suitable, that we should mutually exhort one another unto love and good works, but only to those which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Nothing can enable me to discern those works, save intimate communion, by the Spirit, with Him who has prepared them. If I see before me works which have not been prepared by God, faith will not give me any impulse thereto. If they have been prepared of God, BUT not for me, faith and the Spirit will both engage me to remain still. And He who is my Judge in all these things is the Lord, to whose glory I desire to live and to die, to be occupied and to be still while I wait upon Him and await His return. I count continually upon the High priesthood of Jesus as to all my faults and failings in this precious service. For if I see that good works are those only which are wrought in God, I see also that the

flesh is wily enough to make me miss my opportunities, either by acting after my own thoughts, or by abstaining from entering upon the path which God has prepared for me to walk in.

The last chapter of John's gospel gives us, briefly, various kinds of Christian activity, which were seen in the presence of the Risen Head of the Church. John and Peter especially strike me in this point of view. The former remained quietly in the bosom of Jesus, when Peter would lay down his life for Him, who was to die for him. The crucifixion of the flesh is in practice a thing hard to find. Before the crucifixion, Peter had come towards Jesus in the flesh, and then had followed him. But this Peter, with the best intention in the world, denies Jesus thrice. A flesh weak in itself without strength as to that which is good, and a natural mind, that is to say, one which is always ready to undertake the will of the flesh—was all that law itself could set in movement in man. And therefore also the law condemns the man who is subject to its rule.

But on the other side of the Cross, and on the border of the Land of Promise, the calm, yet energetic spirituality of John, recognized at a distance the Lord., Would Peter have cast himself into the sea, if he had not heard John say, "It is the Lord"? John continues at work all the while he is going to meet Jesus. His spirituality is indeed the cause, or at least, the occasion, of Peter's activity, and yet (while everything here is exactly in its right place), John acts as much as Peter, and in a sense, he acts even more usefully. Yet the moment the Lord bids bring of the produce of the fishing, it is Simon Peter who, already refreshed and restored by the contemplation of the risen Jesus, boards the boat and puts the finishing stroke to the work of power.

Before the crucifixion, Peter was not able to follow Jesus, although, with his whole soul, he was willing to pledge himself thereto. But the knowledge of the cross has, now, given to Peter the power of following Jesus with joy, even whither Peter had no will to go. The crucifixion of the flesh, and the spirit of childlike obedience, are what grace has obtained for the redeemed, whom it thus saves by sanctification of the Spirit.

John followed Jesus without needing an order to do so. His happiness was to keep close to his Master. The Lord on his part, knowing how this faithful disciple counted upon his love, manifests His confidence in him in this very thing, that He gives not to him, as to Peter, an order to follow him. Peter, on the contrary, just barely recovered from his fall, had need of all the visible proofs of the tender vigilance of Jesus; and the Good Shepherd withholds them not from him.

In John we see the confidence and the simplicity of love. Though he makes little noise, he always follows Jesus. He incessantly expects Him, and thus he recognizes Him even before the most zealous disciples: it is only his intimate acquaintance with Jesus which gives him this advantage. Love is calm, and finds its enjoyment in its object. John passes through few painful experiences like those of Peter. The perfect love of Jesus banishes all fear from his disciple; it slays also the activity of the flesh.

John is neither jealous of Peter nor restless about his brother who is on his way to death. Peter, on the contrary, disquiets himself about John, who, the meanwhile is occupied solely about Jesus, and remains perfectly calm and at rest, even while following the Master, whom it was his habit to listen to and gaze upon.

We are never adequately filled with the conviction that we are nothing, and that Jesus is all. And hence we commonly resemble scholars who display an immense diligence in tracing a quantity of

lines, among which the master's eye will, with difficulty, accept two or three passably good uprights. Thus the beginning of the end is always in casting all the copy books aside, whereas by more attentively considering the model we should undertake fewer lines and fewer pages, but we should do more honor to the copy and to the teacher.

"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (Psa. 27:8). "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee" (Psa. 73:25).

The above is translated from a paper in "Etudes Scripturaires," and is signed, Sully, 31st May, 1852. J. B. ROSSIER.

## To Sin and Not Sin

---

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8.)

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9.)

The need of righteousness in order to be able to stand before God is a thought quite natural; it is expressed clearly enough, even by the heathen, in their cruel sacrifices; yet it is a truth which Satan has perverted to evil. As ever, he has sought to cause confusion between the Creator and the creature, to change the truth of God into a lie. That which he has done among the heathen, he has given a second edition of among Christians, in a more subtle form; and he has, alas! but too oft succeeded. How often do we meet with persons who, while they profess to believe in Christ, have no assurance that righteousness is imputed to them; who, instead of having all their expectation from God, expect something from themselves, thus confounding the work of God with the works of their own hands! In order to live happily in the presence of God, the possession of a human righteousness suffices not; we must have the righteousness of God, a righteousness which results from the substitutional suffering of Jesus, for he was made sin for us, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

If we are content with what man can do, we are content with very little, or rather with nothing at all; for all that man does is spotted with sin, and thereby bears the stamp of worthlessness. Man may amuse himself by tying fruit to a fir-tree, but he will never make of it a fruit-tree; man may dress himself up as much as it is possible, he remains, nevertheless, man, who has never brought forth fruit, and who, even when blessed and cared for by God (comp. Matt. 21:33-41), ends by rejecting Him who comes to seek for fruit. The impossibility of producing fruits presentable to God proceeds from the death which reigns in the members of man; and how could one ask for fruit from a tree that is dead? If we want that we must first of all seek for life, even that life, of which the Spirit of God speaks to us in the Epistle of John, life which is in Jesus, and which is communicated from the vine (Jesus) to the branches (John 15). It cannot be that the branches bring not forth fruit, if they abide in union with the tree, which has an exhaustless flow of life, even as it is impossible that they should bring forth fruit if they be separated from the vine.

The first Epistle of John presents us with the nature of God in the Christian, by means of the love of God, manifested in Jesus, and shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us. It is the spirit which quickens, sustains the life, and which makes fruits to be brought forth to the glory and praise of God. Be it remarked, all is represented according to its reality before God, and not according to our thoughts. This is just the reason why many souls feel embarrassed in the reading of this epistle; for man is ever ready to judge things according to his own thoughts, instead of submitting himself to the judgment of God and abiding by it. Christ has done all: to Him alone pertains the honor of having glorified the Father, in every respect. That is the first principle, of which we must not lose sight, if we would understand what God has communicated to us in his word. Christ has brought us life, not merely with a view of showing it to us, but as a gift of grace, in

such sort that he that possesses Jesus, possesses eternal life, for he possesses God; he is in direct fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Without a doubt, it is faith alone which puts us in possession of so precious a possession; faith which sets its seal to the truth of the testimony of God in Jesus. "And this is the testimony, 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. These things have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:11-13).

What assurance! what certitude! There is not a shade of doubt, the life is in Jesus! You who as yet believe not in Him, believe and you will have life; and you who do believe, you have eternal life.

All that has been from the beginning, all the counsels of God are manifested as being realized in the person of Jesus, so that whosoever desires to know Him that is from the beginning, and wishes to be a father, has but to seek the knowledge of Jesus. God has at all times wrought for the putting of men into communion with Himself, in order that they may love what is dear to Him; and Jesus is the perfect and infallible means by which we enter into this precious communion with God (comp. 1 Cor. 1:9); consequently, it is above all things needful to have Jesus, for without him we can do nothing. Jesus is the light, so that if any one wishes to see clearly, if he desires to be able to distinguish between good and evil, according to the thoughts of God, he has only to abide near to Jesus, for by Him we enter into the true knowledge of what God is, and at the same time of that which we are not. Without Him we are blind; and yet it is worth our while to see clearly, which will never be the case if we are not in the light-if the light is not in us. Indeed, it is impossible for us to walk in the light without seeing clearly.

Is the question about love? the word sends us again to Jesus (1 John 4:9,10).

Do we desire to abide in God and that God should abide in us? We are sure of being in that blessed position if we are witnesses for the Son of God (ver. 15); whereas whoever denies the Son is declared to be a liar (2:22), and thereby delivered over to Satan, who is the father of lies.

In a word, all the fullness of God is in Jesus: has not God loudly declared, that His pleasure is in His Son; has he not said, "Hear him?"

You will say to me, "But the Christian?" If you understand by that name a man according to the flesh; I answer you, "He is sin, and he will be sin even unto death, which is a most irrefragable proof of it: the body is dead because of sin; the flesh always loves the things of the flesh, and this affection is death; the flesh is enmity against God." But let attention be paid to it; who is He who judges of it thus? Is it the flesh which judges itself? O confound not the action of the Spirit of God with that of the flesh. The flesh is condemned from top to bottom. The Spirit is the judge, who makes us understand what we are, and the more we live according to the Spirit, the more aware shall we become of the wiles of the flesh. If we walk in the light, we shall not say that we are without sin. It is just this which the word of God presents us with in 1 John 1:8. If we can content ourselves with the virtue of humanity, if we seek only to walk like men in the light, we may flatter ourselves, perhaps, with the notion that we are without sin; but if we seek the walk worthy of God in the light, having understood that we are a royal priesthood, in order to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, we certainly shall not say that we are without sin; rather shall we feel impelled to seek the realization of the resurrection of Jesus,

and to follow on to apprehend that for which we have been apprehended by Christ; not as though we had already attained it, but as pressing on toward it.

There are three points of view under which we may look at sin: 1. Sin as a principle reigning in the flesh; 2. Sins as the manifestation of sin before conversion; 3. Sins after conversion or falls.

Sin is a vile plant, which bears sins for fruit; and the soil where that vile plant is met with is the heart of man, out of which proceed all sorts of evil things, some of which Jesus enumerates for us (Matt. 15:19), Man without God remains in this bad state, the vile plant grows on him freely, whilst the heart of a man converted to God is exercised by the hand of God. He hews down the vile plant, plows up the earth and prepares the soil, in order to cast in the good seed which brings forth fruit to the glory and praise of God. This cultivation, which is continuous, explains to us simply enough why the children of God are exposed to so many trials, which are but tokens of the love on the Father's part towards his children, in order to detach them from the world and to attach their hearts to Him. May we always give heed thereto! We cannot, however, for a moment admit even the thought that the flesh is changed; it remains that which it is, that is to say sin. It is, therefore, that it was judged in Christ, for God, in sending His own Son in the likeness of flesh, which had sin, and for sin has condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). We have here that which is true as to sin, considered as a principle natural to the flesh. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). God has condemned sin in the flesh; the old man is crucified with Jesus (Rom. 6:6), so that the members of Christ are no longer under the sad empire of that which characterizes the natural man. No; the man of God is by no means sin; he is the righteousness of God.

Sins are but the manifestation of what man is. The child of God easily sees that acts positively against God were quite natural to him, when he was but a man of the world. For these sins committed before his conversion he is humbled; he has shame; but he has no more anguish as to them, because he knows that Christ died only for sinners, and for sinners such as he. Paul, mighty instrument of the grace of God, had no fear in recalling to mind what he had been, because that at the same time recalled to mind that he had found mercy, and he adds (1 Tim. 1:15), " This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." His conscience is not charged with these sins, for the blood of Christ has purified him from them. It is just the same with every Christian, for how can any one be a Christian without having the pardon of his sins? That forgiveness it is which characterizes the children, (1 John 2:12).

But if Christians have falls, if they commit sin after conversion? That is quite another thing. It only seems so; for at bottom it is always the same thing. By nature we are sinners, but Christ delivers us.. It very often, however, happens, that Christians, frightened at the discovery that they still sin, begin to be troubled in conscience; and end by doubting of their conversion. But what is it that warrants our thinking that the man who is converted cannot fall? Is there one single case, in the word of God, in which a regenerated man is presented to us as no more sinning? Or, when is it that Paul wrote these words so full of the feeling of sin: " Who shall deliver me from this death?" When was it that Peter stood in need of being rebuked for his hypocrisy in having refused communion with his Gentile brethren? Certainly it was after their conversion! And yet we no where find that Peter or Paul doubted of being converted. Quite the contrary, Paul adds: " I thank God by Jesus Christ our Lord." Here we find what delivers, what lifts up the fallen Christian. If after

conversion we were left to ourselves, O all would be as soon lost as when man undertook the responsibility of keeping the law. But Christ is not only dead for us as sacrifice for sin, He has also lived on earth for us, His death is, in our behalf, the odor of a sweet smell before God; He is risen. Christ, moreover, is our Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1). It is to this last title of Jesus that we owe the full certitude of arriving, at the end of our pilgrimage, spite of falls, in the arms of a Father, who assures us of His love in Jesus. It is He who has an abiding priesthood; therefore, also, can He save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, ever living to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25). "Who is he that condemneth?" Christ is He who died, and, what is better, rose again; • who is at the right-hand of God, and who intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34). Our advocate with the Father is Jesus Christ, without fault or spot-accomplished righteousness. Righteousness which is never removed before God, never loses its value: on the contrary, it demands our salvation. Yes; Jesus is our Advocate, and He can alone, after all falls, restore our communion with the Father; Jesus never ceases to wash our feet. In His adorable love, and even in His glory with the Father, He renders to us this service. O let us not be so ungrateful as to mistrust the efficacy of His intercession; and if the old man gets the upper hand, if Satan succeeds in getting us to a distance from God, let us not stop at that distance; let us haste to the feet of Jesus, and let us keep there until He restores us, He can and He will. Christ then anticipates everything. He sets us in communion with the Father and He upholds us therein. What a blessing, what joy, and what assurance!

Let us bless the love which has given to us such a Jesus. Prostrate before Him, let us adore Him, carrying everything to His feet. It is to Him we owe all; it is He who has loved us, and who loves us, who has washed us from our sins in His blood, and has made us kings and priests to God, His Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever! O my soul, forget not thou His benefits. It is He who pardons all thine iniquities, who heals all thine infirmities, who delivers thy life from destruction, who crowns thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, Amen; yea, Amen forever!

Now, also, we shall understand what the Spirit of God. says to us (1 John 3:9), "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." It is clear, that the question here is not about the flesh which the Christian drags along with him against his will; but it is that which has been born of God, to wit, the divine nature in which we participate by the Holy Spirit of God (comp. 1 John 4:13; 2 Peter 1:4). It is the new man, fruit of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever; it is a man born of the Spirit, born of God; it is the child of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and the flesh profiteth nothing; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and it is the Spirit which quickeneth. The definition which the word of God gives us of a child of God, is this, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). Impossible for sin to be there, impossible for corruption to taint that which is incorruptible. No; that which is born of God cannot sin, for the simple reason that it is born of God. Nevertheless, to live by the Spirit, or to guide oneself and walk by the Spirit, are two very different things. It is not enough to know that we are children of the light, we must also walk in the light; we must follow the rule which the word of God traces for us without lowering it in the least thing; and that rule is to live as Jesus Christ Himself lived. It is not said that we can do what Jesus did. No; flesh allows not of it. Hereafter we shall do so, when, made like to Him, we shall be united around Him to sing an everlasting halleluiah; but we must always manifest somewhat of Jesus upon this earth, where none can

glorify Him but His own. However weak we may be, He upholds us and abides with us even to the end. God is light, let us live in communion with Him, let us walk in the light and we shall even know more surely that we are without sin, through the grace which is in Jesus; but that we have need of mercy in order to attain unto the end. Let us not stop on the road as the old prophet; it is the beginning of a falling. Let us onward, and let us be persuaded that no one will pluck us out of the hand of Jesus, and of His Father.

Jesus gave Himself to us such as He is, let us give ourselves to Him such as we are; and we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, Amen.

(Signed) Peter Nippel.

[Taken from Etudes Scripturaires, No. vii. 14 Mai, 1852].

## The Unsearchable Riches of Christ

---

When we think of our wretchedness, of our state of sin, and of how unworthy we are of any relationship whatsoever with God, if it were not that divine grace was altogether free, and that God has been pleased to show the exceeding riches of His grace to the ages to come, we could scarcely realize the possibility of such relationships as are here presented to us with a God of Holiness. No; we should not dare to take the Bible, and to speak of these things as of things that pertain to ourselves. Certainly, if we did not know that the Lord has been pleased to manifest the exceeding riches of His grace, we could not even conceive that He should take sinners such as we are to establish us in His presence.

When conscience is alive to all the sin and to the amount of selfishness and vanity that is in us, we are tempted to say, even in view of the glory of God, "As for me, there is nothing in me but sin."

It is the consciousness of sin which leads us towards God, when God acts in grace and love. If we had nothing but the consciousness of sin, we should not dare to think of the judgment of God. What sets us at ease is the thought of that grace and love in God, which unfolds itself in spite of our sin and of our corrupt flesh.

Title in man to the love of God there is none. I cannot form for myself any relationship with God, I cannot even touch that which pertains to Him. That which can alone set us at liberty is the consciousness that it is grace which acts, and that thus, in a certain sense, the greater sinners we are, the more we owe to God-the more is He glorified, and made manifest to be excellent in His ways.

This it is which opens the lips of a poor sinner; it is a subject of interest as connected with himself, and of importance to others.

We see, in the case of the Apostle Paul, how full his heart was of this thought. The words which he employs when he desires to express that he, "the chiefest of sinners, is less than the least of all saints," sets at defiance all the rules of common language. Thinking of himself, and of the preciousness of the free gifts which God had bestowed upon him, in pardoning all his sins, and (not only so, but further) in instructing him with the word of that grace for others, he is abashed before God.

Two examples of this grace, two chosen vessels, have been remarkable in their work-Peter and Paul.

What was Peter's preparation for the strengthening of his brethren, for the feeding of the lambs? The denial of the Savior. That was his preparation; that was the education which made him understand that he was worse than nothing.

And Paul, how was he prepared? By persecuting and ravaging the Church, by displaying an energy most execrable against Christ. If Peter could say to the Jews, "You have denied the Holy One and the Just," they might say to him, "And you, you too, did the same!" If Paul could say to

them, "You have filled up the cup of the wrath of God," they might answer him, "And you, what were you? You were a minister of Satan when you persecuted the Christians, forcing them to blaspheme, and dragging them to prison!" Such circumstantially was the preparation, according to God, of these two men, in order that the flesh might be known for that which it is, and the heart as it is.

When Paul is proclaiming the faith to the Gentiles, he who had been caught up to the third heavens must, on account of the importance of the revelations, have a thorn in the flesh.

I add this, in order to show that the wickedness of the flesh is always the same.

As to the other Apostles, they disappear, so to speak, from the scene. The work is, for the greater part, placed in the hands of Peter and Paul; the former was Apostle of the Circumcision, the latter Apostle of the Uncircumcision.

It was very humbling to the flesh, at least, when we think of all that these two men had done, for one of them to have to say-" I have denied the Lord, He who has been so good toward me, who has so loved me, who has anticipated and met for me all the danger"; and for the other to have put Christians to death, and to be obliged to say-" I did it with my whole heart; all that my religion did for me was to make me a bitter enemy of God." At the same time, it tended to fill the heart with the taste of grace, because God was there; and there where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Not only so, but the vessels in which this treasure had been deposited, the vessels themselves, had been prepared, not by good qualities, but by sad experiences. Paul was well fitted, because, as a man, he must have been rendered sensible of the grace which was needed by himself, so that in him those that should afterward believe might know what were the riches of that grace.

The Apostle was to be the witness of the kindness and of the grace of Christ. In him was to be shown sin, just as it is, set in the presence of the love and of the grace of God. Then the flesh was in its proper place, and Paul could preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. We see in Paul how grace overflows constantly, when his thoughts turn towards the grace of God.

The fact was just the same as to the Jews; but then they were expecting something, because they had the promises. Peter, the Apostle of the Circumcision, addressed himself to a people who were outwardly the people of God. He could say to them -" Ye are the children of Abraham, the first-fruits. As to the Gentiles, they were dogs, as Jesus said to the woman of Canaan, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs" (Matt. 15:26).

When Paul addresses himself to the Gentiles, he finds his right to speak to them of Christ on the depth of that grace which recognized nothing, but that God has the right to show grace.

This poor Syro-Phoenician, who was of a race to appearance cursed, who had a right to nothing, arid acknowledges that she is but a dog, it is she who tastes all the sweetness of the grace of God. " Be it to thee even as thou wilt," said the Lord. " If it was a question of thy right, I tell thee, thou hast a right to nothing. I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and thou art not one of these sheep." But it is to grace that this woman addressed herself; and there is so much grace in God, that she can say, " Dog though I be, yet I may eat"; thereupon the Lord could not say to her, " No, thou mayest not." Salvation proclaimed to the Gentiles brought to light all the riches of

the grace which was in God for us. The circumstances which gave occasion to the flesh, gave occasion also to that manifestation of the unsearchable riches of Christ, of which we speak, and which, indeed, are incomprehensible.

A Jew, as such, could not speak of the unsearchable riches. (though grace was always grace); he could say, "Lo, 'tis grace which comes to me." The prophets, Isaiah, for instance, or any ether prophet, would have taken the law, and found things which belonged to him; he had found the Messiah. This the law showed to him. He could say, " See what a magnificent promise will be fulfilled for us." He could show the wonderful favor of God towards His people: it was a thing understood by him who had intelligence in the words of God. It was a promise made to a race to whom God declared remarkable blessings, but which placed man in relationship with God upon revealed promises.

But as soon as a Gentile was in question, all that was gone. For the grace of Christ, it must be they that are spiritual, for such alone could seek it in the prophets. A Jew could say, He will be a king exalted above all people; all the promises of God will form his crown of glory. But when the Gentile was in question, blessings which flowed from the eternal counsels of God must be discovered; not only a people called to enjoy blessings, but Christ must be received according to the counsels of God. Grace was about to find a poor sinner, who had a right to nothing, who was incapable of enjoying the promises, and incapable of understanding them. It took these poor sinners, who had not an idea or feeling in harmony with God, to place them in the enjoyment of all the riches of the thoughts of God, in Christ Himself. This is why the Apostle says, they are the unsearchable riches of Christ. It was not only things which were suitable to man, but things which were meet for God; even things which were quite new, not in the thoughts of God, but as to revelation, and which were to be manifested to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places by the Church itself, and by this revelation.

Let us examine a little what this grace is; and in order to understand it better, let us take Col. 1:26,27-" The mystery which had been hidden from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to the saints: to whom God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." This it is which manifests what these unsearchable riches are. If it was a Christ for the Jews, it was not a Christ the hope of glory, but a Christ who was the fulfiller of the glory. Here it is a Christ who is not the glory, but only the hope of glory, because, though He is in heaven He dwells in us, and in the midst of us, by His Spirit. It is a thought entirely new; but, after all, it is but a hope: this is the idea the Apostle presents to us. We are about to see how he brings this in, and leads us up to that blessed position of the child of God, to have Christ in him, by His Spirit, as it is said, Rom. 8:9,10. Christ in us the source of strength, and of hidden relationships is the hope of glory. This is the position in which he puts us, and it is our joy.

In Eph. 2:12, Paul says, speaking of the Gentiles-" Ye were at that time without Christ, being strangers to the covenants of promise, and without God in the world." Children of wrath, even as others, without hope, and Godless.

Now, on what basis, on what foundation is it, that God builds this glorious hope? At the very beginning God had said to Adam-" In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." This is not a promise, for there is none made to Adam, and thorns and thistles are not a promise. What God

said He said to the serpent, judging him-" The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head." Who is the man who is not the seed of the woman? Adam; he was excluded from this promise, as head of the race. It is in the second Adam that the promises are Yea and Amen. It is not a promise made to men, but to Christ, the second Adam, because God had outwardly set aside the first Adam as object of the promises of God. There is another who is brought in, and He is the object of all the promises. It is the second Adam, the seed of the woman.

We find it very hard to be willing to come down so low as to know ourselves, and to say-" I am a sinner, and nothing but a sinner; I have a right to nothing; I have sinned against God, against the light of my conscience, against knowledge; I have nothing, and I have a right to nothing but condemnation." Nevertheless, the thing is true, and conscience tells us so, even when the will will not submit to it. If you say, "I can present myself before God," go and do so; but you cannot answer him one of a thousand, and conscience tells us so, as did the conscience of Adam. Adam did not await the presence of God; he hid himself among the trees of the garden, because he did not dare to appear before God. Well, are you, reader, prepared to be judged? Would you like all that you have ever done to be published before the whole world? Whoever you may be, you would not dare to appear before God such as you are, with all that you have ever done; and your conscience bears witness to the justice of God. You well know that you are guilty, and if your will does not tell you so, you may well try to make some excuse for yourself. You would be very glad to say, " The woman whom thou gavest me has been the cause of my ruin"; but, though your conscience does not tell you so, God, in His goodness, has provided for all: He has taken to Himself the knowledge of good and evil.

Even when man is in unbelief, his conscience tells him truths from which he cannot escape. Can we think that a bad conscience could be happy in heaven! No; that cannot be. I do not here speak of grace. Some, perhaps, think that they can, as to the natural conscience, be happy in heaven; well, see what man is, and what God says to him. He tells him not to fear the flesh, because He means to deal with him in grace, in which is found a remedy for everything. God sets aside man who is condemned, and introduces the new man, and even the very condemned, into His glory. He has set eternal life in the new man, in the seed of the woman; it is in the Son, and we have life in Him.

Here then from the beginning, in the second Adam, all the promises are Yea and Amen in Christ, to the glory of God -It is this Christ who is the object of all the thoughts of God. We see what are the riches of this grace, for it is the Son of God who is in question, the second Adam, who is also the Holy One and the Just.

All the various glories are given to Him, and He must wear them all. All that is a manifestation of God must be in Him, and must display itself in Him who is the only Object of it. This is why the love of Christ passes knowledge. Yes, and it is for us that this is accomplished, and that it takes its dimensions; and, when I speak of its dimensions, I speak of that which is infinite, and it is Christ who is the object of it.

As to the poor world, all difference between the Jew and the Gentile disappears; 'tis altogether effaced. God spews grace to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. They are all wretched sinners; and if the Jews have tried to enjoy the promises, through their own righteousness, they are the more guilty, because they have the light of the law. They are the ungodly without strength. When the

true God was there, when He introduced Himself into their midst by miracles, they were without strength because they had broken the law. The consequence thereof was it was evident that the due time was come, as to man, because he had showed his utter powerlessness; and as to God also it was the due time. Why? Because He was about to manifest His pure love, and to show that all depended on this love.

When we have arrived at this, then we find all the fullness of the blessedness of the love of God. All difference between the Jew and the Gentile is done away, for they who are heirs were by nature the children of wrath.

Man has shown what man is, and God what God is—we were children of wrath even as others; we had nothing but judgment to expect, but God has shown Himself rich in mercy.

This is where we must begin. We must take the other end, if we can speak of an end of that which has no end, and find in God the resources of grace and goodness, which find their development in a being far off from Him, and who is the enemy. We must see the grace of Him who has met every requirement and who wills to save the sinner in spite of his wickedness whatsoever he may be.

It is a God who acts in grace towards those who are ungodly, towards poor sinners who have a right to nothing.—Who can understand this? It is the unsearchable riches of Christ, which are to be revealed to the principalities and powers—Christ becomes the vessel of all this grace. It is the love of Jesus which displays itself towards the most miserable sinner, even towards one who would not draw near to God, and who has a right to nothing. God, who is rich in mercy, comes to save him who is in sin and in misery.

Instead of making man come to Him, as would have been right and just, God Himself comes to meet man in order to make Himself known—He comes into the midst of evil, because man will not come into the midst of goodness—God comes in flesh into the midst of all this iniquity, in order to show what it is, but He comes in holiness to skew also what it is. It is the love of a perfect God who is far from repelling iniquity: He comes on the contrary to seek it. How blessed it is, to feel that one has to do with God, with God infinite and infinitely holy. If He were not altogether holy, I might doubt if my salvation was finished; but it is a God infinitely holy, who presents His love to me, and while abiding in His holiness, comes to seek the sinner, people of bad character, in order to present to them His grace, and to set them at peace with Him.

It is He who is there, with the woman taken in adultery, with women of bad character, as he was reproached with. It is God who eats with, and who makes Himself the companion of, people of bad character. Is it there where one would seek God if He were in this town? What man would seek there would be iniquity. God saves people of bad character, and He is only the more glorified—He sets aside the pride of man, and He makes manifest not that man has sought God, but that God has sought man. Well, here it is that we have all these unsearchable riches of Christ: all is there, in His person. Christ, as Creator, as Son of God, Heir of the promises, and as Son of Man, has a right to all. He is the witness of love and holiness by His life, and God has been fully glorified in Him. Jesus could say, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do." If it is question of the holiness of God, He bears witness to this holiness, He deserves to be seated at the right hand of God.—"I have glorified Thee on the earth," He says, "and now, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." He has a right to this glory through

His work, and He had already a right to it without that.

What a work is His! See again the unsearchable riches of this grace, when He was made sin for us. Here it is that these two ends meet, if one can speak of the ends of infinity. It is where the Holy One was made sin, when the Son of God who was the Prince of Life was made subject unto death, when the wrath of God fell upon His Beloved, upon His Son, and all for us poor miserable sinners, far off from God, not desiring to belong to Him. He whose sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, and who bore our sins, was at the time that He endured the terrible wrath of God, He was at that very moment the most precious object of the infinite love of His Father, because He glorified Him perfectly. All this was accomplished between God and Christ. The angels desired to look to the very bottom of this mystery and man would avoid it altogether. The very outside of this was too fearful, too solemn, for him to dare to expose himself to such a conflict.-Yes, our pardon is a work all divine.

In the first chapter of the Hebrews the apostle presents us with the divine glory of Christ. " God has spoken to us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

What a proof the apostle gives us of the glory of Jesus and His divine work. " He has purged our sins." It is the most precious part of His grace.-In His love in redemption He skews Himself more excellent than in creation. Has Jesus ceased to be man? No, He is the God-man, who manifests Himself as man made sin. It is not a Messiah who was fulfilling the promises made to a nation, but more than that; all that passes between God and man, between Satan and sin, without that blessing would have been impossible. If I say, does sin separate me from God? Does the power of Satan separate me from God? No.-Is it that even morally there is a barrier between the heart of God and man?-No. All that could come in as a barrier between me and God has been done away in the death of Jesus. If difficulties were insurmountable,-there where the heart of man (who cannot rise to the height of the thoughts of God) shows itself as it is-Christ presented Himself in the most complete weakness; He came into the lower parts of the earth, and there it was, He laid this Stone which cannot be shaken, this Rock of ages; there it is that we have found the certainty of our salvation-these are the unsearchable riches of Christ. What can now be denied to us, when God Himself has passed through this? Can I still have a doubt, a difficulty? God has provided for all. If He fails me, He will not have that which He Himself has merited. We belong to Christ, as it is said, " He shall see of the travail of His soul." We see then how everything has shown itself, everything has tried its strength in the presence of the work of the love of God, and has but served to make manifest what is the power of His love.

All that was a barrier to the salvation of man is destroyed and has but served to bring it about. As to all

I was, all has been judged, the love of God has been more mighty than my hatred; He has removed the evil: I was an instrument of Satan, there was also the state of enmity of my heart, there were also the sins that I had committed; but all is accomplished, and there is no longer a barrier between God and me; it is Christ who has taken all this, and taken it all away.

God has shown that His love was stronger than the evil.-At the cross I have discovered that.-Where was I? Among those wretched ones who hated the Lord;. with Peter who could not confess Him. At the cross I have found grace; there I have found that which my heart wanted; it is God Himself who has taken away my sin, who has done the very thing which has saved me, and has introduced me into all that belongs to Himself.-Christ, whither is He gone? Into the light and presence of God. He has finished that which fully glorifies His Father.

I have the righteousness of God, of Him who died for my sin, I have life in the Son, in the second Adam; my portion is to be with Him. I know that Jesus brings to me the righteousness of God, and the reward of this righteousness.

God has loved me in Jesus; He has given His Son for me; that which was most precious in heaven. I am the object of His love, and now, passed beyond the thick clouds which were between me and God, I am in the presence of Him who has brought me into the dwelling-place of His holiness.-I am in the Father, because Christ has made peace through the blood of His cross. This perfect peace is in Him. Now I have peace, and all who believe have it also. I am raised high enough, and I can say, beholding Jesus: Ah! He has well deserved it.

No sooner is a person placed in the presence of God, but he feels all his own bitterness.-I have deserved hell, he can say to himself, but I can understand what God has given to me. Where then have I found it all? In Christ. What is there which does not belong to Him? Christ is the object of all the love of God. So far as I am able to estimate all that I find in God, so far can I appropriate it to myself: He who has descended into the lower parts of the earth, is Christ; but now He has ascended up far above all things, and He fills all things.- I am in Him, and He in me. I have found redemption, and I enter into the full possession of all things. I enjoy Christ wherever I may be.-This was where the apostle found himself, and where a poor wretched Gentile is placed who had no title to a single promise; but who now possesses Christ, the object of all the love of God.

Examine what the love of God has done (instead of considering what man has done by his ruin). What has followed the ruin? Christ, at the right hand of God, is the object of faith. He dwells in us in order that we may enjoy the love of God as He Himself expresses it, " The love wherewith Thou East loved me may be in them and I in them." Christ dwells in us, by His Spirit, and we are in Him. My thoughts are directed towards Him. "Ye shall know," He says, " that I am in you, and ye in Me."-Christ is in me the hope of glory, and I enjoy all that He is. The hope that I have makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in my heart; so that, in the weakness of my poor body, I may learn in difficulties, in temptations, in the presence of Satan the same as in the presence of God, all the faithfulness, all the tenderness, all the goodness of this Jesus, and that in all the details of my life. I become acquainted with Him intimately; I know Him who is the "hope of glory." For me it is not a Christ who is a stranger, an unknown One, but a Christ whom I know in all the difficulties of my life; a Christ who reflects God to me in all His fullness, who accompanies me as a friend, who knows how to apply all the riches of His grace to the wants of my heart. Yes, I know Him,-I do not fear to go up to heaven, by faith, for there is He who loves me; He hears me, though I am not yet there; but very soon He will enjoy of the travail of His soul and He will be satisfied when I shall be with Him. Christ has completed grace for His people, and hereafter He will share with them His glory. He will present them to His father such as His father would have them to be, in order that the heart of the Father may be satisfied.

I have only presented here some parts of these unsearchable riches of Christ. The angels are the spectators of these things, and we are the objects of them. God acts for our salvation, and even the flesh must learn what God is in His ways of grace. We must know how to learn what this grace is, this goodness of God, this infinite love of which we are the objects, and without which we should be lost.

May God humble us by the Power of His Spirit, and cause us to understand that which we have not yet rightly understood-the horror of sin, what it is to be without God, enemies of God, in order that we may understand, in all its fullness, this grace which introduces us into the riches of glory

Our poor hearts must learn in the details of life, the goodness of the Lord Jesus himself; and in His favor and in His grace, the favor and the grace of God Himself. We must become acquainted with God in order to enjoy Himself.

May He by His Spirit apply to our poor hearts this grace, and all the various expressions of it which are reflected in Jesus. May God make us to grow in the knowledge of Him who is the peace of our hearts, in order that we may understand all His riches and all His love!

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
  - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**