

# PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 7, 1855

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*A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 7, 1855, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

38 Chapters

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## Present Testimony Volume 7, 1855

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## 1 Samuel 14

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The Word of God abounds with instances of the display of God's sovereign mercy. The Old and the New Testaments both illustrate the fact, " He delighteth in mercy." God has His own time to bless; and He chooses that in which most blessing is needed. What lessons do we learn from Israel's history! But, alas! notwithstanding we have all through Scripture our way-marks - our guide-posts - our warnings: we seldom learn till we do so by experience. It matters not that we see examples of God's way of teaching; we must taste the bitter cup ere we thoroughly take heed to our ways.

But it is here we learn, too, the unfailling grace of our God; the grace which unweariedly attends us even in our wanderings, and restores to us the joys of God's salvation.

The period in Israel's history when the mercy of God was shown, which we now purpose giving a few thoughts upon, was that in which the people were proving the value of their course in choosing a king. How certain is that word, " Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap!" We cannot alter this rule-God's rule. In the change that Israel had effected when they made choice of Saul, doubtless many things, apparently, had been in their favor. They had rid themselves of much that had, in their low state, become irksome and painful; they were in a better position to meet the Philistines, having a visible head and leader; but all they had gained was more than counterbalanced by what they had lost. How poor and feeble were they really, as seen in the thirteenth chapter. The branch that is severed from the tree does not all at once show the signs of death. For a while the leaves retain their verdure; but they soon wither, and the branch soon dies. The splendor of Saul's first days had already become subdued, and the reality of poverty was taking its place. This was an opportunity to let Israel feel their sin, and know its bitterness in reaping the harvest they had sown; but God, who is rich in mercy, can prevent our full overthrow. When Jonah had fled from the presence of the Lord, and had been proved to be the cause of trouble to the ship's crew; and, in consequence, was thrown overboard, God prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. There are depths, deeper still, that God saves us from; and well would it be for us if one lesson of experience would suffice. " They soon forgat his works;" "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

In the history before us we see how God's grace will find a channel. If Saul had failed, God could use Jonathan. This He ever does. He is at no loss to make a way for His mercy. In the strait into which Israel had run, and when, to all appearance, help had failed, God uses one who had not been looked up to, and from whom no help had been expected. " Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side. But he told not his father" (ver. 1). This is one of the happy instances of individual faith accomplishing great things for Israel. David, the man after God's own heart, was not yet in the field. But when is the time in which God cannot bless? All around was withered and dead; but here, in this man, we find that which met Israel's need-a heart not to be held in by circumstances-a heart set upon Israel's good--a heart that could prove God.

The danger was great-the courage that was needed great too; but there it was. Impatient under the calamity, Jonathan waited not till others moved; and, unrestrained by the fear of Saul, he acts for God. He brings God into the scene, and he is made bold thereby. His faith was but: "It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." Still it was the faith of God. It cleared away the clouds, and brought in God. We want more of this: we want to lay hold on God. Such a faith must have results. It was given to be used; and, being used, it found blessing: "The honey from the rock; the finest of the wheat."

His armor-bearer said unto him, "Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee, behold I am with thee according to thy heart" (ver. 7). Now, I am sure we here find one who, though not possessing the faith of Jonathan-not the faith which makes the start-nevertheless, made a good second to Jonathan. There was the willingness, the courage, the self-denial, to back up the service of the man who had the faith; no despicable qualities. Though he had not originated the work, his heart failed not. How many such are to be found willing to go up to the Philistines' garrison, free to serve God according to their strength. "Two are better than one." Communion in service has much value. Jonathan could now say, "Behold we will now pass over unto these men; and we will discover ourselves unto them." "In the day when every man's work shall be tried, every man will have his reward, according as his work shall be:" Jonathan his; his armor-bearer his, too. Jonathan represents the few; his armor-bearer, the many. The result was victory, still in the same order, for "they fell before Jonathan; and his armor-bearer slew after him" (ver. 13).

"Behold, I have set before thee an open door; and no man can shut it." When we work with God, or rather, when God uses us, "the little one becomes a thousand; the small one a strong nation." The "sling and the stone" in the hands of David are better than Saul and his men of war. This was the brilliant day of Jonathan's life. We read in his history of no other like it. Afterward, linked with Saul, though acknowledging David's claims, he fell with Saul too. A bright beginning does not insure a lasting brightness; alas for us I Still, God will not forget "the climbing up upon hands and feet" to face the enemy when every man's heart failed him. Jonathan had fought on God's side; and it stands on record. To have been used to carry the bread of life to the hungry soul, to have refreshed the thirsty, is recorded in the book of life. It is well when we can say, now as well as then; and to realize that even now, though feeble, we are on the same errand as heretofore, is a great mercy. The hands often wax feeble, and the heart grows weary; nevertheless, God keeps in recollection the by-gone labors of his people. "That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were a half-acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow" (ver. 14). But He who had begun to bless would not stop here. "There was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling" (ver. 15).

Jonathan's faith was honored. "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." Let the heart trust in God-bring in God, and who can tell the result? Have we not lost sight of this? What, "Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." May the Lord reanimate those who once did run well! Many strong men have fallen; and it may be that their first strokes of faith were their last. Be it so; "God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labor of love"; but it is much better to be able to say, "Though faint, yet pursuing."

Hitherto the victory had been known only to those who were the valiant men that had fought for it; but soon " Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle; and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture" (ver. 20).

It is important to see, how first one, and then another, felt the value of this day of faith and blessing; and none would be more happy to watch its extended results than those who had gone out almost single-handed and braved the storm. This characterizes true faith, " The elder brother" might be angry, and refuse to go in where grace was shining forth in its full glory; still the Father could say, " It was meet that we should make merry and be glad." It did not redound to the credit of Saul and his men to come up at the time when the battle was well nigh over; still they were welcome to the spoil.

"Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan" (ver. 21).

There is nothing like a day of blessing for making crooked things straight, and rough places plain. When the sun shines in its strength the plant opens, and the flower spreads itself to catch the rays; but when the chill evening blast comes on, they shrink before it. When the heyday of blessing is on, there is no time for Satan; it is when that is passed that he seeks to renew his hold. In this day of faith, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time could be recovered. Testimony against evil is a cold thing, and often a very powerless thing, for recovery; but grace-one day of grace-will bring back many a wandering sheep. A famine in the land of Israel drove away Naomi; but when she had heard that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread, she arose that she might return from the country of Moab. Blessing is God's power of attraction.

Again, " Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they had heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle."

This was a wondrous day; a day of strange things. It brought together the scattered sheep of Israel; and even those that had hid themselves could, in that day, follow hard after the Philistines in the battle.

Jonah was exceedingly glad of the gourd, because, while under its shadow, he might see what would become of Nineveh. But when it was taken away, and the sun beat upon his head he fainted, and wished, in himself, to die; and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

" Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him!"

We have seen the happy results of Jonathan's faith, in not only his own case but in that of many; and may the Lord renew His former mercies, and give us to taste yet much of His love: glad for ourselves, and glad for all who are brought thereby to know His love; and, like Jonathan, with unselfish hearts may we rejoice with them that are honored. Many of us may find here what has been our lot in the day of God's blessing. Some have climbed on hands and feet to face the garrison of the Philistines; and the victory was the reward of their faith. No small victory either; for God was reached-truth recovered-and spoil taken. Others, like Saul and his men, late in the field, from a state of inaction, nevertheless have found a share in it all. Others, from among the

Philistines, have gathered to the fight, and have had their portion in God's salvation. And, last of all, those who aforesaid had hid themselves, have known a fresh start, and have shown courage to follow hard after the Philistines in the battle. When God redeemed Israel out of the hands of Pharaoh " There was not a feeble person in their tribes." Not so much as a dog moved his tongue against them.

We come now to a painful part of the narrative, and to see how different a thing it is to hold fast that which we have. God's mercies bring with them fresh responsibilities; and it is here that we almost always prove our failure. " That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

" The men of Israel were distressed that day; for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of Israel tasted any food" (ver. 24).

Saul had been chosen king, and he had undertaken to be the shepherd of Israel; but alas! how constantly do we find him hindering blessing. He saw in this day a day to avenge himself of his enemies. God saw in it a day of salvation for Israel. His heart, alienated from God, could have no fellowship with His thoughts. I take it that the real apostasy of Christendom consists in this, that it has perverted the right ways of the Lord, and that it has marred the gospel of God's grace-spoiled the remedy so far as in it lies. It is true, that in every way, practically, there is a departure from God; for `worldliness, pride, unholiness in all forms, dwell in the great house. But the worst feature of all is, that God having sent His only begotten Son into the world, and made him to be sin for us who knew no sin;-that this great love should have been by man supplanted-and that the forms and rites and sacraments; etc., of human appointment should have been made to supply its place. It is the contrariety of man's heart to God's love to man, and an apostate Christianity that has set itself to hide God and His grace. " The men of Israel were distressed that day."

The proper state of a soul now under God's grace is peace with God; joy in God; the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father! "It is a day of good tidings. -Man has made it, under the name of Christianity, the very opposite. A true Israelite's heart, in the times of refreshment such as this, and other deliverances, was infinitely happier than the heart of man now under the blighting effect of a false gospel.-Saul has stepped in to stop the joy.

There was one, however, who, away in service to God, was out of the reach of this interference. There was one who could and did put forth his hand and dip his rod into the honeycomb. It was Jonathan. True simple service to God in faith has its blessing in many ways. It carries a man off from the bondage of human systems; and his heart is free while others may be bound. He has his own personal joys, as well as those resulting from being used of God in making others happy. I am sure that he who is found laying himself out to do good to others will lack no good thing. The Lord, under the gospel, does not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. " It is more blessed to give than to receive." Alas for Saul, that he should thus have marred the happiness of that day! Jonathan could say-" How much more if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people were very faint" (ver. 30, 31).

There is a solemn responsibility to: retain the blessing when given; and to follow it out to its full results. Few, perhaps, have attained to this. " They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." I have often dreaded the position of Saul, as seen in this chapter, lest one should by any means obstruct the channel of mercy to others, and cut short a day of good things. " These sheep, what have they done?"

Confusion was the result. " The people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them upon the ground, and the people did eat them with the blood" (ver. 32).

The faith and courage of heart in Jonathan were equal to the war with the Philistines; and were equal to the bringing of Israel together to join in the victory and to share the spoil; but all this could be marred and spoiled by the act of Saul, who had no fellowship with God. A hard unbroken heart is often stricter in its forms, less irregular, more apparently straightforward, and even consistent, than the man of faith, who knows not what human restraint means, but who, like Jonathan, walks in happy ignorance of bonds that enslave others.

Saul inquires of God-but He answers him not that day. There is a cause somewhere. He applies himself to seek it out. No burden weighed on his own conscience; no sense of his own failure. There is a cause, but, alas! he saw not where the evil lay. So Ahab, when he met Elijah, said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" His own hand had wrought the evil.

This you find constantly in Saul. He is the last to say, "I am the man." But, indeed, it is the failure of human nature; and who is free from it? Grace does, indeed, overrule it, and the surest proof of God's work upon the heart is found in true open confession of our sins. After Jonathan was taken by lot, " Saul said to Jonathan; What halt thou done? And he said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and lo I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan" (ver. 43, 44).

I think we have here an important principle. I am at a loss to express my thoughts; apparently, Saul was in the right. He had adjured the people, and the curse was upon the head of Jonathan. Consistency required his death. If you stand where Saul stands, you can only see that Jonathan must die. But remove your ground. Look from the point where Jonathan's faith had carried him. See him climbing upon his hands and his feet in the exercise of that faith which "waxes valiant in fight and puts to flight the armies of the aliens," and then ask whether or not, in the hour of such blessing, Saul's adjuring of the people chimed in with the glory of that day? Spiritual discernment would have kept him from such an act at such a time; and nothing could be more inappropriate than that the one who, early in the morning, had fought on the side of God, should fall a victim to Saul's oath. Still, Saul did not, see it. He would have put to death the man that had wrought with God that day. The Lord deliver us from that cold-hearted systematic adjustment of right and wrong, which would thus make the tasting of a little honey, at such a time, an unpardonable sin!-On the other hand, may he save us from calling evil good-from a carelessness which would make light of the practical precepts of God's word!

"And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid; as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought with God this day" (ver. 45).

Such an outburst of true-heartedness to Jonathan speaks well for the people. But Saul was out of communion with God; and consequently every act was perverse. The people had been brought to know and own God and his servant. This is beyond all precept. I have before remarked, as to the fact of this being the brilliant day of Jonathan's life. The influence of Saul upon him, necessarily strong, seems to have paralyzed him. If he loved David, he must do it in disguise, and he must hide it from Saul. The cold grasp of Saul could chill the heart of the one who flinched not before a garrison of Philistines. Samson, who could rend a lion as he would have rent a kid-who could burst the cords that were upon his arms as though they had been flax burnt with fire-under the enticings of Delilah, became as another man. We need to be preserved on every hand; we need the same grace, the same heart of love, that could say to Peter, " I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."

M.

## Babylon and the Beast

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Babylon is a great system in the earth by which men's hearts are drawn away from God. It supplies them with something to have natural enjoyment in besides joy in God. In this Babylon is the great whore drawing out corrupt affections. She is supported by the great power of the earth; but power is not what is presented in Babylon, but the withdrawal of affection from God to have it spent on what ministers to natural lust. There are the kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and all nations brought in as acted on by Babylon. She ministers to the enjoyment of kings, to the wealth of merchants, and to the excitement of the nations: she is borne by the beast whose character is blaspheming power; but she, by corrupt fascinations, rules over the kings of the earth. When she is judged then the beast will rule by blaspheming power, drawing out the wonder of the whole world, and their worship too: but before the beast comes to rule, he supports the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. Open blasphemy is not the character of prevailing evil in the present day: neither is it an astonishing display of combined power, because the beast still carries the harlot. But the evil of the present day is enjoyment in the world, not in Christ; riches in the world, not in Christ; and the excitement of these things intoxicating men's minds, that all engagement in the things of Christ are out of mind. All this may be under a profession of the truth; because it is the beast that is the blasphemer, who, before he himself rules, supports the mother of harlots-the parent of all who draw affection from God to the things of the world.

The woman is drunken with the blood of the saints; but the inhabitants of the earth are drunken with the wine of her fornication. When the saints are persecuted, then the spirit that draws the heart away from God becomes excited: it takes fresh stimulus from this to present with attraction its sinful gratifications; and then these abominations act on the spirit of the inhabitants of the earth, and excite them. The kings, as the great ones of the earth, commit fornication with her: the inhabitants, as the common people of the world, are excited by it. If there is a wicked show in a town, it acts thus doubly. The rich people pay for going in and enjoy the show: the poor people crowd outside the door under the excitement of it. Both are acted on by the evil.

The beast was full of names of blasphemy; but the woman had a cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: the effort of the woman is not to make you an open blasphemer, but to live in sin; she will leave you the form of godliness, but the power thereof she will make you deny. The beast has not even the form of godliness, he is full of names of blasphemy; but he is not ruling, he only supports the woman who does rule.

"The beast which thou sawest was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition."

The beast in its first constitution is seen in Dan. 7, thus it was-but it has declined and ceased to exhibit itself; but in its revival it will assume a new feature as coming out of the bottomless pit. Its constituted strength was not this, but its restored is. That which has its source in wickedness, and its end in judgment, revealed to the servants, will have its importance lowered before them in some little moment of boast; but they who have not the mind of God, and walk by sight, are

altogether dazzled by this display; and so, they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

## The Blessing of the Tribes by Jacob

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It seems to me that we have the whole moral history of Israel, the purposes of God, and the accomplishment of them in Christ as regards this people, in the blessing of Jacob, in Gen. 49. I can only briefly set it forth here. First, Israel as it was, and its moral failure in Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. The universal characters of the development of sin are given. Corruption and violence. Defiling and instruments of cruelty. God in the testimony of the Spirit rejects their assembly. The violent passions are the latter form. The beast is destroyed after Babylon. God's purposes are in Judah. The King, the Lawgiver is there; the gathering of the peoples is to be to Him. But we know when presented to the responsibility of Israel He was rejected. There was no gathering of the peoples. The staves of Beauty and Bands were broken. Those by which the peoples were to be gathered and the two divisions of Israel united in one under one head. Then in Zebulun and Issachar, Israel is presented as mixed up with the world like Tire in Ezekiel, and content to be subject to strangers for ease, as if they were not God's people at all. Dan is still, in spite of all, owned, and represents Israel recognized as God's portion in spite of all, but at the same time points out the apostasy and power of Satan in Israel. The remnant taught of God look beyond the whole position of the people to God's own, salvation who cannot but be faithful to His word. Thereupon we have unmingled blessing crowned with the heavenly and earthly glory of a rejected Christ-channel of all the resources of God's blessing to His people beyond all previous knowledge of blessing. Israel had been overcome, but overcomes at the last. Asher (not like Zebulun) has his fatness in his own pastures, and royal dainties are there. In Naphtali is joyful liberty-the liberty God has given, and full of goodly words. Then comes the crown of all. The rejected one of his brethren sorely tried and shot at; Christ personally considered the Shepherd the Stone of Israel made strong by the power of God, exalted when rejected to be at the King's right hand, and Head over the Gentiles, is the exhaustless source of every divine blessing with which the heart of man can be made glad, all richly coming from God are upon the crown of the head of Him that was separated from His brethren. Such is Christ as rejected and glorified, and the medium as partaking of heavenly glory of all divinely given blessings which are to His glory who was separated from his brethren. In Benjamin, finally, we have the royal strength a kingly power in Israel and of the people when Christ is returned as King amongst them, and makes Judah His goodly horse in the day of battle, and fills His bow with Ephraim. Such in general is the prospect of which the outlines seem to me to be given in this prophecy.

Your affectionate brother in Christ, J. N. D.

"ABLE TO STAND-STAND." Ephesians 6

When Israel was in Egypt, it was not in the desert; and when it was in the desert, it was not in Canaan. God was teaching then according to what man was; and man had to learn the varied truths in succeeding chapters-no two of which existed at the same time. But now God is teaching in another way, according to what Christ is; and this changes all in that which is most real of all things. Christ alone is out of Egypt, and those that, through faith, are in Him: they are as much out

in reality as He is-so far indeed as they are in Him. Faith may be strong, and the soul may repose simply upon what God has done for us in Christ, and then we know that we are not of the world, even as He is not of the world. Or faith may be weak, and instead of our taking God's testimony about Christ, with a "let God be true and every man a liar," we may be occupying ourselves in part with what God is to do in us, if He has saved us; and in our minds confounding what is to be done in the saved, with the saving which precedes the results which flow from it. If so, it is with us no wonder if we hardly know whether we are in or out of Egypt. If thus -weak, let us turn to God's testimony about His Son, and rest upon that, and acknowledge that which God tells us of the blessedness of those who rest upon His grace in Christ-Christ and His work finished for us-a Christ now in heaven, made ours by God, is the sole Exodus of an individual soul. Mark it-Christ and His work made ours through the grace and mercy of God; "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus." That light is its own evidence. If I have it I am not of Egypt; I am out of Egypt, and am not blinded as Satan blinds them that perish.

But though I myself be out of Egypt, my feet are in the wilderness; and all that I can say as to it, whether in the daily gleanings of experience through unbelief, or in the spiritual teachings of faith to the inner man is,- "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Many a Christian cleaves to pilgrimage-character, according to the experiences of nature: such cannot hope, I think, to get better fare than Lot did in Sodom,-if they are cleaving to the world,-or Jacob at Jabbok, if they are seeking to gather back to the path of faith. There is, however, another way of going to work, and that is that of Abraham, who walked according to the call and promises of God. This will not turn the wilderness to a garden-it will make them rather taste the more (because after a divine and heavenly mode and taste) what the wilderness itself is-and I might here say, what none dare question, that none ever tasted what the wilderness was, like Him whose whole being, and heart, and mind, and soul were divine and heavenly. To Him, the blessed Lord Jesus, it was the wilderness indeed.

But then, while our feet are in the wilderness-while we tread the earth, and are in the world, though not of it, we have not to wait to cross Jordan ere tasting Canaan's corn, and the milk, and the honey of that good land.

Heaven is open upon us already, and a Christ full of blessing is there already known and tasted as our blessing. Neither, again, have we, like Israel, to fight our way into the land; nor, when in the land, to make good the claims God has given to us of blessing.

If I am striving to fight my way into the land of promise, I do not recognize that my Head is in possession of what commands it all. I am occupied with striving to take possession (which Christ alone can do), and not striving to act consistently with the possession of blessing already given to me in Christ.

Neither am I trying to make good the claims to the blessing which God has given me--that is, if I act consistently. No; but to act consistently with a possession given in Christ, which has "yet a little while" added to it as the link that connects my soul with the entrance from below into the field of blessing, into which Christ will enter from above at the divinely-appointed moment, for His

beginning to enjoy and to act upon the blessings which are His.

Many, I conceive, lose much by confusion on this point; they think they have to fight their way into the promise, or that they have to make good their claims to the promised blessing. Self and its energy get a wrong place and a wrong direction. They must be wrong, for the blessings are already all treasured up in Christ; and there is but One that can make good the claims to the enjoyment of the blessings, even Christ. Their mistake herein leads many to strive amiss; and instead of saying, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth;" instead of owning-"O how little taught in the blessing!" they are for a doing and a striving which flows from a zeal without knowledge.

What would I have them do? What would I have you do? Why this "Act, hourly, in all the difficulties which come upon you from the wilderness around you, as being indeed and already a living member of the body, whose Head, the Man Christ Jesus, sits in heaven, crowned with honor and glory. That is one thing I would have you do and suffer. Another is like it. Namely, Do and suffer here below in all the trials which flow down upon you from Satan's possession of the heavenlies, as the living member of the Christ of God should suffer.

And, if I added a third word, it would be this: In order that it may be so, be sure to look up from the wilderness where your feet are fast, the spot held by evil spirits in the heavenlies, to where Christ is at the right hand of the Father.

O if men knew what Christ's thoughts to-day are about the spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places and about this world that rejected Him, they would well understand, that being counted by Him as members of His body, one spirit with the Lord, the exhortations to stand fast, at the close of the Ephesians, are not without force.

But who of us really counts himself as so looked upon by God and Christ, and proves that he counts it so by acting thereupon, in all the details of his walk here below?

## The Church of God

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Is it by accident (an accident of no importance) that the term (which is become in our days almost the sole designation for the church, namely, the church of Christ) is nowhere to be found in the New Testament; whereas the very expression, " the church of God" is met with seven times? This does not imply that the church is not Christ's, as well as God's. That it is so is too plain to require a proof. Though it would be established, if doubted, by what is written in John 17:9, 10; and 16: 15.

But it is of all importance, in a time such as the present, to weigh deliberately the very words of God (ipsissima verba); especially upon such a subject as that of the church. Now, according to the word, there is something special as to the kind of relationship of Christ with the -church, which can only be understood by entering into the scriptural force of the expression, " The church of God."

When the Spirit speaks of the church as belonging to Christ, He is most careful to set forth this truth in such a way as to make us see that the church has for Christ all the savor of His Father's name upon it; and that, as to ourselves, never should we think of it without remembering its close and inseparable relationship with Him as the Son of God. To say the church is Christ's would be too feeble an expression. What the Spirit of God desires is, that the nature and closeness of the relationship should be recognized as well as its existence. Communion and mutual sympathy are expressed by both of these. The Spirit speaks of the church as the " body. of Christ"; "the Lamb's wife" or as that which belongs to Christ because it belongs to His Father, etc.

This is seen by the following passages: Eph. 1:22,23; 5:24-32; Col. 1:18, 24; Rev. 21 and 22, etc.; but never once is the expression " the church of Christ" employed. When the church is spoken of as belonging to Christ, it is as "the body" which is absolutely necessary to the Head; as "the wife" which expresses a relationship necessarily existing where there is a husband, etc. The following are the seven passages in which the Spirit speaks to us of the church as being the church of God:-

"Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God" (Acts 20:28).

" Paul... to the church of God... to them that are sanctified in Jesus... Grace... " (1 Cor. 1:2).

" Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." (1 Cor. 10:32.)

"Despise ye the church of God?" (1 Cor. 11:22.)

" I am the least of the apostles, which am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." (1 Cor. 15:9.)

" Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God." (Gal. 1:13.)

" If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. 3:5.)

" The churches of God (1 Cor. 11:16);-of God, which are in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 2:14, and 2 Thess. 1:4);-of the saints (1 Cor. 14:33);-which were in Christ (Gal. 1:22); and the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16).

I do not know of the Lord Jesus once saying, "MY CHURCH," except it be in the following passage, "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter [Petros, in Greek], and on this rock [Petra, in Greek] I will build my church." But here (Matt. 16:16) it is rather speaking of a testimony to be given to the world, and upon earth, than of anything else. He whose title is King of kings for the earth has been rejected by the Jews, the subjects of His kingdom here below: but there, at the right hand of God, His title of King is acknowledged; and it is most evident also in this world to those who are the friends of the King. For though the subjects of the King are in rebellion against Him; and though He has been driven out of the world, He has friends who love Him and who own His title. He admits them into His counsels, and He strengthens and encourages them. There is that which one has well named, " The kingdom in mystery"; and it is the church under this point of view, as the church bound up with the government of the heavens, which is brought before us here.)

"The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:15)

Many things are disclosed to us in this last verse. " Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the Spirit; seen of angels; preached unto the Gentiles; believed on in the world; and received up into glory." The words " God was manifest in the flesh," do not give the meaning of the " mystery of godliness" if they are separated from what follows. Though many do so read them and would have it so; as though the expression, " the mystery of godliness" were synonymous with the person of the God-man, and as though that which is intended by the one expression were the same as that which is intended by the other. If it were so, the child Jesus in the cradle, or Jesus on the cross, would present to us the meaning of this expression, " the mystery of godliness." But in the verse which is now before us, there are, after the expression

God was manifest in the flesh," five other characteristic terms, namely, 1. "justified in the Spirit;" 2. "seen of angels"; 3. "preached unto the Gentiles"; 4. "believed on in the world"; and 5. "received up into glory." That is to say, the God-man, in His present position, is the meaning of this mystery. The God-man has now been received up into a certain glory. The Word teaches us that many things are waiting for Him to do when He leaves this His present position. But He is now received up into glory. " God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory." Without a question, it is Christ that is spoken of here; but Christ in such a manifestation of Him as supposes the church; the church as that which God has formed of Him, by Him, and for Him.

All things are, in a sense, of Him, by Him, and for Him (Rom. 11:36); but the church is so in a way peculiar to itself. There is a relationship between God in His eternal state, in that eternity which belongs to Him, and the church, which distinguishes it in a way peculiarly its own. Of not one of the divine works besides, is it said in the word that it is the expression of His counsel before the world was; of His election before the foundation of the world. Whilst beyond all controversy it is so stated

of the church; but, I repeat it, of it alone.

In the following passages, Ex. 2:22-25; 3:15; 6:3-8; Lev. 26:42; Deut. 30:20; Neh. 9:7; Psa. 105:8-10; Ezek. 16:60; and especially Rom. 11:28; we see that God, when speaking of the blessing of the Jews, hardly ever goes further back than to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom He had formed a covenant which the wickedness of the nation could not disannul. Abraham was called to turn from idolatry to walk with the true God (Gen. 12; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 43:12; Jer. 24:15); and God shows His faithfulness to the call which He-Himself addressed to Abraham. Nevertheless we are never told of the blessing of the Jews as being the result of a divine counsel and choice formed before the world was, and as such to be looked upon by us. Again, as to the nations, we see the faithfulness of

God in his providential arrangements; for we find the very same distribution which He made of the nations in the day of Noah (Gen. 10) again in Ezekiel; and in like manner the providence of God is ever bearing Him witness (Psa. 19; Matt. 5:45); nevertheless, His providence is never spoken of to us as being the result of His divine counsel and choice before the world was, and as such to be looked upon by us.

Again, the world is that which bears witness to the creative power of God (according to Rom. 1). The way in which God introduces the history of the creation is this: "In the beginning God created," etc.; nevertheless this creation is never held out to us as being the recognized result of the divine counsel and choice before the world was, and as such to be looked upon by us. But it is not so with the church. When desiring to set before us what is the power and the blessedness distinctive to the church, God begins thus:

" In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [This is plainly before Gen. 1:1, as the Creator is before his creation.] All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

" And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father."

" And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace (*χαρις αντι χαριτος*). Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:1-4, 14, 16-18).

We find ourselves then here in quite another sphere, whether we consider the sphere of the creation (including all created things); or, again, that of providence (with its ordinances for the seasons, etc.); or, even that of the family of Abraham, who was upon earth the individual whom God had chosen and set apart for Himself from amongst idolaters. What we have in the opening of John's gospel, as cited, is the glory of God shown to us as in His own self; eternal life in Him through whom God alone has ever revealed it; and this life declared to be communicable to whomsoever God wills. It is the fountain of living water whose source is in God, and which pours itself forth through the church. It is then, impossible to find any beginning for the church without going back to Him who was in the beginning. It is His glory which John is sheaving to us in the three first verses of his first epistle.

" 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 do show unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us; that which we have heard and seen 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.'

This is the way, peculiarly its own, in which the church is OF GOD. It has its beginning in Him who was from the beginning; for as the body could not exist without the head, as there would be no meaning in a bride without a bridegroom, so the church could have no existence without Him who is the Son of God.

If I am right, it seems to me that here is the reason why the counsels of God, formed before the world was, are so naturally brought in the moment that the church appears.

" Before the foundation of the world," is declared, or said, of the love which the Father bore to the Son (John 17:24); and (Eph. 1:4.) it is also said of our election in Christ; and (1 Peter 1:20.) of the Lamb the Redeemer, or the Head of redemption.

Perhaps some explanation of the difference in the four cases of which we have spoken, may be found in the truths contained in the different names under which God reveals Himself. First of all we find Elohim, the name of God, in the first chapter of Genesis, and it is Elohim who reveals Himself as Creator through the means of the creation. These are the things which are seen, and it is by their means that the Creator reveals Himself to us. Next, He makes himself known as Jehovah, the God of providence, by the care which He has for His own. We see this in His way of acting after Noah left the ark, He revealed His name in the system which He set up. And, lastly, the name by which God reveals Himself to Abraham is El-Shaddai, the God whose bosom contains every blessing for His people, then only an earthly people.

In the kingdom of creation as well as that of providence, we have, it is true, blessed and glorious testimonies to the divine attributes; but it is God revealing Himself by His attributes in the things which He Himself has created, and which must ever remain entirely below Himself and His own state of blessedness.

In the name of God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (the nursing-place as well as the birth-place of the church), there is a difference which distinguishes it from every other. The value of this name is eternal and divine; it is before all creation, and even before all revelation. It expresses relationship within the bosom of Divinity itself-the Word was with God and was God.

In the Divine foreknowledge all was foreseen. It is needless to repeat it; as it is said in Acts 15:18, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

God, when bringing before us creation, providence, and the call of the Jews, saw it good to do so in the light of His actions; but the church it was His good pleasure to present to us in the light of His choice and His counsels. Now, it is our wisdom to look upon everything, even to the least detail, in the manner in which God has taught it to us; for surely His way is wiser than ours. But, in order to enter into the height and depth of this truth (that the church is of God), we must meditate upon John 17; Rom. 8; Eph.; Col. 1; 2; 3, and 1 John, etc.

May God bless us graciously, and open our hearts more and more to these precious truths I

## Observations Upon the Epistle to the Ephesians

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The contrast between what is found in the opening and in the closing of this epistle is worthy of special notice.

The opening truth is God, in his own eternity, choosing us in Christ, before the world was, and giving us, (for the sole sake of the manifestation of his own glory) the place of Sons and the blessing of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.-Such, the body of gracious light from God in heaven shining downwards upon us.

In contrast with this, the close of the epistle gives us. the church on earth holding its ground in spite of Satan and standing as acting upon the blessings. The armor in detail-the enemies -the conflict: but faith in all things, more than conqueror.

I do not doubt but that these two scenes are links of one chain.-And that it is the same mercy and grace which shines in one way in the former part which shines (the very same grace), in another way in the latter part in both places all is in keeping with the circumstances. Privilege, to be enjoyed, must be privilege acted out. I might say more- for, as I think we shall see, the intermediate connecting links which unite these two extremes -these termini, are traceable.

We know, we realize but little as to what the church is.-This is the more sad, because it is God's present truth, our present responsibility.

I have thought that my own mind has realized help upon this subject by a comparison between the epistle to the Ephesians and the three first chapters of Genesis.

And this is natural because the God of creation is the God of redemption. And not only, are His ways even, but with Him the end was known from the beginning; and redemption (which was the display of the hidden riches of his character), was more precious to Him and took the lead, the place of mold and of pattern, to Him in the creation of this world, which was but the first display of attributes previously known.

I would suggest, rather than teach, one or two things under these feelings.

In the first chapter of the book called Genesis, we have, 1stly, the account of the bringing into existence of a certain system as a whole: "in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

2ndly, the recital in detail of the creating of the various parts of the system-the how of its appearing.

3rdly, there is a specialty of care shown with regard to one part of this creation, man-who ( this comes in chap. 2) was to be the center of the system, its ruler and possessor; in whom it stood in, or fell from, the presence of God as the Blessor.

4thly, in chapter two, we find God's connection with it-His rest; and then, that as the Lord God He set Himself in a specialty of relationship to man, for whom He planted and arranged a garden of delights and into whose hands He gave power and dominion. And out of whom and for whom, He prepared a help-meet. The scene was a display-the vessel as it were-in which was shown out the name of Elohim; and the inner part was that, in which the compound name of Jehovah-Elohim got its display.

The histories (chap. 1:26-31 and chap. 2: 8-25) of man's creation and of man's being placed, when created, as the center of a system, both suppose the pre-existence of other things, and a plan and counsel, fraught and laden with purpose. Just so redemption and the higher and brighter circle of it in the church in Ephesians.

In Ephesians, the recital begins, therefore, with eternity and God's choice and plans, there and then for His own glory, through the church.

To show forth the glory of His grace and the riches of His grace, we were chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world-for this Man, also, was to be the center of a system-and this One was to link up to

God all that should remain in heaven and on earth, all, was to be headed up in Him. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, purposed to show "what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints."

We have, I would suggest, in Ephesians (chapter 1:1-18): first, the system proposed; and, secondly, the outline of its plan.

From chap. 1:18 to end of chap. 2:6, we have the whence and the how of our getting into the blessing.

Then, next, comes the use of the blessed as displaying God. This church was to be the vessel in which the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost would be displayed first. And here two things are remarkable. 1stly, when brought to the Father (18) it is still the name of God with which we have to do in 16, 19, 22, thus reconciled unto God; the household of God; an habitation for God.

But then, 2ndly, though we get, in chap. 3, the church as the mystery, looked at first as connected with God (2, 7, 9, 10), that is, as the expression, in contrast with other outward things, of a Divine perfection which was hidden; yet, in the close of the chapter, we must remark the way in which it was the vessel, in the which this name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, gets a special display and development. And here it is not glory around God and the church brought therein as at the close of chap. 1. But it is the church itself wondrously used as the scene of Divine communion. The Father granting-according to the riches of his glory, such an internal, mighty strengthening by the Spirit that there might be both the indwelling of Christ in the heart by faith, and a comprehending of the breadth and length, and depth and height-and a knowledge of what passes knowledge, Christ's love; unto the filling with all the fullness of God. This clearly is above all comprehension and power in us to ask for or think of; but it is according to the power of the Father already known to us to be working in us.

Man's duty in Eden is defined in Gen. 2-and his present service there to the One that had placed Him there. And Ephesians, chapter iv. begins with the church's service and duty to her blessed.

The three main points are to be a channel through which the full stream of spiritual power and privilege - life -flows; 2ndly, association in character-walk with God; 3rdly, in joy.

This brings us down to the earthly relationships of the heavenly family:-these are shown to point us to Christ and to God.-In the first of them-that of wife and husband-the church is looked at in the speciality of being a something for Christ's ownself.

It is not here, as before, looked at from the outside, but as the special object which was to be Christ's own.

" Christ 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."

Out of this specialty of her separation unto Himself flows, I judge, that which follows: if He holds her one with 'himself for love; Satan holds her one with Christ, for hatred. Satan's hatred is ever against Christ: and, the enemy of all that pertains to Christ, he is most emphatically the enemy of the Saints, and that in order to prevent them living now as in present possession of the good blessings in heavenly places given to them in Christ. -. But there is armor sufficient for the war; and if they quit themselves like men, the details of their panoply will prove the forethought of the Captain of their salvation; and consistency with the possession of the blessing will be their joy.

It is not Israel in pilgrimage through the wilderness, which is the question here, but the anticipation of Israel in possession of the land of promise?

Many a Christian understands pilgrimage; few understand the call that is upon them to act consistently with the faith in present possession in Christ of all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him.

Now, as man's position, recorded in the second chapter of Genesis, cannot be justly apprehended, without seeing its connection with the glory of the display made in chapter one: nor the folly of man's conduct, as recorded in the third chapter, be correctly measured, apart from the bright light that thus formed the back ground of the picture; so I judge, that the importance and responsibilities of our position, marked in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, and the strength provided for those who will stand fast to the blessings given them in Christ, and act worthily of all that God has given to them in Christ, cannot be seen, if the bright light above, with which the Epistle opens, is not seen to be, indeed, an all-glorious, Divine and eternal light, which casts the light of its blessing upon the church militant here below.

The main truth which I have desired to suggest is plain enough; and it is (as I think) truth that is needed to-day. It is simply this, that the doctrine of " the church" has various points of view in which it may be considered, and not merely that one to which so many incline to narrow it, in the which Christ will present the church to himself. That I have myself feebly apprehended the Divine plan and counsel about the church-how God uses it for the display of hidden treasures of His wisdom and grace, how it serves a purpose as to the display of the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, etc., none ought to be more ready to admit than myself: but still I see that there are fields of inquiry open to us. And, if I judge that those who would merge all God's dealings as to man in " a church" to be wrong; so likewise would I stir up those who look upon the church-with the mystery

and the heavenly calling-to be our measure of blessing, to see to it that (not self but) God and His Christ form the center of the church of their view, as most certainly they do the center of the view of that church of which the Spirit writes and teaches.

## Fragment: Adam and Eve

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Marriage was instituted in the garden of Eden; and it vividly displays the nearness of relationship into which believers are to be brought, as the church and bride of Christ, to Himself. Moreover, the familiarity of our minds with this relationship, makes us understand better the place to which we are brought in the gracious affections of Christ. There are many things which are the blessed and substantial revelations of God, that we cannot so well understand. For example-the reign of Christ in glory, and our association with Him in that reign, however blessed it may be, can hardly be definitely familiarized to the mind. But everything around the Christian, in this world, serves to illustrate what this blessed relationship is between Christ and the Church.

Eve was to Adam the companion of his home, and the depository of his affections. So "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it"; and the fact that she becomes the depository and witness of His affections, is a thought more deeply touching than all the glory which will be her endowment as allied to Christ.

The purpose of Christ's ministry toward His Church is," that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word," and the end of that ministry is, " that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Just as Eve was for Adam himself, so is the Church to be for Christ Himself.

## Fragment: Companion to Christ

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If any one thought they knew how to measure Eve's blessedness and position, and only measured it by her relationship to Adam as an individual-the help meet for him, they would give short measure, far shorter than the measure given by another whose line and cord took in both the whereabouts of Adam's position in a garden of delights, fashioned for him by God, etc., and the who and the what Adam was as connected with the Maker of Adam and of those scenes. Just so: sweet as it is to the heart and mind to feel, I am part of a body, the Church, which is to be the companion of Christ-which has His heart's love poured out upon it, and who looks for a return to it-I need to remember the where this Blessed One is to be displayed, and the who and what He is, if I would at all enter into the blessedness of being a member of this Church. He is the channel, and center, and end of every display which God has made for Himself by His various attributes-the Son and Revealer of the Father-the opener of His blessed house.

And such is this Son, that when none, of men, slave to Him as Son of man here on earth, the Father glorified Him with the glory which He had with Him before the world was; and in the Church will be found God's paradise or garden of delights, all that will meet His mind and Christ's-the very expression of His own thought.

## Fragment: Five Eras of Judgment

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What a time of crisis the time contemplated by the Revelation is-and you will observe, that very much of the moral characteristics which marked other times of crisis are to be found therein.

I might say, we ought to be prepared for such a book, and for such contents of such a book.

We ought to be prepared for such a book (a book of crisis or of judgment), because crisis or judgment has at times marked the way of the Lord from the beginning. Thus:-

1. In the day of Noah, there was judgment-the judgment of the old world.
2. In the day of Lot, there was the same, the judgment of the cities of the plain.
3. In the day of Moses, likewise, the judgment of Egypt.
4. In the day of Joshua, likewise, the judgment of Canaan.
5. In the day of Ezekiel, likewise, the judgment of Jerusalem.

So that we might well be prepared for such an action as that which we get in the Revelation-judgment.

But further. In each of these five eras of judgment, we get certain characteristic actions, which are found also in this book. I will mention these leading ones.

1. There are divine warnings or delays ere the judgment come.
2. In spite of these, man goes on to perfect his iniquity.
3. An election is delivered out of the scene of judgment.
4. Another election is separated or withdrawn, prior to the judgment.

These actions will be found in each of these five great eras of crisis or divine judgment; and they will be found in the Revelation also.

So that we might well be prepared for the contents of such a book, as for the book itself; for the characteristics of the action, as for the action itself.

And this is a comforting and establishing thought-that instead of being surprised by the existence of such a book, it is just such a one as we might expect.

There are literal details which are obscure and difficult; but that is secondary. The moral of the book is of chief value and for that we might be well prepared, on the ground of divine or scriptural analogy from the beginning.

But I only suggest.

## Fragment: Our Citizenship in Heaven

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That our citizenship is in heaven is a precious truth. He who is the God of heaven has made good to us the precious privilege, writing our names on the heart of Him who is the Heir of Heaven. Yet, alas! how little heavenly in practice are we, and how daily do we more and more discover this even one to another. The war in the east has caused many a spot of earthly politics to appear on the surface, in some, who seemed quite freed from the politics of this earth. But where, a year or two since, there was no interest in England's arrangements-(What had we to do with the honor of England? Who were we, to be interested in the wisdom of her measures?) -there, in many cases, a back current has washed from the bottom that which the forward current of pure truth had laid in the bed of the stream. Have we seen such feelings as these? " How is our country humbled before the whole world, in the Crimea! " Have we not heard, where the heart has been torn by the thoughts of brothers and kindred dear dying in the Crimea, " What a shame for us that our Government should have shown its inferiority to the French! " etc., etc. Let saints of God look to it that they be not caught by sorrow, where joy did not succeed against them. Be it that the world is unmasking itself, and that he who is a murderer and a liar from the beginning has shown himself in his own colors, and shown what his service really is, still a heavenly man, and man of heaven (be he Russian, Turk, French, or English), has to look down on it all as Christ looks upon it in its connection with God and His testimony, and not as a mere inhabitant of this or that land. T.

## Fragment: Partakers of That Which Is Christ's

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There is such a thing as being made partaker of blessing, in order that one may suffer and give up our all, and do the will of God; and there is such a thing as suffering, giving up our all and doing the will of God, in order that we may be made partakers: but, in both cases, we are made partakers of that which is in Christ-is Christ's-is His alone to give-Himself the alone giver.

Life in and from Christ with death in ourselves and as to the world-and death in ourselves and to the world dying with life in and from Christ are both true.

## Fragment: Paul

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When faith lags, God sometimes breaks up circumstances to hasten our steps-" Then they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." The care of all the churches, also; kept Paul from having too much leisure.

This was better for him than the drawing of his natural heart toward Jerusalem, which so often warped Paul in his course; better was it, too, than being carried away by a zeal without knowledge, as Paul was upon the stairs.

It is remarkable, how his natural zeal for Israel, won for Paul the reward of being the one by whom God cast Israel out of his lap. See last chapter of Acts.

In the first we have the things which we must learn if we would take the place of an intelligent disciple, such as the hope of His calling; the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power in the saints.

In the second, we see what are the relationships beyond all our power to measure existing between each member of the church and the Spirit, Christ and Him who is the father of Christ.

## Fragment: the Seven Churches

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It was decline of the faith and acting the plan of the kingdom, (into which we have been called and its glory)--that became the ruin of the church. Who should worship in the divine and heavenly assembly (and of whom, indeed, should it be composed), but those who were separate out of a world still guilty of the death of Christ and to be judged for final unbelief and resistance to Him?

As to the seven churches.

"But thou art rich" marks the declension in Smyrna. Then Balaam.-Then promise to the faithful in Thyatira to have power over the nations which showed the gist of her ambition. Next the quiet settlement of Sardis. The church in a mild and godly trust in Christ's name and word and the kingdom forgotten in Philadelphia. And Laodicea rich in this world and the world well pleased, and then she spued out.

What a difference between the apostasy of the dispensation and the failure of the Testimony.

## Fragments

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The expression of a thought always tells what the holder of it is.

God, Satan, and man, may express each one his thoughts upon a given subject. Each of them would, as certainly as the thought was expressed, reveal himself in the thought so expressed, and not only the measure (correct or incorrect) of that about which the expression is.

We see God's, Satan's, and men's thoughts about Job, in the book of that name; and Job's own, too, about himself.

God's alone were according to truth, and infallible; and all the rest were wrong, or only partially right. But God's thoughts revealed the character of the speaker, as much as did Satan's his character, and of men, each his own.

Moses gave his thoughts about Israel, once and again. So did God give his, and Satan his, and Israel its own. Each speaker, at least showed out himself;—though only one told the truth perfectly, according to divine light.

What a different thing a saint is as thought of by Christ; by Satan, by the world, by himself.

And what a contrast between John 17 and Rev. 12 in this connection. Christ talking to His Father about His disciples, and Satan accusing the brethren!

## God Is God

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Yes, be the world ever so godless,-God is GOD still; be the professing church ever so ungodly, God is GOD still; be the people of GOD ever so little godly, still GOD is GOD. This mere truism, then, that "GOD is GOD," is a very practical truth for us where we are. And it has a whole volume of truth in it, not only as to man's walk in the wilderness, but as being at the very root, and forming the very core, of the gospel itself.

## He That Descended

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"My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8,9).

Such is one great oracle of God. "The word of God is living." It is the word of Him who "knows what is in man." "With God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," but among the great variety of the human family, savage or civilized, bond or free, religious or philosophical (the Jew and the Greek of the Apostle), man is found in contrariety to God both in his thoughts and in his ways.

Let us take the thoughts and ways of man in reference to the very end of his being. His end and object is himself: He thinks and acts from himself and for himself. But is this God's object in creating man; or, indeed, any creature? Is it not that God may be glorified—that the Creator, who is blessed forever, may be seen—not that the creature should rob Him of His glory? This end, indeed, has not, in the case of man, been secured by creation, but it is secured by redemption. He who is redeemed to God acknowledges the glory of God as Creator, just as he who is justified freely by grace acknowledges the integrity, sanctity, and righteousness of the law. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4).

The contrariety between God and man was conspicuously shown when, the Lord Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, walked and conversed with men on this earth. "He was a sign spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed;" and as He furnished the occasion for bringing out the thoughts of the hearts of men, so He took the opportunity of setting over against them the thoughts of God. There was an inveterate thought in the hearts even of His own disciples, with respect to greatness. At one time they asked him plainly, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" At another time, "They disputed among themselves who should be the greatest." On a third occasion, two of them sought of Jesus the honored place of sitting on His right-hand and on his left, in glory (Mark 10:35-45). These several instances furnish the occasion of bringing out the thoughts of God with respect to greatness. The "little child" is set in the midst of the disciples, as the embodiment of the thoughts of God with respect to greatness. The doctrine is taught that "the chiefest among them shall be servant of all." The doctrine is confirmed by the example. "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The leading thought of the day is the elevation of man. Whatever may be the fact, the thought is not that of a few leading minds controlling all others, but such an elevation of the common mind as shall control all things. Is this the thought of God? Is this the way of God for the real exaltation of man? Is this the way of God for man to attain happiness? On the contrary, it is the subversion of the way of God; it is antagonism to the thought of God in the Gospel of His grace; it is the prelude to the last grand Anti-Christian confederacy, resulting in visible discomfiture, "by the fierceness

and wrath of Almighty God."

As Jesus Himself, in His ministry, was repeatedly contradicting the thought of greatness which His disciples entertained, so the doctrine of the humiliation of the Son of God is presented to us both as the law and example of real greatness. Self-exaltation is the thought of man as to greatness, and the way in which he seeks happiness. "Be that descended," is the thought of God; it is through Him "that descended" that the alone way is found to real greatness, even to the highest exaltation to which it is possible for God to elevate a moral and intelligent creature.

"He that descended." "I am the Lord: that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." This is not less true with respect to the glory due to Him, as "He that descended," than it is with respect to the glory due to Him as the alone object of worship. This glory is singular-it belongs to One alone. The archangel cannot trench on this prerogative glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; for He is as essentially separated from Him that created Him as man Himself. The archangel could not stoop to take on him "the form of a servant," because the condition of a servant was the condition of his being. Such a stooping was only in the power of one "in the form of God." This was His glory-" He that descended." On this point Jesus largely insists in His teaching; a rich sample of which we find in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel.

The Lord graciously seeks, from the miracle of the loaves, to find a way to their hearts for the reception of that bread which endureth unto eternal life, of which the manna which sustained their fathers in the wilderness, was a beautiful, yet but faint shadow: " Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Again, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, for I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." The Jews then murmured at him, because he said: "I am the bread which came down from heaven." They stumbled at the doctrine of the first stage in his humiliation: "He that descended." They thought they knew as much of His birth and bringing up as they did of Moses. They could not see the glory of his humiliation; "There was no beauty in Him that they should desire him." The doctrine is dismissed by the thought: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" But Jesus leads them on in His doctrine to another stage in. His humiliation; its crowning glory; reiterating the doctrine that "He descended," but connecting it with eating His flesh and drinking his blood, which led not only the Jews to strive, but to the turning back of some of His own followers. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." But in teaching this other step in His descent, He connects it with His ascent. "When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them: Doth this offend you? What, and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before." "He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

It was at the moment Judas went out, and the cross was vividly before Him, that Jesus said: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." He was about to enter on a glory counseled and settled in eternity, but manifested in a moment of time; a glory only discernible by the persons of the Godhead till it was actually accomplished, and then only seen by those taught

of the Holy Ghost, the glorifier of Jesus. This glory Jesus cannot give to another, neither dare any other take it to himself. It is only regarded as a disgrace rather than a glory, till the Spirit reveals its truth to the soul. But it is a glory which of necessity implies His own proper underived personal glory. Who but the Son of the living God, one essentially divine, could say, "and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"? Apart from the divinity of His person, it was only reasonable for the Jews to say: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Again, who but one truly divine could say: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father"? It was the glory of Jesus having life in Himself, and able to impart it to others; to descend under the power of death, that He might rescue others from its power, and skew that it was impossible for Him to be holden of death. Nor is this all, He laid down His life in obedience to the will of His Father and there was in the death of Jesus that singular and distinctive glory, that independence and obedience met together in it. "I lay it down of myself." "This commandment have I received of my Father." "Angels that excel in strength, do the commandment of the Lord, hearkening unto the voice of His word." This indeed is their glory. But angels are not independent beings; they are upheld as creatures, and obedience is necessary to their condition. But obedience is that into which the Son humbled Himself. It was His glory to do so, and God was glorified in Him. It is the glory of His humiliation which reached its utmost limit in the cross, which brings forth in such prominence the name of Jesus, "the only name under heaven given among men wherein there is salvation," and at the same time "the name above every name in heaven," the honor of which all must eventually acknowledge, if not in salvation, assuredly in judgment. It is as the only Savior, that Jesus says: "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it: for how should my name be polluted! and I will not give my glory to another." The Holy Ghost glorifies Jesus in testifying to His sufferings and the glories which followed them. The true doctrine of the cross is inseparably connected with the essential glory of the Person of the Son; but it is very possible to maintain a true confession of His Person, apart from the true doctrine of the cross. It is to this doctrine the Spirit testifies, and invests the familiar fact of the crucifixion of Christ with such a meaning and interest, that it may justly be said of it, "what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into man's heart to conceive, 'God has revealed to us by His Spirit.'" The acknowledgment of the fact of the cross apart from the doctrine of the cross, is as truly a subversion of the gospel, as the denial of the true divinity of the Lord Jesus. He will not receive the acknowledgment of the glory of His Person, save to exercise judgment, where the glory of His humiliation is not acknowledged. The preaching of the cross not only sets forth the only way by which a sinner may find remission of sins, peace with God and access to God, but is so essentially connected with the glory of Jesus, that contempt of it is treated as trampling under foot the Son of God. The doctrine of the cross is the special test of our standing before God-to the religious after the Jewish caste, it is "a stumbling-block"; to the philosophical, after the Grecian school, it is "foolishness," but "to the called, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

"The heavens declare the glory of God"; they set forth to our senses the power of God and the wisdom of God; and were it not for sin, which has alienated the mind from God, they would carry universally the demonstration of God's eternal power and Godhead. But man, as a sinner, needs another kind of demonstration, even "the demonstration of the Spirit," who shows to an awakened conscience, "the power and the wisdom of God" in the humiliation of Jesus. Until there be such

demonstration of the Spirit, however clearly it may be supposed that God is read in His works, He is not known as the Creator, "blessed forever."

The difference between the apostle's determination to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, and the popular creed that Christ was crucified, is an essential difference. In the last, credit is given to a well-attested historical fact, but the apostle's expression comprises the wide range of the thoughts and ways of God. And when these thoughts and ways are brought out in their great results, it is in the triumph of "Him that descended"- it is in the victory of the Lamb slain. "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

When once the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as "He that descended," is perceived, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that there must be a new thought, a new way, and a new order of greatness, corresponding with the glory of the humiliation of Jesus. The human order of greatness is an ascending order. It is the development of the power of mind over matter, so that men themselves are startled at the greatness of their achievements. Every step in advance only makes way for further progress. Men think, speak, and act, as though impossibility was to be blotted out of their vocabulary; but their thoughts and ways are in direct antagonism to the thoughts and ways of God. They are "laboring in the fire, and wearying themselves for very vanity, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It is not the glory of man, but the glory of God, which is to prevail. In vain are men contending against the purpose and counsel of God; for "the Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth." It is a fearful thing to be found striving against God. We may have marveled at the stoutheartedness of Pharaoh in refusing to humble himself before God. But when men refuse to submit to the righteousness of God, by going about to establish their own righteousness, it is only another form of stoutheartedness and of insubjection to God. And if God has declared, "Every good and perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and men are seeking good and perfection by exalting themselves, the issue of such a conflict between God and man, must be as terrible as it is certain. It is to such an issue that all things are now rapidly tending.

There is a wisdom, "earthly" in its origin, and a wisdom "that descendeth from above." The earthly wisdom "has sought out many inventions," but nothing, perfect" results from it. It does not satisfy the craving of man, as a creature; it cannot pacify the conscience of man, as a sinner. It is "the good and perfect gift, that cometh down from above," which alone effects these ends. It is Jesus Himself, the unspeakable gift of God, comprehending in Himself, and in that which He has wrought, that which satisfies the soul, gives peace to the conscience, and access with confidence into the presence of God. It is He who testified, "I am from above, ye are from beneath," who alone could say, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." This is the divine order-the perfect one coming from above-this is the alone order of exaltation. According to this order, "he that exalteth himself shall be abased." He that exalts himself is traversing the divine order; he is spurning the good and perfect gift; he stands before God as a sinner, under the increased condemnation of "sitting in the seat of the scornful." He is still attempting to attain blessedness by the ascending line, when the coming down of the Son from heaven, and His further humiliation in the death of the cross, declares that it can only be attained in the descending line. The peril of the age is that men are turning upside down the gospel of

Christ, in order to exalt themselves.

One feature of corruption noticed by the Apostle Jude is that " in those things which men know naturally as brute beasts, they corrupt themselves." Such a natural knowledge, even of the leading truths of the gospel, is found among professing Christians. There is a natural knowledge of the mercy of God, a natural knowledge of Christ dying for sinners, which men only use to corrupt themselves, by assuming, on the very ground of it, a more proud and independent standing before God than those who are without such knowledge. Such is the fearful aspect before our eyes-man exalting himself by means of the very light which should humble him and lead him to magnify the Lord, Surely " the light is become darkness, and how great is that darkness?"

" It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Infidelity and superstition are spreading, and God's hand lifted up in judgment, and yet men " will not see." This is, indeed, alarming. But this is not all; the most alarming feature is that of man advancing himself into independence of God, by means of the -very light which sets forth " the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This, it is to be feared, is the true character of vaunted Christian civilization.

There is nothing so dark in the picture of " the perilous days," portrayed by the apostle Paul, as to alarm our fears. He does not present us with desolating wars, appalling famine, or ravaging pestilence, but with selfishness, gain and pleasure, under the form of godliness. If this peril is not perceived, if even real Christians have thought that, by mingling with the world, they could elevate and improve it, and by the attempt have lost their own savor-(" wherewithal shall it be salted?") Christians themselves are not the only sufferers. " A woe is come on the world," because of the offenses of Christians. Christians have failed to glory only in the cross of Christ; and thus, instead of "holding forth the word of life in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," they have helped on the delusion of the world. The Christian of this favored land, although a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, may well weep over the actual condition of his country. He sees before him the antagonism of selfishness, capital arrayed against labor, and labor against capital, and the efforts of the wisest powerless to adjust these conflicting claims. He sees gain and godliness almost become convertible terms; and national legislation, and even religion itself, made to bow to the low principle of human convenience. But it belongs not to the Christian to speculate on the decline of nations, except so far as to show the church the magnitude of its sin. " Judgment must begin at the house of God." Such is the divine order. Let Christians then judge from their ownelves what is right. And, if they have helped on human selfishness by failing to exhibit the glory of the humiliation of Jesus, let them at once stand forth in the confession of His name before men, not only for their own souls' blessing, but for the good of others. We cannot correct selfishness by counter-selfishness, but by testifying to the unselfish love of Jesus, taking up the cross and following Him. " Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Presbutes,

[See also Phil. 2:5-10.-ED.]

## Heads of Psalms

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Faithful endurance, in the day of such manifest weakness that the enemy scoffs, as despising the oppressed righteous; but in that day He confesses the Lord as His trust, and triumphs in spirit, in the deep and blessed intelligence of the things to follow after-such the actings of the Spirit of Christ.

### Psa. 12

The poor and the needy, in the midst of abounding and prevailing evil, turns to the Lord for help, and in Him finds relief; His pure words to sustain the heart, in place of words of vanity that grieve, that vex a righteous soul; and in this peaceful repose of faith all is blessed triumph for the afflicted and poor people: such was the patient endurance of Christ in the day of His humiliation, and such the spirit of faith, in the saints now sustained by Him, who suffered, being tempted.

## Hebrews 13:7-10

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Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ; the same yesterday, and to day, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

## The Epistle to the Hebrews

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A Fragment.

There is a divine wisdom' stamped on every page of the precious Word of God, which only requires divine light, and a heart subject to God, in order to its being perceived and enjoyed. But in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the rays of this wisdom are concentrated, making the ever-interesting subjects on which it treats, glow with its heavenly brightness.

Sacrifice, priesthood, and religious ordinances, are elements for which there appears to be a natural affinity in the human mind, almost independently of the adventitious circumstances of rudeness or intellectual culture - the possession of a divine revelation, or the glimmerings of traditional notices of truth--and the immense practical importance of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in such a day as this, is found in its object being to define the character of these elements, to show their necessity and bearing in regard to a sinner's intercourse and relationship with God; and above all, to give them their just place and force according to the light of the gospel of the grace of God.

Everything in the shape of a divinely-appointed ordinance that ever had a claim upon the conscience and the soul, is in this epistle taken up, and the limit of its continuance is marked, and the manner of its abrogation indicated with a wisdom that proclaims itself to be divine.

It is shown especially, that in the original constitution of these ordinances, whether relating to sacrifice or priesthood, or ritual service, no latitude was allowed to the mind or thoughts of man. " For see (said He to Moses) that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount." But, in the next place, it is as plainly shown that, in their original constitution, they were but the "shadows of good things to come," which had their verification in the perfected work and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ; and not, as many imagine, by an arrangement of more spiritual ordinances, but in these ordinances having their whole meaning, and harmony, and force, in the person, and work, and present position, and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, when it is considered that all which is ordinarily called religion, in these days is but an imperfect, humanly-devised compound of these ordinances, it will easily be conceived how unspeakable is the importance of a right understanding of this epistle, that men may not blindly imagine they are serving God by attending to what are called " meats, and drinks, and divers ordinances, imposed until the times of reformation"; and in another Scripture, called even "beggarly elements" by the Holy Ghost.

The express object of this divine treatise is to take up the whole means of God's own appointment, by which man was to have to do with God, and to show that in their abrogation the believer is brought, through the very means of their putting away, into the nearest possible connection with God, and into an entire dissociation from the world in which these ordinances had their place; so that now a believer's position is (toward God) " boldness by the blood of Jesus to enter into the holiest of all," and (toward the world, and all the religion of the world) "going without the camp,

bearing Christ's reproach." J. C.

## The Intercession of the Spirit

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It has pleased God to reveal that standing in grace into which faith in Christ gives us introduction; and He shows us, to our comfort, how that standing is always maintained for us in righteousness by the intercession of Christ. It is not the way of the Spirit of God to present truth to us theoretically, but rather in a way to meet the exercises of conscience, both with respect to our sinfulness and God's holiness. An abstract doctrine, however true, will not meet the need of an exercised soul. Such a soul is sensitive both as to the holiness of God and the evil of sin, and needs to know the present living active ministry of Christ as engaged on its behalf. It is with the intercession of Christ that the apostle closes the wonderful climax (Rom. 8:31-34). None can lay anything to the charge of God's elect, for God Himself has justified them—none can condemn them without impugning the value of Christ's death. But Christ is risen again, and is even at the right hand of God; and there He is actively engaged on our behalf; "He also maketh intercession for us." It is thus that God has provided for the maintenance of His holiness, and prevented even our failings from displacing us from that nearness to Him, whereunto we are brought by the blood of Christ.

What the value of the intercession of Jesus was to Peter, the same is it to every believer. Had Peter's faith in Jesus failed, on the discovery of the turpitude of his conduct to his Master, how exquisite would have been his misery. But when he was turned from fleshly confidence to look only to Jesus, he not only knew that he was "kept by the power of God," but he was also "strengthened." It is thus that we are kept in that grace wherein we stand; and our standing before God through Jesus is "holy, and unblameable, and unrebukeable."

But God is pleased to consider our actual circumstances, and to provide for us accordingly. This is in—finite condescension, and the way in which we especially learn divine sympathy. "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are but as dust." The apostle in Rom. 8 speaks of sufferings, "groanings," and "infirmities," as making part of the actual condition of the saints; and it is well to notice, that if we do not recognize the gracious way in which God considers our actual condition, we are liable to fall into mysticism or reckless fatalism. Over against "the sufferings of the present time" the apostle sets "the glory to be revealed in us"—over against "the groanings" "the redemption of the body" (see also 2 Cor. 5). But in meeting "the infirmities" the apostle introduces "the intercession of the Spirit." But what are the infirmities of which the apostle speaks? These are sufficiently defined; for whilst they result from our being still in the flesh and in the world, they are infirmities which are not common to man as man, but characteristic of "the saints." "We know," says the apostle, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"; and not only it, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, "the redemption of the body." Here "ourselves" stands in contrast with "the whole creation." It groans, and we groan. True it is that we groan with it, as having sympathy with it, because we are connected with "the first man, who is of the earth, earthy." But we groan "within ourselves," because of our possession of the Spirit; by that Spirit we are linked to another creation, of which Jesus, not Adam, is the Head in and of one creation for a time, but belonging to another

creation essentially and forever, we groan by reason of the strangeness of our actual condition.

The spiritual man, knowing that he is presented before God as in the spirit, and not in the flesh, is at the same time made very sensible of what it is to "groan in this tabernacle, being burdened." But even were he exempt from personal trials, he sees all around him contrary to Christ; he sees the great mass, although outwardly acknowledging Christ, yet strangers to His grace, and either setting aside or resisting "the truth." Jesus himself, for there is none perfect but the Lord, was necessarily, in this world, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," exhibiting divine sympathy in full intelligence of the extent of human misery. He was "grieved at the hardness of the heart" of those around Him, Mark 3:5. When a case of human misery was presented before Him, in one deaf, and who had an impediment in his speech, "He sighed, and saith unto him 'Ephphatha,' that is, Be opened." So again, at witnessing the deeper misery of those who sought a sign from heaven; "He sighed deeply in His spirit." He wept over Jerusalem, when He saw her reckless of impending visitation. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, when He witnessed the inevitable disruption of the fondest human affections. In our measure the reality of human misery, moral and physical, must often produce the secret sigh, alloyed, indeed, in us, by selfishness, which had no place in Jesus. Even where there is allowed human joy, as in the outflowing of family affection, the sigh will escape, or the tear roll down, in the certain knowledge of its transiency. But whilst our actual condition necessitates as it were this inward groaning, there are exercises of the soul, which (although not sinful in themselves, yet resulting from our actual condition) become most perplexing. Such exercises the apostle here calls "infirmities," and it is in reference to these infirmities that the apostle presents to us the doctrine of "the intercession of the Spirit." "Likewise, also, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to God." "But we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." One special "infirmity" arising from our actual condition, is, that because of that condition We are unable intelligently to ask God to meet our need. We are perplexed and drawn different ways. The soul may labor to pour itself out before God, and yet know not how to Utter its complaint, or what to ask for. Here the Spirit comes in to our help, and by means of a groan, or a sigh, unintelligent to us, maketh intercession for us. But, although unintelligent to us, it is not unintelligent in heaven, for "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." He knows what the real need is, and what the right remedy is; for the intercession of the Spirit is according to God's perfect understanding of our case, and not according to our ignorance. This is a doctrine of solid comfort to the soul. The Lord had made known of old how that he put "all the tears of His saints in His bottle," as well as that "in all their afflictions He was afflicted." But till redemption was actually accomplished by the work of Christ on the cross, the doctrine of the intercession of the Spirit could not be announced. Till Jesus was glorified, the Holy Ghost could not come down from heaven to dwell in the church as the other comforter, and to take this place of intercession. It is only when the irreconcilable variance between the flesh and the spirit is truly acknowledged, and we have learned to judge the flesh according to the extent of its meaning, as set forth in the word of God, that we discover that there may be intelligence with God in a sigh or a groan. The doctrine may be exemplified by Jesus himself, the perfect one.

The scene at the grave of Lazarus brought out from Jesus what seemed only an unintelligent groan; but that groan was intelligible to the Father, and it was answered. " When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping, which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.... Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself, cometh to the grave.... Then they took away the stone where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me'" (John 11:33, 38, 41). This illustrates the doctrine. Prayer was not uttered, but the groan in the spirit was heard and answered.

The Apostle Paul, in the statement of his experience (Phil. 1:21-24), furnishes us with an instance of an "infirmity" to which we are subject by reason of our present condition. His perplexity was speedily resolved, but the perplexity itself sprang from an infirmity, because his personal spiritual feelings drew him one way, and his spiritual judgment another. There was nothing sinful in the conflict; it was infirmity. However holy and pure his personal feeling-a feeling only possible for one born of God-even this feeling needed to be lost in the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God. One only could perfectly say, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." We must, indeed, take perfection as our example; but in our case, personal feelings have often to be crossed, and always to be exercised, in order to bring us into approval of and delight in the will of God. "To me," says the apostle, "to live, is Christ, and to die, is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not, for I am in a strait between two." The sum of human life is, in the case of many, nothing more than a choice between two evils; and unfaithfulness often brings Christians themselves into a like perplexity. But in the case of the apostle, it was a choice between two blessed things: his own personal joy, in being with the Lord, and his service to the Lord in serving the saints. To be thrown into " a strait betwixt two," is a token of infirmity arising from the condition in which we are. The unfallen angels cannot be supposed to be in such a state. Their glory is, that however "they excel in strength, they do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." The glory of the redeemed also is obedience to the will of God; but they not being dependent on direct mandate, as angels; but, led of the Spirit into exercise of conscience in order to obedience, discover their infirmity, and are often in such a strait as not to know what to choose, or what to ask for, as they ought. Hence they sigh and groan; but in this exercise, the Spirit maketh intercession for them according to God. When we look at "the Son" Himself, we see the difference between Him and "men having infirmity"-between the Master and His servant.

In the servant there was "infirmity," hence his strait, his not knowing what to choose.

The Master also was "straitened" but not "between two." There was no place in Him for such infirmity. He had one single object before Him. "My meat," says He, "is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." "That work was before Him," and " when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." But He knew the reality of that which awaited Him there, and said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Deep were the exercises of His soul in approaching this marvelous work. His perfect knowledge of the evil of sin, as well as of the wrath of God about to light on Him, before He was "received up," "straitened" His spirit. But in the deepest exercise of His soul in anticipation of the cross (for when the moment came He was led as a lamb to the slaughter) He was never "in a strait betwixt two." His one object, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," was always conspicuous. "How is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." In His agony in

the garden of Gethsemane, His one object is made more prominent by the depth of the soul-exercise through which He was passing. "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." We have the fullest assurance that in Jesus, "we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He can throw Himself into our case in all the power of divine sympathy, but He "needed not," as we do, to be led by a process of discipline into acquiescence with the will of God, because to do that will was His single paramount object. We are often in a "strait between two," not knowing what to choose, or what to pray for as we ought. But the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us according to God, by a sigh or a groan. The perplexity is cleared away, and acquiescence in the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God is brought about. For the statement of the apostle, that "we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God, the called according to His purpose," is closely connected with the doctrine of the intercession of the Spirit. The apostle states what "we do not know," and what "we do know." "We know not what to pray for as we ought," "but we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God." This statement comes in to meet the need of an exercised soul, and not as an abstract doctrine. It is through perplexities and difficulties, in proving what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, that the soul is led to leave all things in His hand, rather than choose for itself; and to rest in holy confidence, that under His wise master-hand all things are working together for good, although it may not know what to pray for.

In illustration of what these infirmities are, which the Spirit helps by what is to us an intelligent sigh or groan; let us take the case of a Christian father of a family laid on a bed of sickness. His own gain would be to depart and be with Christ, but he sees those around him whom he is bringing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and his anxiety is for them. Shall he plead to be raised up for their sakes? He is in a strait, conflicting thoughts rise within; he is deeply exercised, he knows not what to pray for; he feels almost as though he could not pray; he groans inwardly. Here is the intercession of the Spirit. The conflict ends. His times are in the hands of the Lord. If God takes him, He can "turn His hand on the little ones." God can take better care of them than the father, and He will not take away the father without supplying the father's place Himself. Such an exercise of soul therefore, under God's hand, is working together with other things for good; it brings out into prominence God's covenant promises as blessed realities, and leading the soul to look unto Jesus, as the perfect pattern, to say humbly, yet sincerely, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

Presbutes.

## Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: the Church in Christ

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" God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.... has blessed us.....IN CHRIST, according as He has chosen us IN HIM." (Eph. 1:4).

"In that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

Whither are we led, if we trace upward the river of eternal life which flows in the channel of the church to its source? The church is of God, but it is in Christ the Son, in God.

We must, then, leave the bounds of time, and go back, be it only in thought, to the glory which was before the foundation of the world. Here, doubtless, it becomes us to take our shoes from off our feet and to worship. God alone is from eternity and to eternity; and He alone is in Himself ETERNAL. It is, then, He alone who can instruct us in the truths which belong to eternity. Now, in His grace, He has already given to us His word; and this word shows us two great blessings which belong to the church; both of them are as wonderful as the truth, the fact, that the first thought of the church was found in God, in His counsels before the foundation of the world. And both these turn (as the wheel on its pivot) around the Son. He is the center of their action. They proceed, indeed, from what God saw in Him. Oh, how this precious Savior is all glorious in Himself, and how happy is God to have such a Son!

The two blessings of which I speak are, first, being blessed by God as the Father; and, second, that our blessing is in His Christ (Eph. 1:3). Now our Lord is the Son of the Father; and He is the Servant, the Anointed One of God. How plainly do we see this at the moment He declares Himself through Mary to His disciples (John 20:17). Jesus saith to her, " Touch me not, for I am not' yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them; I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God."

Supposing I say to any one " My father," it is evident I take the place of a child towards the one to whom I so speak. In this relationship, the word child is correlative with the word father; and the name father is correlative with that of child. The names father and child are correlative terms. There is a reciprocal, a corresponding relationship between the two positions as to nearness, between the two ideas conveyed by the names father and son.

I may be. the only child of my father, really his child; or, perhaps, I am only an adopted child, a captive taken in war the son of an implacable enemy of the one to whom I give the name of "my father." Nevertheless, the moment I call any one by the name of father I put myself in the position towards him of being his " child"; for the name father, the thought conveyed by this name, places me towards him in the relationship of child. In this relationship it is not wages given by the one who is the superior to the one who is the inferior which unites them together (though such might be given and received without destroying the relationship); no, there is a closeness of relationship; one of the highest degree between the two. Liberty in love reigns between them, and the interest of the one is the interest of the other. The one is the head and the protector. The other is in the place of protected and dependent. The service is both mutual and one of love. The service of him

who is a son and heir is free, and not like the service of him who is a slave and serves because he is forced to it. My only son is my second self. I do not give to him as I do to a slave, to a mere hireling. Supposing I have slaves, upon the principle of self-interest I might give to them, looking upon them as part of my property, it becomes my own interest to take care of them: or, perhaps, I do not like that any one dependent on me should be seen to want while I have more than enough. If I have hired servants, the motives which influence me in my conduct towards them may be justice, or the relations which I feel ought to exist between man and man in a free country. But with regard to my son it is quite another thing: it does not become me as father to act towards my son upon the same principles which govern my conduct towards my slaves or hired servants. It would be my shame to do so-my heart would revolt from it; and the same holds good as to my son's conduct, it would be shameful for him to act towards me upon the same motives on which a hireling would act towards his master.

Now to turn to the thoughts which we find in scripture connected with the name "the Son of God."

1. The scripture calls Adam the son of God. "Jesus being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli.... son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God" (Luke 3:38).

2. When it was the purpose of God to deliver Israel out of Egypt, he first began to work in their behalf by providence (Ex. 1:17, 20; ch. 2). Then, He heard their groanings, and He remembered the covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus He had pity on the children of Israel and remembered their estate. Afterward He revealed Himself to Moses in the midst of the bush (3:6), saying to him, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and (ver. 7) he says, "I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt," etc.; but, not long afterward, He calls them by another name, "Israel is my son, my first-born. And I said to thee, Let my son go that he may serve me; but if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born" (iv. 22, 23).

3. Solomon, the king, is called by God "my son" (2 Sam. 8:14; 22. 10; 28:6). God had before given to him the name of Jedidiah (Beloved of Jah). The meaning of Solomon is PEACE; blessed name of Him whose type he was, who shall establish peace! The "Prince of Peace" is Jesus the Son of God.

If I were writing about Israel as a type of Jesus, I could hardly forbear from dwelling at length upon one passage, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1; and Matt. 2:15). But now I must content myself with observing, that it proves that both the nation Israel, and the child Jesus, are called by God "my son" in one and the same passage.

4. The Lord Jesus is called "Son".

Before presenting a few verses on this subject, I desire to turn to a passage containing a warning as to the spirit in which we should come to search the scriptures on this precious doctrine; precious in itself, and precious to us, because it is united (as we shall soon see) with all the blessing of the church.

"All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27).

What is said here is most plain. No one (ο■δεις) knoweth the Son but the Father. What heresies! What errors! have there not arisen from the neglect of this short sentence.

The Son reveals, makes known, the Father: but no one save the Father knoweth the Son. But though we cannot know the Son; nevertheless, that which is written is for us, and we find there much revealed to us concerning Him whom no one knoweth but the Father:-truths without the revelation of which, perhaps, the Son could not have revealed the Father. To study these things is, without doubt, our duty if only done in the spirit of dependence.

I remark then first, that the Jews evidently knew and connected the name of Son of David and Son of Abraham with the Messiah whom they were looking for.

Jesus was hailed (at least by those who believed on Him in His day) as "Son of David."

For example (Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:28, 30.) Read the two following passages. "And the multitudes.... cried, saying: Hosanna (save, we beseech thee) to the son of David I Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest...."

The children cried in the temple, saying:-

"Hosanna to the son of David!" (Matt. 21:9, 15.) Jesus said to the Pharisees:-

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in Spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, How is He then His son?" (22:42-45.)

I notice here, that the unconverted Jews boasted of being the children of Abraham: "We be Abraham's seed (John 8:33); Abraham is our Father" (39). "Think not to say within yourselves: We have Abraham to our Father. For I say unto you, that God is able even of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3:8; see also Matt. 8:11). Again in Luke 16:22-24.

Father Abraham, was said by the rich man three times out of the depth of Hell; see also John 8:52,56. Now that He who was son of David was necessarily also son

of Abraham is plain: but though Jesus is declared by the Spirit of God in the Gospels to be son of Abraham as well as son of David (Matt. 1:1 etc.); yet, though the receiving of this truth is of faith, I do not see that believing Jews ever hailed Jesus as " the seed of Abraham," as they did as "son of David."

The name by which the Lord always called Himself was Son of man (see Matt. 8:20;9. 6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; 13:37-41; 16:13, 27, 28; 17:9, 12, 22; 18:11; 19:28; 20:18, 28; 26:2, 24). As Redeemer, it is the name peculiar to Himself. I quote the epistle to the Heb. 2:8-10, as explaining the meaning of this name. "We see not yet all things put under Him; but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 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 suffering." This is the reason which God pleases to give us, for such or such a thing-His why. "It becomes Me"; higher we cannot go. But we may well observe, that if the

Son of God became Son of man because we were such, and became also the chief one in suffering, crucified through weakness, this name, " Son of Man" has also for him quite another aspect-that, namely, of glory. And through means of it, His Glory becomes likewise ours. The glory in the Transfiguration pre-figured the coming glory of the Son of Man (Matt. 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:27, 37, 39, 40, 44; 25:13, 31.)

This name "Son of Man," is often joined to another, "the Son of God." Take for example (Matt. 26:63, 64); the high priest adjures Him, " by the Living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said. I say to thee, that hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of Heaven" (agreeing with Dan. 7), see also John 1:52.

Here I would remark, that it is evident that the high priest acknowledged that the Christ or Messiah whom they expected was the Son of God. He says not "Son of the Father," but, " Son of God."

And further, Jesus was honored as the Son of God by the God of Israel. Both at His baptism and transfiguration, He owned Him to be "my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35).

John the Baptist (John 1:34), Nathanael (1:50), Satan and those possessed by him (Matt. 8:29; Mark 3:11; 5:7).-They who were in the ship with Him (Matt. 14:33); Peter (Matt. 16:16); the centurion at the cross (Matt. 27:54); all united to own this Glory of Son of God to be His.

And, moreover, He claimed for Himself the right as the Son of man who is in Heaven (John 3:16); to be Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28); and to have power upon earth to forgive sins (Luke 5:24); that is to say, to have the same power as God Himself (see also John 3:16, 17, 18, 35, 36).

And here let it be repeated what has been said already, that the high priest acknowledged that the Messiah must be none other but the Son of God Himself; and Jesus in His character of God's witness to Israel was distinguished and owned in divers ways to be the Son of God.

As to this title of the Lord Jesus, there are two things which I would desire to point out. First, it is most plain that this name was given expressly to the seed of the Virgin (Luke 1:31, 32, 33, 35). "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and thou shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His Father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then Mary said.. how shall this thing be, seeing I know not a man? And the Angel said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over-shadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD." This passage is of the utmost importance, whether we consider the child Jesus or the man Jesus. But on the other hand let it never be forgotten that this name "Son of God" belonged BEFORE the World was to Him who we know became "Jesus." The evidence in support of this truth is as perfect as its importance is inexpressible. To deny it would be to destroy (though perhaps without knowing what one was doing, still it would be doing so) the whole work of redemption and to nullify salvation by grace.-The Glory of the "Son of God" is distinctly recognized in Proverbs, as likewise in the same book, chap. xxx. It is not the child, the man of Nazareth which is here described, but it is He who, being Son of God before the world was, stooped to become the Son of the Virgin -the Son of man.-There are three things which it would seem to me are true of all

that is, in its most positive sense, eternal. It is not only eternal, first, as to what is to come, but it is so likewise, secondly, as to that which is past. It never had a beginning, and, as there is none but God of whom this can be said, it has necessarily, thirdly, the character of the eternal. The body of our adorable Master (blessed be God that it is so I) has an eternal future, as also our glorified bodies shall have. His human body was always perfect, never knew anything but perfection; alas! it is not so with ours!-But God was not manifest in the flesh, until "The Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin Mary, and the power of the Highest over-shadowed her"; and then it could be said, "therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of her shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1); but God who was manifest in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), is THE SON (as we shall see); and so there is at least a double application of this name of Son of God to the Lord Jesus..

In the eighth chapter of the Proverbs, we find "Wisdom Divine" as the subject of it; and Christ is "the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:30), "for in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). "22. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. 23. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was. 24. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. 25. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth. 26. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27. When He prepared the heavens I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the depth. 28. When He stablished the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29. When He gave to the sea His decree, that the water should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: 30. Then I was by Him as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; 31. Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth, and my delights were with the sons of men. 32. Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways. 33. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. 34. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. 35. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. 36. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."

What a beautiful description this is! I passingly remark, that I should prefer to render ver. 23, "I was anointed from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the world was [Gentil renders it thus-"I received the anointing from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the world was"]; and it is absolutely necessary that "I was there" (■■■■■■ ■■■■) should be put in after "the heavens" in ver. 27, if the Hebrew is faithfully rendered. Some translators omit it.

It is not my wish to reason about these verses, nor even to analyze them in detail. When the glory of God passed before Moses, hidden in the rock (Ex. 33 and 34), Moses hastened and bowed his head to the earth and worshipped. Light, when it shines, is its own evidence, at least for those who have eyes and see (2 Cor. 4:3-6). As to boasted Reason, I have but one observation to add; namely, that as well to it as to him who wrote the scriptures do we give the lie, if vivid descriptions which, necessarily pre-suppose a person to whom they belong, and giving us the thoughts, the words, the acts, the reasonings of that person, are looked upon merely as descriptive of some attribute or quality, or some feature of character.

The Jews, in the time of Christ, never thought of so despising the glory of their nation, as to deny that their expected Messiah was to be Son of God as well as Son of Man. I know that they now

deny both. But what then can this people understand by such passages as the following; for instance, these two as to the name of Son of Man (Gen. 18 and Dan. 7)

The worship which Abraham rendered to one alone of his three visitors, how will they explain that; or, this name of Adonai, by which Abraham calls Him? They dare not say that this name may be given to any other than to Him to whom the Tetragrammaton belongs (even ■■■■■). Do they then dare to accuse Abraham of lightness, profaneness, or ignorance? No: Abraham was right; it is they who call themselves his children that are wrong. Abraham worshipped, Abraham addressed Him who was before him under the form of a MAP as Jehovah. And what is meant by the Son of Man in Daniel (chap. vii.) The Son of Man who came with the clouds of heaven, and he came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him; and there was given to Him a kingdom and glory and dominion, and all people, nations, and tongues shall serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not pass away (13, 14).

But infidelity finds no difficulties. It can pass over everything, it fears nothing, unless to be blessed by grace.

And as to the name "Son of God": Who is the Son of God who walked with the three children of the faith of Abraham in the fiery furnace. "Behold, I see four men\* bound, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God?" (Dan. 3:25).

Who is He who has ascended up into heaven, or descended? (comp. Deut. 30:13, 14, and Rom. 10:6,7). Who is He that hath gathered the winds in his fists, who hath bound the waters in a garment, who hath established all the bounds of the earth? (comp. Job 38:41) What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou knowest it? (Prov. 30:4).

And how do the Jews explain Jehovah being sold in His temple for thirty pieces? (Zech. 10:12, 13). The pieces which were cast to the potter? And who is this One with the wounds in His hands, wounds which he received in the house of His friends? Nevertheless, it is to Him that this wonderful address is made, which we read in Zech. 13:7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts; for it is written, Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn my hand upon the little ones." The history of the life of Jesus is a master-key which opens all these difficult passages. Who is there who will find a second key to them?

We have now looked at four different applications of this name, "the Son of God." First, as to Adam in his place in the kingdom of the creation; then to Israel in its place as a nation in the kingdom of Divine Providence upon the earth; then to Jesus the Savior, first as to His human body, and secondly to Himself as God over all. From eternity Son, and in Himself, He is eternal; eternal and from eternity and to eternity. It is God alone that can say "I am"-and Jesus said so of Himself.

It has been well said, as to the Bible, that the best principle for understanding it is by the context. This is always the case, whether it be in the sacred scriptures, or in human productions; but this principle is much more applicable to the word of God, by reason of one thing which distinguishes it as the word of God from everything which merely proceeds from a creature. God is infinite; He sees everything as it is in itself, but in its relationship with Himself who is infinite. When then He presents His thoughts to us (and the Bible is the book in which He does so) we have the exact thoughts of Him who is infinite about things which, though they be in themselves finite, are

nevertheless seen in their relationships with Him who is infinite. When it is a man who speaks to us, or that we have to do with the words of man, he does not show us things just as they are—he wants to show us things as he sees them; he gives us his definitions of them. By reason of infirmity he must necessarily do so, and he can only look at them as in a limited sphere, because he himself is finite.

Who is able to bring down the divine thoughts found in the scriptures, so as to present them correctly in a human dictionary. We have only to make the trial with this name, " the Son of God," or with this expression, " Thou art my Son, to-day I have begotten thee" (found in Acts 13:32,33; Heb. 1:5 and 5:5), or with this other (in Hab. 2:4), " The just shall live by faith," quoted in Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, and Heb. 10:38, and what, say you, will be the result of the effort? The result, I say, will be one of two things—either you will find yourself powerless in the presence of the truth which judges you, and which will force you to feel that you are not capable of judging it (for it is the word of Him who is infinite), or else you will lower down the word of God, who is infinite, to the limits of the capacity of one, not merely finite, but a sinner. That word which is enough for God, as the expression of His thoughts, who is infinite, must be enough for me. It addresses itself plainly enough to my conscience, in all my littleness, to show me my state of separation from God and to condemn me. If I have faith, then I have also the Spirit of God; and thus this word becomes the life eternal of my soul, my food; but, as to understanding it, as to the thought of bringing it down to the limits of the mind of man; I do not look upon myself as capable of attempting even to do so. Much sooner should I think of comprehensively grasping, or of bringing down to the bounds of man, the physical atmosphere of our globe.

The reception of the word, according to the purpose of God in giving it to us, and the reception of it to use it for our own lusts, are two things directly opposite:—the first is faith's use of it, the second is proud reason's, and has been the source of every heresy.

But there is yet another expression which we have to consider; and it is this, "the Son of the Father." A revelation which God the Father in His grace has made to us, and which stands in contrast with the glory promised to His people Israel. There is not, that I know of, a single expression in the gospels which would lead us to suppose that any Jew as such had even an idea of the glory of the Son of the Father, which nevertheless belongs to Him who is the Second Adam; the Son of Man, the God-man, the Son of God as Man; and Son of God, according to the glory of His person as God.

The Son of the Father.

John 1:18. " No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath declared Him."

Chapter 5:17. Jesus said: " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His father, making Himself equal with God. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what thing soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth

whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."

Chapter 6:27. " 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 the Father hath sealed."

Ver. 44. "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."

But our best instruction in this so deep subject, is found in the Lord's own words in chaps. 14 and 17 of the gospel of John. In chap. 14, Jesus is speaking to His disciples, whom He was about to leave; but the prayer, in chap. 17 was addressed to the Father, though it was uttered in the presence of the eleven disciples. Chapter 13 of the Gospel of St. John is a description of the wilderness and the sorrows which there await the faithful disciple-it is in contrast with the picture of the Father's house and the blessings inside it of chap. 14. In the wilderness, the glory of Him who is of God is to be servant, and to be so of His own choice; and the humiliation of each one, is according to the measure of his rank.

The One, who is Head of all, as to His personal glory, is the one who was chiefest of all in humiliation and suffering (as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief). The smallest measure of affliction and of suffering is for the least of the servants; and this principle, which ordains for the wilderness, that the glory of a servant should be inseparably linked with humiliation and suffering, holds good in all the degrees which lie between these two extremes; that is to say, the same rule applies to every degree between the first and the last of the servants. According to the balance of the sanctuary, humiliation in service is the counterbalance in the scale of the rank of each individual. The one balances against the other. The service of the disciples is one of humiliation-it is to wash one another's feet; and it is one likewise of deep sorrow; perils of false brethren (such as Judas); afflictions which spring up from true brethren (such as Peter) when the flesh is not judged, as well as the world, Satan, and the flesh to harass us. In contrast with this, chap. 14 speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; and the scene opened before us is the Father's house with the blessings, positions and happiness of the children inside it.

But upon this second subject, it is not difficult to see that no one had knowledge save the Master Himself.

The disciples could not understand His instructions,-the subject was quite new to them, He met with no response within them. It was not so (as we have seen) when it related to the title of the Son of God belonging to their Master. No; as Jews, they well knew that the Messiah must be no other than the Son of God; but the moment that Jesus begins to speak to them of " my Father" and the glory which belonged to Him as Son of the Father, they were completely puzzled. When Jesus said, " I go to my Father's house," Thomas wishes to be taught the way to it. Philip, a little after, asks, " Lord, show us the Father, and it shall suffice us." When Jesus was speaking of Himself as the Son of God, was Thomas ignorant of the way to God, or then could Philip have said, " Show us God." No; all in the category of divine glory was too well known to them to allow of their asking so ignorant a question: but the heavenly Father of Jesus was a thought quite new to them-they

understood nothing about it. Chapter 14 of John is the heavenly Father's house and the blessings which belong to His adopted children; chap. xv. is this family standing in face of the world. The Father seeks for Himself fruit from those who are shown to the world as inseparably united with the true vine. Chapter 16 tells us of the strength which abides with this family, even the power of God opposed to the world. And chap. 17 lets us into the thoughts of the Lord about His own, and these thoughts poured forth in the presence of His Father.

It is the heart of the Son of the Father which is shown to us in this chapter, regarding those whom the Father had given to Him. He had molded His conduct towards His disciples by the love which God had towards Himself and them; but all through, it is the glory of Jesus as the Son of the Father which we find here.

Perhaps the attention of some one may be struck by another thought. The glory of the Father is evidently the glory of God, but the glory of God is not necessarily the glory of the Father. The name of God is applicable to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and so to every manifestation of glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, whether in heaven or on earth, whether the manifestation supposed is moral or physical, in heaven or on earth, it does not matter. It is the manifestation of God. But take the statement the other way; and it is not sufficient to prove that such or such a glory is of God, in order to be able therefore to say that it is the glory of the Father. There are most glorious manifestations of God, such as that in creation, that in providence, that of Sinai, and even that which is to come upon the earth,-which are not manifestations of the glory of the Father-which are not revelations of His glory as the Father of the Lord Jesus.

I have said enough to present my thoughts. The Spirit of God must act upon the heart through means of the word, for His truth to find entrance into the soul of each one individually. When the Lord Jesus said " My God," He took the place of the servant of God: when He said " My Father," He took the place of the Son of the Father, according to the glory which He had with Him before the world was, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine ownself with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." He has given us to say (what the world cannot say), " His God is our God. But likewise by His grace we can say that His Father is our Father. The glory of the Father and of the Father's house is infinitely more precious in itself than that of any other; and let it be well observed, that, in the divine wisdom, it has been reserved for Jesus Himself to be the one who reveals to us the Father.

The prayer of the apostle Paul at the close of the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, is based upon the name " God of our Lord Jesus Christ" (chap. 1:16).

But His prayer in chap. 3 is addressed to God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (ver. 14-21).

May God grant to us to feel on the one hand what is the length and breadth and depth and height of which He tells us in this prayer: and on the other, all the condescension of that grace which has added (in the 20th) that all is according to the power which already worketh in us.

## Observations on the Kingdoms Spoken of in the Book of Daniel

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The history of the kingdoms of this world has been given to us in scripture, as well as everything in which we can be instructed in righteousness.

Everything that is revealed in scripture is for our instruction; but we cannot go away from scripture to get instruction anywhere else.

If you go to the writings of natural men to learn the history of the kingdoms of this world, you will there see the purposes of man brought forward by them, but not the purposes of God.

Natural men do not know the beginning or the ending of the things about which they speak, but God has revealed both the beginning and the ending; and those who know the mind of God are instructed thus.

Any one who is taught of God in the history of the kingdoms of this world, will see that the nation of Israel is the chief of all the nations in the mind of God.

" When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

The children of Israel, with their twelve tribes, are the chief of all the nations of this earth, and their land is called " Immanuel's lane It is the most important part of the whole earth in connection with the purposes of God; and it is so in the minds of His people having faith in God as to His purposes. The faith of Joseph is thus marked in scripture: " By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones." Heb. 11:22.

If Joseph was walking by sight, and not by faith, then he would have made no mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and he would have given no commandment concerning his bones, because there was no appearance of the departing of the children of Israel at the time when Joseph died; but the word of God said that they were to depart, and therefore it was by faith that Joseph made mention of their departure.

In Gen. 15 we read the word of God which was upon the heart of Joseph at the time when he was dying. God had then said unto Abram, " Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

A natural man might say to Joseph, when on his death-bed, " Why do you talk of the departing of the children of Israel? Do you not expect that they and their children will have a comfortable home in Egypt; everything has been so prosperous there for you and for them?" Joseph in faith would answer to this, "O no. I know of a surety, that they will be but strangers here in a land that is not theirs." The natural man again might say, "But surely you and they have had such kindly treatment

from Pharaoh, and from the Egyptians, that you need not dread for the future." But again Joseph in faith would say, "O the Egyptians will afflict my people, and will evil entreat them". And again this natural man might say, "What then are you saying about their departure? How do you know they will be able to go away?" To this Joseph in faith would again answer, "Because God will judge this nation, whom they shall serve, and after they shall come out with great substance."

It is thus that one taught of God knows the history of the kingdoms of this world, and of everything else of which God has spoken; as Joseph knew the history of Egypt and of Israel, not by the deceptive appearance of changing circumstances, but by the unchanging word of God who cannot lie.

Natural men, in the present day, can know as little of the closing history of the kingdoms of this world, as a natural man, in the time of Joseph, could know what was about to take place with regard to Israel and Egypt. Joseph knew it by faith, because the word of God was in his heart.

Until the days of Nebuchadnezzar no nation, except Israel, was set up above the other nations. If Israel had not provoked the Lord, Israel would still be exalted above the other nations, but God humbled them in judgment, and in judgment exalted the Gentiles above them. This took place in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

## Luke

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The Gospel of Luke sets the Lord before us in the character of Son of Man, unfolding the power of Jehovah in grace among men. At first, no doubt, we find Him in connection with Israel, to whom He had been promised, and in relationship with whom He came into this world; but afterward this Gospel presents moral principles which apply to man, whosoever he may be, whilst yet manifesting Christ, for the moment, in the midst of that people. This power of God in grace is displayed in various ways, in its application to the wants of men. After the transfiguration, which takes place earlier in the narrative by Luke, than in the other Gospels, we find the judgment of those who rejected the Lord, and the heavenly character of the grace which, because it is grace, addresses itself to the nations, to sinners, without any particular reference to the Jews, overturning the legal principles according to which the latter pretended to be in connection with God. After this, we find that which should happen to the Jews, according to the righteous government of God; and, at the end, the account of the death and resurrection of the Lord, accomplishing the work of redemption. We must observe, that Luke—who morally sets aside the Jewish system, and who introduces the Son of Man as the Man before God, presenting Him as the One who is filled with all the fullness of God dwelling in Him bodily, as the Man before God according to His own heart, and thus as Mediator between man and God, and center of a moral system much more vast than that of Messiah among the Jews—we must observe, I repeat, that Luke, who is occupied with these new relations (ancient, in fact, as to the counsels of God), gives us, with the facts belonging to the Lord's connection with the Jews, much more development than the other Evangelists, as well as the proofs of His mission to that people, in coming into the world, proofs which ought to have gained their attention, and fixed it upon the child who was born to them.

In Luke, we add, that which especially characterizes the narrative and gives its peculiar interest to this Gospel, is, that it sets before us that which Christ is Himself: 'I' is not His official glory, a relative position that HE assumed; neither is it the revelation of His divine nature, in itself; nor His mission as the Great Prophet. It is Himself, as he was a man on the earth; the person whom I should have met every day had I lived at that time, in Judea, or in Galilee.

Many had undertaken to give an account of that which was historically received among Christians, as related to them by the companions of Jesus: and Luke thought it well—having followed these things from the beginning, and thus obtained exact knowledge respecting them—to write methodically to Theophilus, in order that he might have the certainty of those things in which he had been instructed. It is thus that God has provided for the instruction of the whole church, in the doctrine contained in the picture of the Lord's life furnished by this man of God; who, personally moved by Christian motives, was directed and inspired by the Holy Ghost for the good of all believers.

At verse 5, the Evangelist begins with the first revelations of the Spirit of God respecting these events, on which the condition of God's people and that of the world entirely depended; and in which God was to glorify Himself to all eternity.

But we immediately find ourselves in the atmosphere of Jewish circumstances. The Jewish ordinances of the Old Testament, and the thoughts and expectations connected with them, are the frame-work in which this great and solemn event is set, Herod, king of Judea, furnishes the date; and it is a priest, righteous, and blameless, belonging to one of the twenty-four classes, whom we find in the first step of our way. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and these two upright persons walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the law without blame. All was right before God, according to His law in the Jewish sense. But they did not enjoy the blessing that every Jew desired: they had no child. Nevertheless, it was according, we may say, to the ordinary ways of God in the government of His people, to accomplish His blessing while manifesting the weakness of the instrument—a weakness that took away all hope according to human principles. Such had been the history of the Sarahs, the Rebeccas, the Hannahs, and many more, of whom the Word tells us for our instruction in the ways of God.

This blessing was often prayed for by the pious priest; but until now, the answer had been delayed. Now, however, when, at the moment of exercising his regular ministry, Zacharias drew near to burn incense, which, according to the law, was to go up as a sweet savor before God (type of the Lord's intercession), and while the people were praying outside the holy place, the angel of the Lord appears to the priest on the right side of the altar of incense. At the sight of this glorious personage Zacharias is troubled, but the angel encourages him by declaring himself to be the bearer of good news; announcing to him that his prayers, so long apparently addressed in vain to God, were granted. Elizabeth should bear a son, and the name by which he should be called was, "the favor of the Lord," a source of joy and gladness to Zacharias, and whose birth would be the occasion of thanksgiving to many. But this was not merely as the son of Zacharias. The child was the Lord's gift, and should be great before Him; he should be a Nazarite, and filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb; and many of the children of Israel should he turn to the Lord their God, he should go before Him in the spirit of Elias, and with the same power, to re-establish moral order in Israel, even in its sources; and to bring back the disobedient to the wisdom of the just—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

The spirit of Elias was a steadfast and ardent zeal for the glory of the Lord, and for the establishment, or reestablishment by repentance, of the relations between Israel and the Lord. His heart clung to this link between the people and their God, according to the strength and glory of the link itself, but in the sense of their fallen condition, and according to the rights of God, in connection with these relationships. The spirit of Elias—although indeed the grace of God towards His people had sent him—was, in a certain sense, a legal spirit. He asserted the rights of Jehovah in judgment. It was grace, opening the door to repentance, but not the sovereign grace of salvation. It is in the moral force of his call to repentance, that John is here compared to Elias, in bringing back Israel to Jehovah. And in fact, Jesus was Jehovah.

But the faith of Zacharias in God, and in His goodness, did not come up to the height of his petition (alas! too common a case) and when it is granted at a moment that required the intervention of God to accomplish his desire, he is not able to walk in the steps of an Abraham, or a Hannah, and he asks how this thing can now take place.

God, in His goodness, turns His servant's want of faith into an instructive chastisement for himself, and into a proof for the people that Zacharias had been visited from on high. He is dumb until the

word of the Lord is fulfilled; and the signs which he makes to the people, who marvel at his staying so long in the sanctuary, explain to them the reason.

But the word of God is accomplished in blessing towards Him; and Elizabeth, recognizing the good hand of God upon her, with a tact that belongs to her piety, goes into retirement. The grace which blessed her, did not make her insensible to that which was a shame in Israel, and which although removed, left its traces, as to man, in the superhuman circumstances through which it was accomplished. There was a right-mindedness in this, which became a holy woman. But that which is rightly concealed from man, has all its value before God, and Elizabeth is visited in her retreat by the mother of the Lord. But here the scene changes, to introduce the Lord Himself into this marvelous history which unfolds before our eyes.

God, who had prepared all beforehand, sends now to announce the Savior's birth to Mary. In the last place that man would have chosen for the purpose of God, a place whose name sufficed, in the eyes of the world, to condemn those who came from thence, a maiden, unknown to all whom the world recognized, was betrothed to a poor carpenter. Her name was Mary. But everything was in confusion in Israel: the carpenter was of the house of David. The promises of God-who never forgets them, and never overlooks those who are their object-found here the sphere for their accomplishment. Here, the power and the affections of God are directed, according to their divine energy. Whether Nazareth was small or great was of no importance, except to show that God does not expect from man, but man from God. Gabriel is sent to Nazareth, to a virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David.

The gift of John to Zacharias was an answer to his prayers - God faithful in His goodness towards His people who wait upon Him.

But this is a visitation of sovereign grace. Mary, a chosen vessel for this purpose, had found grace in God's sight. She was favored by sovereign grace-blessed among women-she should conceive and bring forth a son; she should call Him Jesus, He should be great, and should be called the Son of the Highest; God should give Him the throne of His father David. He should reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom should have no end.

It will be observed here, that the subject which the Holy Ghost sets before us is the birth of the child, as He would be down here in this world, as brought forth by Mary-He who should be born.

The instruction given by the Holy Ghost on this point, is divided into two parts-firstly, that which the child to be born should be; secondly, the manner of His conception; and the glory which would be its result. It is not simply the divine nature of Jesus that is presented, the word which was God, the word made flesh; but that -which was born of Mary, and the way in which it should take place. We know well that it is the same precious and divine Savior of whom John speaks that is in question; but He is here presented to us under another aspect, which is of infinite interest to us; and we must consider Him as the Holy Ghost presents Him, as born of the virgin Mary in this world of tears.

To take first the verses 31-33.

It was a child really conceived in Mary's womb, who brought forth this child at the time which God had Himself appointed for human nature. The usual time elapsed before its birth. As yet this tells

us nothing of the manner. It is the fact itself, which has an importance that can neither be measured nor exaggerated. He was really and truly man, born of a woman as we are-not as to the source nor as to the manner of His conception, of which we are not, yet speaking, but as to the reality of His existence as man. He was really and truly a human being. But there were other things connected with the person of the One who should be born, that are also set before us. His name should be called Jesus, i.e. Jehovah the Savior. He should be manifested in this character and with this power. He was so. This is not connected here with the fact, "for He shall save His people from their sins;" as in Matthew, where it was the manifestation to Israel of the power of Jehovah, of their God, in fulfillment of the promises made to that people. Here, we see that He has a right to this name, but this divine title lies hidden under the form of a personal name; for it is the Son of man who is presented in this Gospel, whatever His divine power might be. Here we are told, "He"-the One who should be born- "should be great," and (born into this world) "should be called the Son of the Highest." He had been the Son of the Father before' the world was, but this child, born on earth, should be called - such as He was down here-the Son of the Highest: a title, to which He would thoroughly prove His right, by His acts and by all that manifested what He was. A precious thought to us, and full of glory, a child, born of a woman, legitimately bears this name, "Son of the Highest," supremely glorious for one who is in the position of a man, and really was such, before God. But other things, still, were connected with the One that should be born. God would give Him the throne of His father David. Here, again, we plainly see that He is considered as born, a man, in this world. The throne of His father David belongs to Him. God will give it Him. By right of birth, He is heir to the promises, to the earthly promises which-as to the kingdom-appertained to the family of David: but it should be according to the counsels and the power of God. He should reign over the house of Jacob-not only over Judah and in the weakness of a transitory power and an ephemeral life, but throughout the ages; and of His kingdom there should be no end. As, indeed, Daniel had predicted, it should never be taken by another. It should never be transferred to another people. It should be established according to the counsels of God which are unchangeable, and His power which never fails. Until He delivered up the kingdom to God the Father, He should exercise a royalty that nothing could dispute; which He would deliver up (all things being fulfilled) to God; but the royal glory of which should never be tarnished in His hands.

Such should be the child born-truly born is man. To those who could understand His name, it was, Jehovah the Savior.

He should be king over the house of Jacob, according to a power that should never decay, and never fail until blended with the eternal power of God as God.

The grand subject of the revelation is, that the child should be conceived and born-the remainder is the glory that should belong to Him, being born.

But it is the conception that Mary does not understand. God permits her to ask the angel how this should be. Her question was according to God. I do not think there was any want of faith here. Zacharias had constantly asked for a son-it was only a question of the goodness and the power of God to perform his request -and was brought by the positive declaration of God to a point at which he had only to trust in it. He did not trust to the promise of God. It was only the exercise of the extraordinary power of God in the natural order of things. Mary asks, with holy confidence, since

God thus favored her, how the thing should be accomplished, outside the natural order. Of its accomplishment she has no doubt. (See ver. 45, "Blessed," said Elizabeth, "is she that believed"). She inquires how it shall be accomplished, since it must be done outside the order of nature. The angel proceeds with his commission, making known to her the answer of God to this question also. In the purposes of God, this question gave occasion (by the answer it received) to the revelation of the miraculous conception. The birth of Him who has walked upon this earth, was the thing in question, His birth by the virgin Mary. He was God, He became man: but here, it is the manner of His conception, in becoming a man upon the earth. It is not what He was, that is declared. It is He who was born, such as He was in the world, of whose miraculous conception we here read. The Holy Ghost should come upon her, should act in power upon this earthen vessel, without its own will or the will of any man. God is the source of the life of the child promised to Mary, as born in this world and by His power, He is born of Mary, of this woman chosen by God. The power of the Highest should overshadow her. And therefore that which should be born of her, should be called the Son of God. Holy in His birth, conceived by the intervention of the power of God acting upon Mary, a power which was the divine source of His existence on the earth, as man, that which thus received its being from Mary, the fruit of her womb, should, even in this sense, have the title of Son of God. That holy thing which should be born of Mary, should be called the Son of God. It is not here the doctrine of the eternal relationship of the Son with the Father. The Gospel of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, that to the Colossians, establish this precious truth and demonstrate its importance; but here it is that which was born by virtue of the miraculous conception, which, on that ground, is called the Son of God.

The angel announces to her the blessing bestowed on Elizabeth, through the almighty power of God; and Mary bows to the will of her God-the submissive vessel of His purposes, and, in her piety, acknowledges a height and greatness in these purposes, which only left to her, their passive instrument, the place of subjection to the will of God. This was her glory, through the favor of her God.

It was befitting that wonders should accompany, and bear a just testimony to, this marvelous intervention of God. The communication of the angel was not without fruit in the heart of Mary; and, by her visit to Elizabeth, she goes to acknowledge the wonderful dealings of God. The piety of the Virgin displays itself here in a touching manner. The marvelous intervention of God humbled, instead of lifting her up. She saw God in that which had taken place, and not herself; on the contrary, the greatness of these marvels brought God so near her as to hide her from herself. She yields herself to His holy will; but God is too near her heart in this matter to leave any room for self-importance. The visit of the mother of her Lord to Elizabeth was a natural thing to herself, for the Lord had visited the wife of Zacharias. The angel had made it known to her. She is concerned in these things of God, for God was near her heart by the grace that had visited her. Led by the Holy Ghost in heart and affection, the glory that belonged to Mary, in virtue of the grace of God, who had elected her to be the mother of her Lord, is recognized by Elizabeth, speaking by the Holy Ghost. She also acknowledges the pious faith of Mary, and announces to her the fulfillment of the promise she had received: all that took place being a signal testimony given to Him who should be born in Israel and among men. The heart of Mary is then poured out in thanksgiving. She owns God her Savior, in the grace that has filled her with joy; and her own low estate, a figure of the condition of the remnant of Israel, and that gave occasion to the intervention of God's greatness,

with a full testimony that all was of Himself. Whatever might be the piety suitable to the instrument whom He employed, and which was found indeed in Mary, it was in proportion as she hid herself that she was great; for then God was all, and it was through her that He intervened for the manifestation of His marvelous ways. She lost her place if she made anything of herself; but, in truth, she did not. The grace of God preserved her, in order that His glory might be fully displayed in this divine event. She recognizes His grace, but she acknowledges that all is grace towards her.

It will be remarked here, that in the character and the application of the thoughts that fill her heart all is Jewish. We may compare the song of Hannah, who prophetically celebrated this same intervention; and see, also, verses 44, 45. But, observe, she goes back to the promises made to the fathers, and she embraces all Israel. It is the power of God, which works in the midst of weakness, when there is no resource, and all is contrary to it. Such is the moment that suits God, and, to the same end, instruments that are null, that God may be all.

It is remarkable that we are not told that Mary was full of the Holy Ghost. It appears to me that this is an honorable distinction for her. The Holy Ghost visited Elizabeth and Zacharias in an exceptional manner. But although we cannot doubt that Mary was under the influence of the Spirit of God, it was a more inward effect, more connected with her own faith, with her piety, with the more habitual relations of her heart with God (that were formed by this faith and by this piety), and which, consequently, expressed itself more as her own sentiments. In all this there appears to me a very striking harmony in connection with the wondrous favor bestowed upon her.

I repeat it, Mary is great inasmuch as she is nothing; but she is favored by God in a way that is unparalleled, and all generations shall call her blessed.

But her piety, and its expression in this song, being more personal, an answer to God rather than a revelation on His part, it is clearly limited to that which was necessarily for her, the sphere of this piety-to Israel, to the hopes and promises given to Israel. It goes back, as we have seen, to the farthest point of God's relations with Israel, but it does not go beyond them.

Mary abides three months with the woman whom God had blessed, the mother of him who was to be the voice of God in the wilderness, and she returns, to follow humbly her own path, that the purposes of God may be accomplished.

Nothing more beautiful of its kind than this picture of the intercourse between these pious women, unknown to the world, but the instruments of God's grace for the accomplishment of His purposes, glorious and infinite in their results. They hide themselves, moving in a scene into which nothing enters but piety and grace; but God is there, as little known to the world as were these poor women, yet preparing and accomplishing that which the angels desire to fathom in its depths. This takes place in the hill country, where these pious relatives dwelt. They hid themselves; but their hearts, visited by God and touched by His grace, responded by their mutual piety to these wondrous visits from above; and the grace of God was truly reflected in the calmness of a heart that recognized His hand and His greatness, trusting in His goodness and submitting to His will. We are favored in being admitted into a scene from which the world was excluded by its unbelief and alienation from God, and in which God thus acted.

But that which piety recognized in secret, through faith in the visitations of God, must at length be made public, and be fulfilled before the eyes of men. The son of Zacharias and Elizabeth is born,

and Zacharias (who, obedient to the word of the angel, ceases to be dumb) announces the coming of the Branch of David, the horn of Israel's salvation, in the house of God's elect king, to accomplish all the promises made to the fathers, and all the prophecies by which God had proclaimed the future blessing of His people. The child whom God had given to Zacharias and Elizabeth should go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, for the Son of David was the Lord, who came according to the promises, and according to the Word by which God had proclaimed the manifestation of His glory.

The visitation of Israel by the Lord, celebrated by the mouth of Zacharias, embraces all the blessing of the Millennium. This is connected with the presence of Jesus, who brings in His own person all this blessing. All the promises are yea and amen in Him. All the prophecies encircle Him with the glory then to be realized, and make Him the source from which it springs. Abraham rejoiced to see the glorious day of Christ.

The Holy Ghost always does this when His subject is the fulfillment of the promise in power. He goes on to the full effect which God will accomplish at the end. The difference here is, that it is no longer the announcement of joys in a distant future, when a Christ should be born-when a child should be brought forth, to bring in their joys, in days still obscured by the distance at which they were seen. The Christ is now at the door, and it is the effect of His presence that is celebrated. We know that having been rejected, and being now absent, the accomplishment of these things is necessarily put off until He returns; but His presence will bring their fulfillment, and it is announced as being connected with that presence.

We may remark here, that this chapter confines itself within the strict limits of the promises made to Israel, that is to say, to the fathers. We have the priests, the Messiah, His forerunner, the promises made to Abraham, the covenant of promise, the oath of God. It is not the law, it is the hope of Israel-founded on the promise, the covenant, the oath of God, and confirmed by the prophets-which has its realization in the birth of Jesus, of the Son of David. It is not, I again say, the law. It is Israel under blessing, not, indeed, yet accomplished, but Israel in the relationship of faith with God who would accomplish it. It is only God and Israel who are in question, and that which had taken place in grace between Him and His people alone.

In the next chapter the scene changes. Instead of the relations of God with Israel according to grace, we see, first, the pagan emperor of the world-the head of Daniel's last empire-exercising his power in Emmanuel's land, and over the people of God, as though God did not know them. Nevertheless, we are still in presence of the birth of the Son of David, of Emmanuel Himself; but He is outwardly under the power of the head of the beast, of a pagan empire. What a strange state of things is brought in by sin! Take special notice, however, that we have grace here: it is the intervention of God which makes all this manifest. Connected with it are some other circumstances which it is well to observe. When the interests and the glory of Jesus are in question, all this power-which governs without the fear of God, which reigns, seeking its own glory, in the place where Christ should reign-all the imperial glory, is but an instrument in the hands of God for the fulfillment of His counsels. As to the public fact, we find the Roman emperor exercising despotic and pagan authority in the place where the throne of God should have been, if the sin of the people had not made it impossible.

The emperor will have all the world registered, and every one goes to his own city. The power of the world is set in motion, and that by an act which proves its supremacy over those who, as the people of God, should have been free from all but the immediate government of their God, which was their glory-an act which proves the complete degradation and servitude of the people. They are slaves, in their bodies and in their possessions, to the heathen, because of their sins. But this act only accomplishes the marvelous purpose of God, causing the Savior-king to be born in the village where, according to the testimony of God, that event was to take place. And more than that, the divine person, who was to excite the joy and the praises of heaven, is born among men, Himself a child in this world.

The state of things in Israel and in the world is, the supremacy of the Gentiles and the absence of the throne of God. The Son of man, the Savior, God manifested in the flesh, comes to take His place-a place which grace alone could find or take in a world that knew Him not. This registration is so much the more remarkable, in that, as soon as the purpose of God was accomplished, it was carried no farther; that is to say, not till afterward, under the government of Cyrenius.

The Son of God is born in this world, but He finds no place there. The world is at home, or, at least, by its resources it finds a place in the inn. The Son of God finds none, save in the manger. Is it for nothing that the Holy Ghost records this circumstance? No. There is no room for God, and that which is of God, in this world. So much the more perfect, therefore, is the love that brought Him down to earth.

The Son of God-a child, partaking in all the weakness and all the circumstances of human life, thus manifested-appears in the world.

But if God comes into this world, and if a manger receives Him, in the nature He has taken in grace, the angels are occupied with the event on which depends the fate of the whole universe, and the accomplishment of all the counsels of God; for He has chosen weak things to confound things that are mighty. This poor infant is the object of all the counsels of God-the upholder and heir of the whole creation-the Savior of all who shall inherit glory and eternal life.

Some poor men who were faithfully performing their toilsome labors, afar from the restless activity of an ambitious and sinful world, receive the first tidings of the Lord's presence on earth. The God of Israel did not seek for the great among His people; but had respect to the poor of the flock. Two things here present themselves. The angel who comes to the shepherds of Judea, announces to them the fulfillment of the promises of God to Israel. The choir of angels celebrate in their heavenly song of praise all the real import of this wondrous event. "Unto you," says the heavenly messenger who visits the poor shepherds, "is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." This was proclaiming good tidings to them and to all the people.

But the birth of the Son of Man, God manifest in the flesh, the accomplishment of the incarnation, had far deeper importance than this. The fact that this poor infant was there, disallowed and left (humanly speaking) to its fate by the world, was (as understood by the heavenly intelligences, the multitude of the heavenly host, whose praises resounded at the angel's message to the shepherds), "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good' pleasure (of God) in men." These few words embrace such widely extended thoughts, that it is difficult to speak suitably of them in a work like this; but some remarks are necessary. First, it is deeply blessed to see, that the thought

of Jesus excludes all that could oppress the heart in that which accompanied His presence on earth. Sin, alas! was there. It was manifested by the position in which this wondrous infant was found. But if sin had placed Him there, grace had placed Him there. Grace superabounds; and in thinking of Him, blessing, grace, the mind of God respecting sin, that which God is, as manifested by the presence of Christ, absorb the mind and possess the heart. We see grace alone; and sin does but magnify the fullness, the sovereignty, the perfection of that grace. God, in His glorious dealings, blots out the sin with respect to which He acts, and which He thus exhibits in all its deformity; but there is that which "much more abounds." Jesus, come in grace, fills the heart. It is the same thing in all the details of Christian life. It is the true source of moral power, of sanctification, and of joy.

We see next, that there are three things brought out by the presence of Jesus born as a child on the earth; first, Glory to God in the highest. The love of God- His wisdom-His power (not in creating a universe out of nothing, but in rising above the evil and turning the effect of all the enemy's power into an occasion of showing that this power was only impotence and folly in presence of that which may be called " the weakness of God")-the fulfillment of His eternal counsels-the perfection of His ways where evil had come in-the manifestation of Himself amidst this evil in such a manner as to glorify Himself before the angels; in a word, God had so manifested Himself by the birth of Jesus, that the hosts of heaven, long familiar with His power, could raise the song of " Glory to God in the highest!" and every voice unite in sounding forth these praises. -What love like this love! and God is love. What a purely divine thought, that God has become man! What supremacy of good over evil! What wisdom in drawing nigh to the heart of man, and the heart of man back to Him! What fitness in addressing man! What maintenance of the holiness of God! What nearness to the heart of man, what participation in his wants, what experience of his condition! But beyond all, God, above the evil in grace, and in that grace visiting this defiled world, to make Himself known as He had never yet been known!

The second effect of the presence of Him who manifested God on the earth is, that peace should be there. Rejected-His name should be an occasion of strife; but the heavenly choir are occupied with the fact of His presence and with the result when fully produced; of the consequences wrapped up in the person of Him who was there (looked at in their proper fruits), and they celebrate these consequences. Evil should disappear; the introduction of perfect love should banish all enmity; Jesus, mighty in love should reign, and impart the character in which He had come to the whole scene that should surround Him in the world He came into, that it might be according to His heart who took delight therein (Prov. 8:31). See as regards a smaller scale Psa. 85:10,11.

The means of this redemption, the destruction of Satan's power, the reconciliation of man by faith, and of all things in heaven and earth with God, are not here pointed out. Everything depended on the person and presence of Him who was born. All was wrapped in Him. This state of blessing was born in the birth of that child.

Presented to the responsibility of man, man is unable to profit by it, and all fails. His position thereby becomes only so much the worse.

But being attached to His person, all its consequences necessarily flow forth. After all, it was the intervention of God accomplishing the counsels of His love, the settled purpose of His good

pleasure, and Jesus once there, the consequences could not fail, whatever interruption there might be to their fulfillment, Jesus was their surety. He was come into the world. He contained in His person, He was the expression of, all these consequences. The presence of the Son of God in the midst of sinners, said to all spiritual intelligency, " Peace on earth."

The third thing was the good pleasure-the affection of God-in men. Nothing more simple, since Jesus was a man. He had not taken hold of angels.

It was a glorious testimony that the affection, the good pleasure of God, was centered in this poor race, afar from Him, but in whom He was pleased to accomplish all his glorious counsels.

In a word; it was the power of God present in grace in the person of the Son of God, taking part in the nature, and interesting Himself in the lot of a being who had departed from Him; and making him the sphere of the accomplishment of all His counsels, and of the manifestation of His grace and His nature to all His creatures. What a position for man! for it is indeed in man that all this is accomplished. The whole universe was to learn in man, and in what God was for man, that which God was in Himself, and the fruit of all His glorious counsels, as well as its complete rest in His presence, according to His nature of love. All this was implied in the birth of that child of whom the world took no notice. Natural and marvelous subject of praise to the holy inhabitants of heaven, unto whom God had made it known

Faith was in exercise in those simple Israelites to whom the angel of the Lord was sent; and they rejoiced in the blessing fulfilled before their eyes, and which verified the grace that God had shown in announcing it to them. The word, "as it was told unto them," adds its testimony of grace to all that we enjoy by the loving-kindness of God.

The child receives the name of Jesus on the day of His circumcision, according to Jewish custom (see ch. 1 ver. 59), but according to the counsels and revelations of God, communicated by the angels of His power. Moreover, everything was performed according to the law; for, historically, we find ourselves always in connection with Israel. He who was born of a woman was born under the law.

The condition of poverty in which Jesus was born is also shown by the sacrifice offered for the purification of His mother.

But another point is here made prominent by the Holy Ghost, insignificant, apparently, as He may be who gave occasion to it.

Jesus is recognized by the godly remnant of Israel, so far as the Holy Ghost acts in them. He becomes a touchstone for every soul in Israel. The condition of the remnant taught by the Holy Ghost, i.e., who had taken the position of the remnant, was this. They were sensible of the misery and ruin of Israel, but waited upon the God of Israel, trusting to His unchangeable faithfulness for the consolation of His people. And God was with this remnant. He had made known to those who thus trusted in His mercy the coming of the promised One, who was to be the fulfillment of this mercy to Israel.

Thus, in face of the oppression of the Gentiles, and of the iniquity of a people who were ripening in evil, the remnant who trust in God, do not lose that which, as we saw in the preceding chapter, belonged to Israel. In the midst of Israel's misery they had for their consolation that which promise

and prophecy had declared for Israel's glory.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. That was the consolation, and it was great. It was contained in the person of Jesus the Savior, without going farther into the details of the manner or the time of the accomplishment of Israel's deliverance.

Simeon loved Israel—he could depart in peace, since God had blessed him according to the desires of faith. The joy of faith dwells on the Lord and on His people, but sees in the relationship that exists between them, all the extent of that which gives rise to this joy. Salvation, the deliverance of God, was come in Christ. It was for the revelation of the Gentiles, till then hidden in the darkness of ignorance, without a revelation; and for the glory of Israel, the people of God. This, indeed, is the fruit of the government of God in Christ, that is to say, the millennium. But if the Spirit revealed to this pious and faithful servant of the God of Israel, the future which depended on the presence of the Son of God, He revealed to him that he held the Savior Himself in his arms; thus giving him present peace, and such a sense of the favor of God that death lost its terrors. It was not a knowledge of the work of Jesus acting on an enlightened and convicted conscience, but it was the fulfillment of the promises to Israel, the possession of the Savior, and the proof of the favor of God; so that the peace which flowed from thence filled his soul. There were the three things, the prophecy that announced the coming of Christ, the possession of Christ, and the effect of His presence in the whole world. We are here in connection with the remnant of Israel, and, consequently, find nothing of the church and of purely heavenly things. The rejection comes afterward. Here it is all that belongs to the remnant, in the way of blessing, through the presence of Jesus. His work is not the present subject.

What a beautiful picture, and what a testimony rendered to this child, by the manner in which, through the power of the Holy Ghost, He filled the heart of this holy man at the close of his earthly life. Observe, also, what communications are made to this feeble remnant, unknown amid the darkness that covered the people. But the testimony of this holy man of God (and how sweet it is to think how many of these souls, full of grace and of communion with the Lord, have flourished in the shade, unknown to men, but well known to and beloved of God; souls who, when they appear, coming out of their retreat according to His will in testimony to Christ, bear so blessed a witness to a work of God which is carried on in spite of all that man is doing, and behind the painful and embittered scene that is unfolding on the earth), Simeon's testimony here, was more than the expression of the deeply interesting thoughts which had filled his heart in communion between himself and God. This knowledge of Christ, and of the thoughts of God respecting Him, which is developed in secret between God and the soul, gives understanding of the effect produced by the manifestation to the world of Him who is its object. The Spirit speaks of it by the mouth of Simeon. In his previous words we received the declaration of the sure fulfillment of God's counsels in the Messiah, the joy of his own heart. Now, it is the effect of the presentation of Jesus, as the Messiah, to Israel on the earth, which is described. Whatever may have been the power of God in Christ for blessing, He put the heart of man to the test. He should thus be-by revealing the thoughts of many hearts (for He was light, and so much the more that He was humbled in a world of pride) an occasion of falling to many, and the means of rising again to many from their low and degraded condition. Mary herself, although the mother of the Messiah, should have her own soul pierced through by a sword; for her child should be rejected, the natural relationship of the Messiah to the

people broken and disallowed. This contradiction of sinners against the Lord, laid all hearts bare as to their desires, their hopes, and their ambition, whatever forms of piety might be assumed.

Such was the testimony rendered in Israel to the Messiah, according to the action of the Spirit of God upon the remnant, amid the bondage and misery of that people. The full accomplishment of the counsels of God towards Israel, and towards the world through Israel, for joy of heart to the faithful who had trusted in these promises, but for a test at that moment to every heart, by means of a Messiah who was a sign spoken against. The counsels of God, and the heart of man, were revealed in Him.

Malachi had said that those who feared the Lord in the evil days when the proud were called happy, should often speak together. This time had arrived in Israel. From Malachi to the birth of Jesus, there was but the passage of Israel from misery to pride—a pride moreover that was dawning even in the days of the prophet. That which he said of the remnant was also being accomplished, they it spake together." Anna, a holy widow, who departed not from the temple, and who deeply felt the misery of Israel, had besieged the throne of God with a widowed heart, for a people to whom God was no longer a husband, who were really widowed like herself; and she now makes known to all who pondered on these things together, that the Lord had visited His temple. They had looked for redemption in Jerusalem, and now the Redeemer—unknown of men—was there. What a subject of joy to this poor remnant! What an answer to their faith!

But Jerusalem was not, after all, the place in which God visited the remnant of His people, but the seat of pride of those, who said "the temple of the Lord." And Joseph and Mary, having performed that which the law required, return with the child Jesus to take their place, together with Him, in the despised spot which should give Him its name, and in those regions where the despised remnant had more their place, and where the testimony of God had announced that the light should appear.

There His early days were spent, in the physical and mental growth of the true humanity which He had assumed. Simple and precious testimony! But He was not the less conscious, when the time was come for speaking to men of His real relationship to His Father. The two things are united in that which is said at the end of the chapter. In the development of His humanity, is manifested the Son of God on earth. Joseph and Mary, who (while marveling at all that happened to Him) did not thoroughly know by faith His glory, blame the child, according to the position in which He formally stood towards them. But this gives occasion to the manifestation of another character of perfection in Jesus. If He was the Son of God, and had the full consciousness of it, He was also the obedient man, essentially and ever perfect and sinless; an obedient child, whatever sense He also had of another relationship. Connected in itself, with subjection to human parents. Consciousness of the one did not injure His perfection in the other. His being the Son of God secured His perfection as a man and a child on the earth.

But there is another important thing to remark here; it is, that this position had nothing to do with His being anointed with the Holy Ghost. He fulfilled, no doubt, the public ministry which He afterward entered on according to the power and the perfection of that anointing; but His relationship to His Father belonged to His person itself. The bond existed between Him and His Father. He was fully conscious of it, whatever might be the means or the form of its public manifestation, and of the power of His ministry. He was all that a child ought to be; but it was the Son of God who was so. His relationship to His Father was as well known to Him, as His

obedience to Joseph and to His mother was beautiful, becoming, and perfect.

Here we close this touching and divine history of the birth and early days of the divine Savior, the Son of Man. It is impossible to have anything more profoundly interesting. Henceforward it is in His ministry, in His public life that we shall find Him, rejected of men, but accomplishing the counsels and the work of God; separate from all, in order to do this in the power of the Holy Ghost who was upon Him without measure, to fulfill that course with which nothing can be compared, with respect to which it, would be lowering the truth to call it interesting. It is the center and the means-and the only possible means of all relationship between our souls and God; the perfection of the manifestation of His grace, and the foundation of all relationship between any creature and Himself.

In chap. 3, we find the exercise of the ministry of the Word towards Israel, and that for the introduction of the Lord into this world. It is not the promises to Israel and the privileges secured to them by God, nor the birth of that child who was Heir to all the promises, the empire, itself a testimony to Israel's captivity, being an instrument for the accomplishment of the word respecting the Lord.

The years are here reckoned according to the reign of the Gentiles. Judea is a province in the hands of the Gentile empire, and the other parts of Canaan are divided under different chiefs, subordinate to the empire.

The Jewish system continues nevertheless, and the high priests were there to take note of the years of their subjection to the Gentiles by name; and at the same time to preserve the order, the doctrine, and the ceremonies of the Jews, as far as could be done in their circumstances at that period.

Now the Word of God is ever sure, and it is when the relationships of God with His people fail on the side of their faithfulness, that God in sovereignty maintains His relationship by means of communications through a prophet. His sovereign word maintains it when there are no other means.

But in this case, Jehovah's message to His people had a peculiar character, for Israel was ruined; having forsaken the Lord. The goodness of God had still left the people outwardly in their land; but the throne of the world was transferred to the Gentiles. They were now called to repent, to be forgiven, and to take a new place through the coming of the Messiah.

The testimony of God is, therefore, not in connection with His ordinances at Jerusalem, although the righteous submit to them. It is His voice in the wilderness, making His paths straight; in order that He may come, as from without, to those who repented and prepared themselves for His coming. Moreover, since it was the Lord Himself who came, His glory should not be confined within the narrow limits of Israel. All flesh should see the salvation wrought by God. The condition of the nation itself was that, out of which God called them to come by repentance, proclaiming the wrath that was about to fall upon a rebellious people. Besides, if God came, He would have realities; the true fruits of righteousness, and not the mere name of a people. And He came in His sovereign power, which was able to raise up that which He would have before Him. God comes. He would have righteousness as to man's responsibility; because He is righteous. He could raise up a seed unto Abraham by His divine power; and that from the very stones, if He saw fit. It is the

presence, the coming of God Himself, that here characterizes everything.

Now, the ax was already at the root of the trees, and each was judged according to its fruits. It was in vain to plead that they were Jews; if they enjoyed that privilege, where were its fruits? Wherever God could find fruit according to His heart, He would acknowledge the tree to be good.

Accordingly the publicans-objects of hatred to the Jews, as instruments of the fiscal oppression of the Gentiles, and the soldiers, who executed the arbitrary mandates of the kings imposed on the people by the Roman will, or of heathen governors, were exhorted to act in accordance with that which the true fear of God would produce, in contrast with the iniquity habitually practiced in accordance with the will of man; the multitude were exhorted to practical charity, while the people, considered as a people, were (as we have seen) treated as a generation of vipers, on whom the wrath of God was coming.

Thus, from the 3rd to the 14th verse, we have these two things: 3-6, the position of John towards the people, as such, in the thought that God Himself would soon appear; 6-14, his address to the conscience of individuals; the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses teaching them that the formal privileges of the people would afford no shelter in the presence of the holy and righteous God, and that to take refuge in national privilege was only to bring wrath upon themselves, for the nation was under judgment and exposed to the wrath of God. In verse 10 he comes to details. The question as to the Messiah is solved 15-17.

The great subject, however, of this passage, the great truth which the testimony of John displayed before the eyes of the people, was that God Himself was coming. Man was to repent. Privileges granted meanwhile, as means of blessing, could not be pleaded against the nature and the righteousness of Him who was coming, nor destroy the power by which He could create a people after His own heart. Nevertheless, the door of repentance was open, according to His faithfulness towards a people whom He loved.

But, there was a special work for the Messiah, according to the counsels, the wisdom.- and the grace of God.

He baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. That is to say, He brought in the power and the judgment which dispelled evil, whether in holiness and blessing, or in destruction.

He baptizes with the Holy Ghost. This is not merely a renewal of desires, but power, in grace, in the midst of the evil.

He baptizes with fire. This is judgment that consumes the evil.

This judgment is thus applied to Israel, His threshing-floor. He would gather His wheat in safety elsewhere, the chaff should be burnt up in judgment.

But at length John is put in prison by the regal head of the people. Not that this event took place historically at that moment; hut the Spirit of God would set forth, morally, the end of His testimony, in order to commence the life of Jesus, the Son of Man, but born the Son of God in this world.

It is with the 21st verse that this history begins, and in a manner both wonderful and full of grace. God, by John the baptist, had called His people to repentance, and those 'on whom His word

produced its effect came to be baptized by John. It was the first sign of life and of obedience. Jesus, perfect in life and in obedience, come down in grace for the remnant of His people, goes thither, taking

His place with them, and is baptized with the baptism of John as they were. Touching and marvelous testimony!

He does not love at a distance, nor merely in bestowing pardon, He comes, by grace, into the very place where the sin of His people had brought them, according to the sense of that sin which the converting and quickening power of their God had wrought in them. He leads His people there by grace, but He accompanies them when they go. He takes His place with them in all the difficulties of the way, and goes with them to meet all the obstacles that present themselves; and truly-as identifying Himself with the poor remnant, those excellent of the earth, in whom was all His delight-calling the Lord His Lord; and making Himself of no reputation, not saying that His goodness extended to God, not taking His eternal place with God, but the place of humiliation -and for that very reason of perfection in the position to which He had humbled Himself, but a perfection that recognized the existence of sin, because in fact, there was sin, and it behooved the remnant to be sensible of it in returning to God. To be sensible of it was the beginning of good. In Christ, however humble grace might be, His taking that path with them was grace that wrought by righteousness, for, in Him, it was love and obedience, and the path by which He glorified His Father.

Jesus, therefore, in taking this place of humiliation which the state of the beloved people required, and to which grace brought Him, found Himself in the place of the fulfillment of righteousness, and of all the good pleasure of the Father, of which He thus became the object.

The Father could acknowledge Him as the One who satisfied His heart in the place where sin was found (and, at the same time, the objects of His grace), so that He could give free course to His grace. The cross was the full accomplishment of this. We shall say a word on the difference when speaking of the temptation of the Lord; but it is the same principle. Christ was here with the remnant, instead of being substituted for them, and put in their place, to atone for sin; but the object of the Father's delight had, in grace taken His place with the people, viewed as confessing their sins before God, and, in this sense, in their sins; although renewed in heart to confess them, without which the Lord could not have been with them except as a witness to preach grace to them prophetically.

Jesus, having taken this position, and praying, appearing as the godly man, dependent on God and lifting up His heart to God-thus also the expression of perfection in that position-Heaven opens to Him. By baptism He took His place with the remnant; in praying-being there -He exhibited perfection in His own relationship with God. Dependence, and the heart going up to God, as the first thing, and as the expression, so to say, of its existence, is the perfection of man here below; and, in this case, of man in such circumstances as these. Here, then, heaven can open. And, observe, it was not heaven opening to seek some one afar from God, nor grace opening the heart to a certain feeling; but it was the grace and perfection of Jesus which caused heaven to open. As it is said, " Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." Thus, also, it is the positive perfection of Jesus that is the reason of heaven's opening. Remark also here, that when once this principle of reconciliation is brought in, heaven and earth are not so far from each other.

It is true that till after the death of Christ, this intimacy could but be centered in the person of Jesus, but that comprised all the rest. Proximity was established, although the grain of wheat had to remain alone, until it should "fall into the ground and die." Nevertheless, the angels (as we have seen) could say, "Peace on earth, the good pleasure (of God) in men. And we see the angel with the shepherds, and the heavenly host in the sight and hearing of earth, praising God for that which had taken place; and here heaven open upon man and the Holy Ghost descending visibly upon Him.

Let us examine the import of this last case. Christ has taken His place with the remnant in their weak and humble condition, but, in it, fulfilling righteousness. The entire favor of the Father rests upon Him, and the Holy Ghost comes down to seal and anoint Him with His presence and His power. Son of God, man on earth, heaven is open to Him, and all the affection of heaven is centered upon Him, and upon Him in union with His own. The first step which these humbled souls take in the path of grace and of life, finds Jesus there with them, and He being there-the favor and delight of the Father, and the presence of the Holy Ghost. And, let us always remember that it is upon Him as man, while Son of God.

Such is the position of man accepted before God, Jesus is its measure, its expression. It has these two things-the Father's delight, and the power and seal of the Holy Ghost; and that in this world, and known by him who enjoys it. There is now this difference, already, noticed, that we look by the Holy Ghost into heaven, where Jesus is, but we take his place down here.

Let us contemplate man thus in Christ-heaven open -the power of the Holy Ghost upon Him and in Him -the testimony of the Father, and the relationship of Son with the Father.

It will be remarked, that the genealogy of Christ is here traced, not to Abraham and David, that He should be the heir of the promises after the flesh, but to Adam; in order to exhibit the true Son of God a man on earth, where the first Adam lost His title, such as it was. The second Adam, the Son of God was there, accepted of the Father, and preparing to take upon Himself the difficulties into which the sin and fall of the first Adam had brought those of his race who drew nigh to God, under the influence of His grace.

The enemy was in possession, through sin, of the first Adam; and Jesus must gain the victory over Satan, if He would deliver those who are under his power. He must bind the strong man. To conquer him practically, is the second part of the Christian life. Joy in God, conflict with the enemy, make up the life of the redeemed, sealed with the Holy Ghost and walking by His power. In both these things, the believer is with Jesus, and Jesus with him.

The unknown Son of God on earth, Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Holy Ghost, with whom He had been sealed, to undergo the temptation of the enemy, beneath which Adam fell. But Jesus endured this temptation in the circumstances in which we stand, not those in which Adam stood; that is to say, He felt it in all the difficulties of the life of faith; tempted in all points like as we are, sin excepted. Take notice here that it is no question of bondage to sin but of conflict. When it is a question of bondage, it is a question of deliverance, not of conflict. It was in Canaan that Israel fought. They were delivered out of Egypt, they did not fight there.

In Luke, the temptations are arranged according to their moral order:-first, that which bodily need required; second, the world; third, spiritual subtlety. In each, the Lord maintains the position of

obedience and of dependence, giving God and His communications to man their true place. Simple principle, which shelters us in every attack; but which, by its very simplicity, is perfection. Nevertheless, let us remember that this is the case; for, raising ourselves to marvelous heights, is not the thing required of us, but that which applies to our human condition as the normal rule for its guidance; it is obedience, dependence, doing nothing except as God wills it, and reliance on Him. This walk supposes the Word. But the Word is the expression of the will, the goodness and the authority of God, applicable to all the circumstances of man, as he is. It shows that God interests Himself in all that regards him, why then should man act of himself without looking to God and to this Word? Alas! speaking of men in general, they are self-willed. To submit and be dependent is precisely that which they will not. They have too much enmity to God to trust in Him. It was this, therefore, which distinguished the Lord. The power to work a miracle God could bestow on whom He would. But an obedient man, who had no will to do anything with respect to which the will of God was not expressed, a man who lived by the Word, a man who lived in complete dependence upon God, and had a perfect trust, which required no other proof of God's faithfulness than His Word; no other means of certainty that He would intervene than His promise of so doing, and who waited for that intervention in the path of His will—here was something more than power. This was the perfection of man, in the place where man stood (not simply innocence, for innocence has no need of trusting God in the midst of difficulties), and a perfection which sheltered one who possessed it from every attack Satan could make upon him; for what could he do to one who never went beyond the will of God, and to whom that will was the only motive for action. Moreover, the power of the Spirit of God was there. Accordingly, we find that simple obedience directed by the Word, is the only weapon employed by Jesus. This obedience requires dependence on God, and trust in God, in order to accomplish it.

He lives by the Word—this is dependence. He will not tempt, i.e., put God to the test, to see if He is faithful—this is trust.

He acts when God wills, and because He wills, and does that which God wills. All the rest He leaves with God.

Satan is overcome and powerless before this second Adam, who acts according to the power of the Spirit in the place where man is found, by the means which Spirit, has given to man, and in the circumstances in which Satan exercises his power. Sin there was none; or it would have been to yield, not to conquer. It was shut out by obedience. But Satan is overcome in the circumstances of temptation in which man is found. Bodily need, which would have become lust if self-will had entered into it, instead of dependence on the will of God; the world and all its glory, which, so far as it is the object of man's covetousness, is in fact the kingdom of Satan<sup>•</sup> and it was on that ground that Satan tried to bring Jesus, and sheathed himself to be Satan in so doing; and lastly self-exaltation, in a religious way, through the things which God has given us;—these were the points of the enemy's attack. But there was no self-seeking in Jesus.

We have found, then, in these things which we have been looking at, a man filled with the Holy Ghost, and born of the Holy Ghost on earth, perfectly well pleasing to God and the object of His affection, His beloved. Son, in His position of dependence; and a man the conqueror of Satan amid those temptations by which he usually gains advantage over man; conqueror in the power of the Holy Ghost, and by making use of the Word, as dependent, obedient, and trusting in God, in

the ordinary circumstances of man. In the first position, Jesus stood with the remnant; in the second, alone; as in Gethsemane and on the cross. Nevertheless, it was for us; and, accepted as Jesus, we have in a certain sense the enemy to overcome; but it is a conquered enemy whom we resist in the strength of the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us in virtue of redemption. If we resist him, he flies; for he has met his conqueror. The flesh does not resist him. He finds Christ in us. Resistance in the flesh does not lead to victory.

Jesus conquered, and then despoiled the strong man of his goods; but it was in temptation, obedience, having no will but that of God, dependence, the use of the Word, abiding in subjection to God, that Jesus gained the victory over him. In all this, the first Adam failed. After Christ's victory, we, also, as servants of Christ, gain actual victories, or, rather, the fruits of the victory already gained in the presence of God.

The Lord has now taken His place, so to speak, for the work of the second Adam—the man in whom is the Spirit without measure, the Son of God in this world by His birth—He has taken it as the seed of the woman (nevertheless, conceived of the Holy Ghost). He has taken it as the Son of God, perfectly well-pleasing to God in His person as man here below; and He has taken it as the conqueror of Satan. Owned to be the Son of God, and sealed with the Holy Ghost by the Father, Heaven being open to Him as man, His genealogy is, however, traced up to Adam; and, the descendant of Adam, without sin, full of the Holy Ghost, He conquers Satan (as the obedient man, having no motive but the will of God), and sets Himself to accomplish the work which God His Father committed to Him in this world, and that, as man, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

He returns, in the power of the Spirit, into Galilee, and His fame spreads through all the region round about.

He presents Himself in this character: "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, etc., to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Here He stops; that which follows, in the prophet, respecting the deliverance of Israel by the judgment which avenges them of their enemies, is omitted by the Lord.

Now, Jesus does not announce promises, but their fulfillment in grace by His own presence. The Spirit is upon this man, full of grace; and the God of grace in Him manifests His goodness: the time of deliverance is come, the vessel of His favor to Israel is there in their midst.

The examination of the prophecy renders this testimony so much the more remarkable, that the Spirit having declared the sin of the people and their judgment in the chapters that precede these words, speaks, when introducing the Christ, the Anointed, only of grace and blessing to Israel; if there is vengeance, it should be executed upon their enemies for the deliverance of Israel.

But here it is in His person, this man, the Son of God, full of the Holy Ghost, in order to proclaim the mercy of a God who is faithful to His promises, and to comfort and lift up the bruised and the poor in spirit. Blessing was there, presenting itself before them. They could not misunderstand it, but they do not recognize the Son of God. "Is not this Joseph's son?" We have here the whole history of Christ. The perfect manifestation of grace in the midst of Israel, His land, and His people; and they knew Him not. No prophet is accepted in his own country.

But this rejection opened the way to a grace which went beyond the limits that a rebellious people would set to it. The woman of Sarepta and Naaman were testimonies of this grace.

Wrath fills the heart of those who reject grace. Unbelieving, and incapable of discerning the blessing that had visited them, they will not have it go elsewhere. The pride which rendered them unable to appreciate grace would not hear of its communication to others.

They seek to destroy Jesus, but He goes on His way. Here is the whole history of Jesus among the people traced beforehand.

He went His way; and the Spirit preserves to us the acts and the cures which characterize His ministry in the aspect of the efficacy of grace, and of its extension to others besides Israel.

Power was in Him whose grace was rejected. Acknowledged by devils, if not by Israel, He expels them by a word. He heals the sick. All the power of the enemy, all the sad outward effects of sin, disappear before Him. He heals, He withdraws; and when entreated to remain (the effect of His works that procured Him that honor from the people, which He did not seek), He goes away to labor elsewhere in the testimony committed to Him. He seeks to accomplish His work, and not to be honored.

He preaches everywhere among the people. He casts out the enemy, He removes suffering, and proclaims the goodness of God to the poor.

Man-He was come for men. He will associate others with Himself in this glorious work. He has a right to do it. If He is a servant in grace, He is so according to the full power of the Holy Ghost. He works a miracle well adapted to strike those whom He would call, and which made them feel that everything was at His disposal, that all depended on Him, that where man could do nothing He could do everything. Peter, stricken in conscience by the presence of the Lord, confesses his unworthiness. Grace raises him up, and appoints him to speak of itself to others-to fish for men. Already it was not a preacher of righteousness among the people of God, but One who drew into His net those that were afar off. He attracted to Himself, as the manifestation on earth of the power and the character of God. It was grace which was there.

He was there with the will and the power to heal that which was the token of sin, a disease which was incurable except by the intervention of God in power. God had intervened; and in grace He can say, and He says, to one who acknowledged His power but doubted His will, "I will, be thou clean." Nevertheless, He submitted to the ordinances as a man, a Jew, obedient to the law. Jesus prayed, as a man dependent on God. This was His perfection as a man born under the law. Moreover, He must needs acknowledge the authority of the ordinances of God not yet abrogated by His rejection. He was in the midst of Israel. But this obedience as man became a testimony; for the power of Jehovah alone could heal leprosy, and the priests were to acknowledge that which had been done.

But He brings pardon as well as cleansing. He gives a proof of this by removing all infirmity, and imparting strength to one who had none. This was not the doctrine that God could pardon. They believed that. But God had intervened, and pardon was present. They would no longer have to wait for the last day, nor for a day of judgment, to know their condition. A Nathan would not be required to come and proclaim it on the part of a God who was in heaven while His people were on

earth. Pardon was come, in the person of the Son of man come down to earth. In all this Jesus gave proofs of the power and the rights of Jehovah. In this instance it was the fulfillment of Psa. 8:3; but, at the same time, He gave these proofs as accomplished by the power of the Holy Ghost, without measure in man, in His own person, the true Son of God. The Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins; in fact, Jehovah was come a man on earth. The Son of man was there before their eyes, in grace, to exercise this power—a proof that God had visited them.

In both these instances the Lord, while displaying a power fitted to extend, and that was to extend, beyond this sphere, displays it in connection with Israel. The cleansing was a proof of the power of Jehovah in the midst of Israel, and the pardon was in connection with His government in Israel, and therefore proved itself by the perfect cure of the sick man, according to the Psalm already quoted. No doubt, these rights were not limited to Israel, but at that moment they were exercised in connection with this nation. He cleansed, in grace, that which Jehovah alone could cleanse, He pardoned that which Jehovah alone could pardon, taking away all the consequences of their sin. It was, in this sense, a govern-

mental pardon. The power of Jehovah present, fully to restore, and re-establish Israel—wherever, at least, faith could profit by it. Afterward, we shall find pardon for peace of soul.

The call of Levi, and that which follows, shows that not only was this power of grace to extend beyond Israel, but that the old vessel was not able to bear it. It must form a vessel for itself.

We may also remark here, on the other hand, that faith is characterized by perseverance; in the consciousness of the evil, an evil without remedy, and in the assurance that One able to heal is there, it does not allow itself to be discouraged—does not put off the relief of its need. Now the power of God was there, to meet this need.

This terminates that part of the narrative which reveals, in a positive way, divine power visiting the earth in grace, in the person of the Son of Man, and exercised among Israel, in the condition in which it found them.

That which follows, characterizes its exercise in contrast with Judaism. But that which we have already examined, is divided into two parts, having distinct characters which deserve to be noticed. First, from ver. 31 to 41 of chap. 4, it is the power of the Lord manifesting itself on His part, as triumphing (without any particular connection with the mind of the individual) over all the power of the enemy, whether in sickness or in possession. The power of the enemy, is there. Jesus casts it out, and heals those who were suffering from it. But, secondly, His occupation is to preach. And the kingdom was not only the manifestation of a power which cast out all that of the enemy, but of a power which brought souls also into connection with God. We see this in chap. 5:1-26. Here their condition before God, sin, and faith, are in question, in a word, all that belonged to their relationship with God.

Here, consequently, we see the authority of the word of Christ upon the heart, the manifestation of His glory (He is owned as Lord), conviction of sin, just jealousy for His glory, in the sense of His holiness which should keep itself inviolate; the soul taking God's part against itself, because it loves holiness and respects the glory of God, even while feeling the attraction of His grace; so that, owing to this, everything is forgotten—fish, nets, boat, danger—"one thing" already possesses the soul. The Lord's answer then dispels all fear, and He associates the freed soul with Himself in

the grace which He had exercised towards it, and in the work which he wrought in behalf of men. It was already delivered, morally, from all that was around it-now, in the full enjoyment of grace, it is set free by the power of grace, and wholly given to Jesus. The Lord -perfect manifestation of God-in creating new affections by this revelation of God, separates the heart from all that bound it to this world, to the order of the old man, in order to set it apart for Himself, for God. He surrounds Himself with all that is delivered, becoming its center; and, indeed, delivers by being so.

He then cleanses the leper-which none but Jehovah could do. Still, He does not come out of His position under the law; and, however great His fame, He maintains His place of perfect dependence as man before God. The leper, the unclean, may return to God.

He next forgives. The guilty one is no longer so before God. He is pardoned. At the same time He receives strength. Nevertheless, it is still the Son of Man who is there. In both cases, faith seeks the Lord, bringing its need before Him.

The Lord now exhibits the character of this grace in connection with its objects. Being supreme, being of God, it acts in virtue of its rights. Human circumstances do not hinder it. It adapts itself by its very nature to human need, and not to human privileges. It is not subject to ordinances, and does not come in through them. The power of God by the Spirit was there, and acted for itself, and produced its own effects, setting aside that which was old, that to which man was attached.

The Scribes and Pharisees would not have the Lord associate with the wicked and disreputable. God seeks those who need Him-sinners in grace.

When they ask why His disciples do not observe the customs and the ordinances of John and the Pharisees, by which they guided the legal piety of their disciples, it is that the new thing could not be subjected to the forms that belonged to that which was old, and which could not sustain the strength and energy of that which came from God. The old were the forms of man after the flesh; the new, the energy of God, according to the Holy Ghost. Moreover, it was not the time for a piety that took the form of self-mortification: what else could man do? But the Bridegroom was there.

Nevertheless, man would prefer that which was old, because it was man, and not the energy of God.

The circumstances related in chap. 6:1-10, have reference to the same truth, and in an important aspect.

The Sabbath was the sign of the covenant between Israel and God: rest, after finished work. The Pharisees blame the disciples of Christ, because they rub out the ears of corn in their hands. Now, a rejected David had overleapt the barrier of the law when his need required it. The Son of man, Son of David (rejected like the son of Jesse, the elect and anointed king), was Lord of the Sabbath. God, who established this ordinance, was so; and the Son of man was there, with the rights and the power of God. Marvelous fact! Moreover, the power of God present in grace did not allow misery to exist, 'because it was the day of grace. Availing Himself of the rights of supreme goodness, and displaying a power that authorized His pretension to assert those rights, He heals, in full synagogue, the man with the withered hand. They are filled with madness at this manifestation of power, which overflows and carries away the dykes of their pride and self-righteousness. We may observe that all these circumstances are gathered together with an

order and mutual connection that are perfect, but without regard to the moment at which they took place. Their arrangement is governed by the subject, and not by chronology.

The Lord had shown that this grace-which had visited Israel according to all that could be expected from the Lord Almighty, faithful to His promises-could, nevertheless, not be confined to the narrow limits of that people, nor be adapted to the ordinances of the law; that men desired the old things, but that the power of God acted according to its own nature. He had shown that the most sacred, the most obligatory sign of the old covenant, must bow to His title, superior to all ordinance, and give place to the rights of His divine love which was in action. He had shown Himself in everything -in the calling of Peter especially-to be the new center, around which all that sought God and blessing must gather; for He was the living manifestation of God and of blessing in man. Thus God was manifested, the old order of things was worn out and unable to contain this grace, and the remnant were separated-around the Lord -from a world that saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. He now acted on this basis; and if faith sought Him in Israel, this power of grace manifested God in a new way. God surrounds Himself with men, as the center of blessing in Christ as man. But He is love, and in the activity of that love He seeks the lost. Christ had been sent: He now sends. The name of "apostle" (sent), for He so names them, contains this deep and marvelous truth-God is acting in grace. He surrounds Himself with blessed ones. He seeks miserable sinners. If Christ, the true center of grace and happiness, surrounds Himself with followers; yet He sends, also, His chosen ones to bear testimony of the love which He came to manifest. God has manifested Himself in man. In man He seeks sinners. Man has part in the most immediate display of the divine nature in both ways. He is with Christ as man; and he is sent by Christ. Christ Himself does this as man. It is man, full of the Holy Ghost. Thus we see Him again manifested in dependence on His Father before choosing the apostles; He retires to pray. He passes the night in prayer.

And now He goes beyond the manifestation of Himself, as personally full of the Holy Ghost, to bring in the knowledge of God among men. He becomes the center, around which all must come who sought God, and a source of mission for the accomplishment of His love-the center of the manifestation of divine power in grace. And, therefore, He called around Him the remnant who should be saved. His position in every respect is summed up in that which is said after He came down from the mountain. He comes down with the apostles from His communion with God. In the plain He is surrounded by the company of His disciples, and then by a great multitude, drawn together by His word. There was the attraction of the word of God, and He healed the diseases of man, and cast out the power of Satan. This power dwelt in His person; the virtue that went out of Him gave these outward testimonies to the power of God present in grace. The attention of the people was drawn to Him by these means. Nevertheless, we have seen that the old things, to which the multitude were attached, were passing away. He surrounded Himself with hearts faithful to God, the called of His grace. Here, therefore, He does not, as in Matthew, announce strictly the character of the kingdom, to show that of the dispensation which was at hand, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," etc.; but, distinguishing the remnant by their attachment to Himself, He declares to the disciples who followed Him that they were these blessed ones. They were poor and despised, but they were blessed. They should have the kingdom. This is important, because it separates the remnant, and puts them in relationship with Himself to receive the blessing. He describes in a remarkable manner the character of those who were thus blessed of God.

His discourse is divided into several branches-

20-26. The contrast between the remnant, manifested as His disciples, and the multitude who were satisfied with the world. Remark, also, here, that it is not a question of persecution for righteousness' sake, as in Matthew, but only for His name's sake. All was marked by attachment to His person.

27-36. The character of God the Father in the manifestation of grace in Christ, which they were to imitate.

37, 38. This character particularly developed in the position of Christ, as He was on earth at that time. Christ fulfilling His service on earth. This implied government and recompense on God's part, as was the case with regard to Christ Himself.

The condition of the leaders in Israel, and the connection between them and the multitude.

That of the disciples in relation to Christ.

41, 42. The way to attain it; and to see clearly in the midst of evil is to put it away from oneself.

Afterward, in general, its own fruit characterized every tree. Coming around Christ to hear Him was not the question, but that He should be so precious to their hearts that they would put aside every obstacle and practically obey Him.

Let us sum up these things which we have been considering. He acts in a power which expels evil, because He finds it there, and He is good; and God alone is good. He reaches the conscience, and calls souls to Himself. He acts in connection with the hope of Israel and the power of God to cleanse, pardon, and give them strength. But it is a grace which we all need, and the goodness of God, the energy of His love, did not confine itself to that people. Its exercise did not agree with the forms on which the Jews lived-or rather, could not live; and the new wine must be put into new bottles. The question of the Sabbath settled the question of the introduction of this power. The sign of the covenant gave way to it. He who exercised it was Lord of the Sabbath. The loving-kindness of the God of the Sabbath was not stayed as if in hands tied by that which He had established in connection with the covenant. Jesus then assembles the vessels of His grace and power, according to the will of God, around Himself. They were the blessed ones, the heirs of the kingdom. The Lord describes their character. It was not the indifference and pride that arose from ignorance of God, justly alienated from Israel who had sinned against Him and despised the glorious manifestation of His grace in Christ. They share the distress and pain which such a condition of God's people must cause in those who had the mind of God. Hated, proscribed, put to shame, for the sake of the Son of Man who had come to bear their sorrows, it was their glory. They should share His glory when the nature of God was glorified in doing all things according to His own will. They would not be put to shame in heaven-they should have their reward there-not in Israel. "In like manner had their fathers done unto the prophets." Woe unto those that were at ease in Zion, during the sinful condition of Israel, and their rejection and ill-treatment of their Messiah. It is the contrast between the character of the true remnant and that of the proud among the people.

We then find the conduct that is suitable to the former -conduct which, to express it in one word, comprises in its essential elements, the character of God in grace, as manifested in Jesus on the earth. But Jesus had His own character of service as the Son of Man; the application of this to their

particular circumstances, is added in vers. 37, 38. In 39, the leaders of Israel are set before us; and in ver. 40 the portion of the disciples. Rejected, like Himself, they should have His portion; but--assuming that they followed Him perfectly--they should have it in blessing, in grace, in character, in position, also. What a favor! Moreover, the judgment of self, and not of one's brother, was the means of attaining clear moral sight. The tree good, the fruit would be good. Self-judgment applies to the tree. This is always true. In self-judgment, it is not only the fruit that is corrected, it is oneself. And the tree is known by its fruit, not only by good fruit, but by its own. The Christian bears the fruit of the nature of Christ. Also, it is the heart itself, and real practical obedience, that are in question.

Here, then, the great principles of the new life, in its full practical development in Christ, are set before us. It is the new thing, the savor and character of the new wine. The remnant made like unto Christ whom they followed, unto Christ the new center of the movement of the Spirit of God, and of the calling of His grace. Christ has come out of the walled court of Judaism, in the power of a new life and by the authority of the Most High, who had brought blessing into this enclosure, which it was unable to acknowledge. He had come out from it, according to the principles of the life itself which He announced--historically He was still in it.

Hence after this, we find the Spirit acting in the heart of a Gentile--that heart manifested more faith than any among the children of Israel. Humble in heart, and loving the people of God, as such, for the sake of God, whose people they were, and thus raised in His affections above their practical wretched state, he can see in Jesus one who had authority over everything even as he himself had over his soldiers and servants. He knew nothing of the Messiah, but he recognized in Jesus the power of God. This was not mere idea, it was faith. There was no such faith in Israel. The Lord then acts with a power which was to be the source of that which is new for man. He raises the dead. This, indeed, was going beyond the pale of the ordinances of the law. He has compassion on the affliction and misery of man. Death was a burthen to him--Jesus delivers him from it. It was not only cleansing a leprous Israelite, nor pardoning and healing believers among His people. He restores life to one who had lost it. Israel, no doubt, will profit by it; but the power necessary to the accomplishment of this work, is that which makes all things new wherever it be.

The change, of which we speak, and which these two examples so strikingly illustrate, is brought out in treating of the connection between Christ and John the Baptist, who sends to learn from the Lord's own mouth who He is. John had heard of His miracles, and sends his disciples to learn who it was that wrought them. Naturally, the Messiah, in the exercise of His power, would have delivered him from prison. Was He the Messiah? or was John to wait for another? He had faith enough to depend on the answer of one who wrought these miracles; but, shut up in prison, his mind desired something more positive. This circumstance, brought about by God, gives rise to an explanation respecting the relative position of John and Jesus. The Lord does not here receive testimony from John. John was to receive Christ upon the testimony He gave of Himself; and that as having taken a position which would offend those who judged according to Jewish and carnal ideas; a position which required faith in a divine testimony, and, consequently, surrounded itself with those whom a moral change had enabled to appreciate this testimony. The Lord, in reply to John's messengers, works miracles which prove the power of God present in grace, and a service rendered to the poor; and declares that blessed is he who is not offended at the humble position He had taken in order to accomplish it. But He gives testimony to John, if He will receive none from

him; He had attracted the attention of the people, and with reason; he was more than a prophet-he had prepared the way of the Lord Himself. Nevertheless, if he prepared the way, the immense and complete change to be made was not accomplished. John's ministry, by its very nature, put him outside the effect of this change. He went before it, to announce the One who would accomplish it, whose presence would bring in its power on the earth. The least, therefore, in the kingdom, was greater than he.

The people who had received with humility the word sent by John the Baptist, bore testimony in their heart to the ways and the wisdom of God. Those who trusted in themselves, rejected the counsels of God accomplished by him. The Lord on this declares plainly what their condition is. They rejected alike the warnings and the grace of God. The children of wisdom, those in whom the wisdom of God wrought, acknowledged and gave glory to it in its ways. This is the history of the reception both of John and of Jesus. The wisdom of man denounced the ways of God. The righteous severity of His testimony against evil-against the condition of His people, showed (to man) the influence of a devil. The perfection of His grace, condescending to poor sinners and presenting itself to them where they were, was the wallowing in sin and the making oneself known by one's associates. The wisdom of God would be owned by those who were taught by it, and by those alone. Thereupon these ways of God towards the most wretched sinners, and their effect, in contrast with this pharisaic spirit, are shown in the history of the woman who was a sinner in the Pharisee's house; and a pardon is revealed, not with reference to the government of God in the earth on behalf of His people; a government with which the healing of an Israelite under God's discipline was connected; but an absolute pardon, involving peace to the soul, is granted to the most miserable of sinners. A prophet merely was not in question (the Pharisee's self-righteousness could not even discern that), but a soul that loves God; because God is love; a soul that has learned this with regard to, and by means of its own sins in seeing Jesus. This is grace. Nothing more touching than the way in which the Lord spews the presence of those qualities which made this woman now truly excellent, qualities connected with the discernment of His person by faith. In her were found divine understanding of the person of Christ, deep sense of her own sin, humility, love for that which was good, devotedness to Him who was good. Everything showed a heart in which reigned sentiments proper to relationship with God; sentiments that flowed from His presence revealed in the heart, because He had made Himself known to it. This, however, is not the place to dwell upon them; but it is important to remark that which has great moral value, when what a free pardon really is is to be set forth, that in the exercise of grace on God's part, creates, when received into the heart, sentiments corresponding to itself, and which nothing else can produce; and that these sentiments are in connection with that grace, and with the sense of sin it produces. It gives a deep consciousness of sin, but it is in connection with the sense of God's goodness; and the two feelings increase in mutual proportion. The new thing, sovereign grace, can alone produce these qualities, which answer to the nature of God Himself, whose true character the heart has apprehended, and with whom it is in communion; and that, while judging sin as it deserves in the presence of such a God. It will be observed, that this is connected with the knowledge of Christ Himself, who is the manifestation of this character; the true source, by grace, of the feelings of this broken heart; and also that the knowledge of her pardon comes afterward. It is grace-it is Jesus Himself-His person -that attracts this woman and produces the moral effect. She goes away in peace when she understands the extent of grace in the pardon which He pronounces. And the pardon itself has its force, in that Jesus was everything to her. If He

forgave she was satisfied. Without accounting for it to herself, it was God revealed to her heart; it was not self-approval, nor the judgment others might form of the change wrought in her. Grace had so taken possession of her heart-grace personified in Jesus-God was so manifested to her that His approval in grace, His forgiveness carried everything else with it. If He was satisfied, so was she. She had all in attaching this importance to Christ. Grace is content to bless, and the soul that attaches importance enough to Christ, is content with the blessing it bestows. How striking is the firmness with which grace asserts itself, and does not fear to withstand the judgment of man who despises it. It takes unhesitatingly the part of the poor sinner whom it has touched. Man's judgment only proves that he neither knows nor appreciates God in the most perfect manifestation of His nature. To man, with all his wisdom, it is but a poor preacher, who deceives himself in passing for a prophet, and to whom it is not worth while to give a little water for his feet. To the believer, it is perfect peace if he has faith in Christ. Its fruits are not yet before man; they are before God, if Christ is appreciated. And he who appreciates Him, thinks neither of Himself nor his fruits (except of the bad), but of the One who was the testimony of grace to his heart, when he was nothing but a sinner.

This is the new thing-Grace, and even its fruits in their perfection; the heart of God manifested in grace, and the heart of men, a sinner, responding to it by grace; having apprehended, or rather, having been apprehended by, the perfect manifestation of that grace in Christ.

In chap. 8, the Lord explains the import and the effect of His ministry; and especially, I doubt not, its effect among the Jews.

However great the unbelief, Jesus carries on His work to the end, and the fruits of His work appear. He goes to preach the good news of the kingdom. His disciples, the fruit, and the witnesses by grace in their measure, in the same manner as Himself, of His mighty Word, accompany Him; and other fruits of this same Word, witnesses also by their own deliverance from the power of the enemy, and by the affection and devotedness flowing from thence by grace, a grace which acted by their means, according to the love and devotedness that attach to Jesus. Here women have a good place. The work was strengthened and consolidated, and characterizes itself by its effects.

The Lord explains its true nature. He did not take possession of the kingdom, He did not seek for fruit. He sowed the testimony of God, in order to produce fruit. This, in a striking way, is the altogether new thing. The Word was its seed. Moreover, it was the disciples only-who had followed and attached themselves to His person, by grace and by virtue of the manifestation of the power and grace of God in His person-to whom it was given to understand the mysteries, the thoughts of God, revealed in Christ, of this kingdom which was not being openly established by power. Here, the remnant is very clearly distinguished from the nation. To "others" it was in parables, that they might not understand. For that, the Lord Himself must be received morally. Here this parable is not accompanied by others. Alone, it marks out the position. The warning, which we considered in Mark, is added. Finally, the light of God was not manifested in order to be hidden. Moreover, everything should be made manifest; therefore they must take heed how they heard, for if they possessed that which they heard they should receive more, otherwise even that should be taken from them.

The Lord puts a seal upon this testimony, namely, that the thing in question was the Word, which drew to Him and to God those who were to enjoy the blessing; and that the Word was the basis of all relationship with Himself, declaring, when they spoke to Him of His mother and brethren, by whom He was related to Israel after the flesh, that He acknowledged as such none others but those who heard and obeyed the Word of God.

Besides the evident power manifested in His miracles, the accounts that follow-to the end of chap. 8-present different aspects of the work of Christ, and of His reception, and of its consequences.

First, the Lord-although, apparently, He takes no notice-is associated with His disciples in the difficulties and storms that surround them, because they have embarked in His service. We have seen that He gathered the disciples around Himself: they are devoted to His service. As far as man's power to avert it went, they were in imminent danger. The waves are ready to swallow them up. Jesus, in their eyes, cares nothing about it; but God has permitted this exercise of faith. They are there on account of Christ, and with Him. Christ is with them; and the power of Christ, for whose sake they are in the storm, is there to protect them. They are together with Him in the same vessel. If as to themselves they might perish, they are associated in the counsels of God with Jesus, and His presence is their safeguard. He permits the storm, but He is Himself in the vessel. When He shall awake and manifest Himself, all will be calm.

As to Israel, the remnant-however great the enemy's power -is delivered. The world beseeches Jesus to depart, desiring their own ease, which is more disturbed by the presence and power of God than by a legion of devils. He goes away. The man who was healed-the remnant-would fain be with Him; but the Lord sends him back into the world that He quitted Himself, to be a witness of the grace and power of which He had been himself the subject.

The herd of swine, I doubt not, set before us the career of Israel towards their destruction, after the rejection of the Lord.

The world accustoms itself to the power of Satan,- painful as it may be to see it in certain cases,-never to the power of God.

The two next histories present the effect of faith, and the real need with which the grace that meets it has to do. The faith of the remnant seeks Jesus to preserve the life of that which is ready to perish. The Lord answers it, and comes Himself to answer it. On the way (it is there He was, and, as to final deliverance, He is still there), in the midst of the crowd that surrounded Him, faith touches Him. The poor woman had a disease which no means at man's disposal could heal. But power is found in the Man Christ, and comes forth from Him for the healing of man, wherever faith exists, while waiting for the final accomplishment of His mission on earth. She is healed, and confesses before Christ her-condition and all that had happened to her; and thus, by means of the effect of faith, testimony is rendered to Christ. The remnant is manifested, faith distinguishes them from the multitude; their condition being the fruit of divine power in Christ.

This principle applies to the healing of every believer, and, consequently, to that of the Gentiles, as the apostle argues. Healing power is in the person of Christ; faith -by grace and by the attraction of Christ-profits by it. It does not depend on the relationship of the Jew, although He was the first, as to his position, to profit by it. It is a question of what there is in the person of Christ, and of faith in the individual. If there is faith in the individual, this power acts; he goes away in peace, healed by

the power of God Himself.

But, in fact, if we consider in full the condition of man; it was not sickness merely which was in question, but death. Christ, before the full manifestation of the state of man, met it, so to speak, on the way; but, as in the case of Lazarus, the manifestation was allowed. And to faith, this manifestation took place in the death of Jesus. Thus, here, it is permitted that the daughter of Jairus should die before the arrival of Christ; but grace has come to raise from the dead, with the divine power that alone can accomplish it; and Jesus, in comforting the poor father, bids him not to fear, but only to believe, and his daughter should be made whole. It is faith in His person, in the divine power in Him, in the grace that comes to exercise it, which obtains joy and deliverance. But Jesus does not seek the multitude here; the manifestation of this power is only for the consolation of those who feel their need of it, and for the faith of those who are really attached to Him. The multitude know, indeed, that the maiden is dead; they bewail her, and do not understand the power of God that can raise her up. Jesus gives back to her parents the child whose life He had restored. Thus will it be with the Jews at the end, in the midst of the unbelief of the many. Meantime, by faith we anticipate this joy, convinced that it is our state, by grace, we live. Only that for us it is in connection with Christ in heaven-the first-fruits of a new creation.

With respect to His ministry, Jesus will have this hidden. He must be received according to the testimony which He bore to the conscience and to the heart. On the way this testimony was not entirely finished. We shall see His last efforts with the unbelieving heart of man in the succeeding chapters.

In chap. 9 the Lord charges the disciples with the same mission in Israel as that which He Himself fulfilled. They preach the kingdom, heal the sick, and cast out devils. But this is added, that their work takes the character of a final mission. Not that the Lord had ceased to work, and he also sent forth the seventy; but final in this sense, that it became a testimony against the people if they rejected it. The twelve were to shake off the dust from their feet on leaving the cities that would reject them. This is intelligible, at the point we have reached in the Gospel. It is repeated, with a yet greater force, in the case of the seventy. We shall speak of it in the chapter that relates it. Their mission comes after the manifestation of His glory to the three disciples.

To go on with our chapter. That which follows, ver. 7, shows that the fame of His marvelous works had reached the ears of the king. Israel was without excuse. Whatever little conscience there was felt the effect of His power. The people also followed Him. Gone apart with the disciples, who had returned from their mission, He is soon surrounded by the multitude,-again their servant in grace, however great their unbelief, He preaches to them and heals all who needed it,

But He would give them a fresh and very especial proof of the divine power and presence that was among them. It had been said that in the time of Israel's blessing from the Lord, when He should make the horn of David to flourish, He would satisfy the poor with bread. Jesus now does so. But there is more than this here. We have seen throughout this Gospel that He exercises this power, in His humanity, by the unmeasured energy of the Holy Ghost. Hence a marvelous blessing for us, granted according to the sovereign counsels of God, through the perfect wisdom of Jesus in selecting His instruments. He will have the disciples do it. Nevertheless, the power that performs it is all His own. The disciples see nothing beyond that which their eyes can estimate. But, if He is Jehovah who feeds them, He ever takes His place Himself in the dependence of the nature He

had assumed. He retires with His disciples, and there, afar from the world He prays. And, as in the two remarkable cases of the descent of the Holy Ghost and the selection of the Twelve, so here also, His prayer is the occasion of the manifestation of His glory-glory which was due to Him, but which the Father gave Him as man, and in connection with the sufferings and the humiliation, which, in His love, He voluntarily underwent. The attention of the people was excited, but they did not go beyond the speculations of the human mind with regard to the Savior. The disciples, faith, recognized without hesitation the Christ in Jesus. But He was no longer to be proclaimed as such-the Son of Man was to suffer. Counsels more important, a glory more excellent than that of the Messiah, were to be realized: but it should be through suffering-suffering that His disciples were to share, by following Him. But in losing their life for Him, they would gain it; for in following Jesus, the eternal life of the soul was the question, and not merely the kingdom. Moreover, He who was now rejected, would return in His own glory, namely, as Son of Man (the character He takes in this Gospel); in the glory of the Father, for He was the Son of God; and in that of the angels, above whom He took place, although man; He was worthy of this, for He created them. The salvation of the soul, the glory of Jesus acknowledged according to His rights, everything warned them to confess Him while He was despised and disallowed. Now, to strengthen the faith of those whom He would make pillars, and through them the faith of all, He announces that some of them, before they tasted death (they should neither wait for death, in which the value of eternal life would be felt, nor for the return of Christ) should see the kingdom of God.

In consequence of this declaration, eight days later, He took the three and went up into a mountain to pray. There He is transfigured. He appears in glory, and the disciples see it. But Moses and Elias share it with Him. The saints of the Old Testament have part with Him in the glory of the kingdom, founded upon His death. They speak with Him of His decease. They had spoken of other things. They had seen the law set up, or had sought to bring the people back to it, for the introduction of blessing; but now that this new glory is the subject, all depends on the death of Christ, and on that alone. Everything else disappears. The heavenly glory of the kingdom, and death, are in immediate relationship. Peter sees only the introduction of Christ into a glory equal to theirs; connecting the latter, in His mind, with that which they both were to a Jew, and associating Jesus with it. It is then that the two disappear entirely, and Jesus remains alone. It was He alone whom they were to hear. • The connection of Moses and Elias with Jesus in the glory, depended on the rejection of their testimony by the people to whom they had addressed it.

But this is not all. The Church, properly so called, is not seen here. But the sign of the excellent glory, of the presence of God, shows itself-the cloud in which Jehovah dwelt in Israel. Jesus brings the disciples into it as witnesses. Moses and Elias disappear, and Jesus, having brought the disciples into it, the God of Israel manifests Himself as the Father, and owns Jesus as the Son in whom He delighted. All is changed in the relationships of God with man. The Son of Man, put to death on the earth, is owned in the excellent glory to be the Son of the Father. The disciples know Him thus by the testimony of the Father, are in communion with Him, and, as it were, introduced into the glory in which the Father Himself thus acknowledged Jesus, in which the Father and the Son are found. Jehovah makes himself known as Father, by revealing the Son. And the disciples find themselves in the abode of glory, from whence, at all times, Jehovah Himself had protected Israel. Jesus was there with them, and He was the Son of God. What a position! what a change for them! It is in fact (save the oneness of the body) the change from all that was most excellent in

Judaism, to the heavenly glory, which was wrought at that moment, in order to make all things new.

The personal profit of this passage is great, in that it reveals to us, in a very striking manner, the heavenly and glorious state. The saints are in the same glory as Jesus, they are with Him, they converse familiarly with Him, they converse on that which is nearest to His heart-on His sufferings and death. They speak with the sentiments that flow from circumstances which affect the heart. He was to die in the beloved Jerusalem, instead of there receiving the kingdom. They speak asunderstanding the counsels of God; for the thing had not yet taken place. Such are the relationships of the saints with Jesus in the kingdom. For, up to this point, it is the manifestation of the glory as the world will see it, with the addition of the intercourse between the glorified and Jesus. But the three disciples go beyond this. They enter into the abode of the Father. They are taught of Him. His own affections for His Son are made known to them. Moses and Elias have borne testimony to Christ, and shall be glorified with Him: but Jesus remains alone for the Church. This is more than the kingdom-it is fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus; not understood, assuredly, at that time, but now is by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is wonderful this entrance into the excellent glory, into the Shechinah, the abode of God,-and these revelations, on God's-part, of His own affections for His Son. This is more than the glory. Jesus, however, is always the object that fills the scene for us. Observe also, for our position down here, that the Lord speaks as intimately of His death, to His disciples on the earth, as to Moses and Elias. These are not more intimate with Him than are Peter, James, and John. Sweet and precious thought!

That which follows is the application of this to the state of things below. The disciples are unable to profit by the power of Jesus already manifested, to cast out the power of the enemy. And this justifies God in that which was revealed of His counsels on the Mount, and leads to the setting aside of the Jewish system, in order to introduce their fulfillment. But this does not hinder the action of the grace of Christ in delivering men while He was yet with them, until man had finally rejected Him. But without noticing the fruitless astonishment of the people, He insists with His disciples on His rejection and on His crucifixion; carrying this principle on to the renunciation of self, and the humility which would receive that which was least.

In the remainder of the chapter, from ver. 46, the gospel gives us the different features of selfishness and of the flesh, that are in contrast with the grace and devotedness manifested in Christ, and that tend to prevent the believer from walking in His steps. 46-48, 49, 50, 51-56, respectively, present examples of this; and from 57 to 62, the contrast between the illusive will of man and the efficacious call of grace; the discovery of the repugnance of the flesh, when there is a true call; and the absolute renunciation of all things, in order to obey it, are set before us by the Spirit of God.

The Lord, in reply to the spirit that sought the aggrandizement of their own company on earth, forgetful of the Cross, expresses to the disciples that which He did not conceal from Himself, the truth of God, that all were in such wise against them; that if any one were not so, he was even thereby for them. The other reason, given elsewhere, is not repeated here. The Spirit, in this connection, confines Himself to the point of view we are considering. Thus rejected, the Lord judges no one; He does not avenge Himself. He was come to save men's lives. That a Samaritan should repulse the Messiah, was, to the disciples, worthy of destruction. Christ came to save the

lives of men. He submits to the insult, and goes elsewhere. There were some who wished to serve Him here below. He had no home to which He could take them. Meantime, for this very reason, the preaching of the kingdom was the only thing to His unwearying love - the dead (to God) might bury the dead-he who was called, who was alive, must be occupied with one thing, with the kingdom, to bear testimony to it; and that, without looking back, the urgency of the matter lifting him above all other thoughts. He who had put his hand to the plow must not look back. The kingdom, in presence of the enmity, the ruin of man, of all that opposed it, required the soul to be wholly absorbed in its interests, by the power of God. The work- of God, in the presence of Christ's rejection, demanded entire consecration.

The mission of the seventy follows in chap. 10; a mission important in its character for the development of the ways of God.

This character is, in fact, different in some respects from that of the ninth chapter. The mission is founded on the glory of Christ, manifested in chap. 9. This, of necessity, settles the question more decisively of the Lord's relations with the Jews; for His glory came after, and as to His human position-was the result of His rejection by the nation.

This rejection was not yet accomplished; this glory was only revealed to three of His disciples; so that the Lord still exercised His ministry among the people. But we see these alterations in it. He insists on that which is moral and eternal, the position into which it would bring His disciples, the true effect of His testimony in the world, and the judgment about to fall upon the Jews. Nevertheless, the harvest was great; for love, unchilled by sin, saw the need through the outward opposition; but there were few moved by this love. The Lord of the harvest alone could send forth true laborers.

Already the Lord announces that they are as lambs among wolves. What a change from the presentation of the kingdom to the people of God! They were to trust (like the twelve) to the care of the Messiah present on the earth, and who influenced the heart with a divine power. They were to go as the Lord's laborers, openly avowing their object, not toiling for their food, but as having claims on His part. Wholly devoted to their work, they were to salute no one. Time pressed. Judgment was coming. There were those in Israel who were not children of peace. The remnant would be distinguished by the effect of their mission on the heart, not yet judicially. But peace should rest on the children of peace. These messengers exercised the power gained by Jesus over the enemy, and which He could thus bestow (and this was much more than a miracle), and they were to declare unto those whom they visited that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them: important testimony! When the judgment was not executed, it required faith to recognize it in a testimony. If they were not received, they were to denounce the city; assuring them that, received or not, the kingdom of God had come nigh. What a solemn testimony, now that Jesus was going to be rejected-a rejection that filled up the measure of man's iniquity. It would be more tolerable for infamous Sodom in the day that judgment should be executed, than for that city. This clearly points out the character of the testimony. The Lord denounces the cities in which He had wrought, and assures His disciples that to reject them in their mission was the same thing as to reject Him, and that in rejecting Him, He who had sent Him was rejected- the God of Israel-the Father. On their return, they announce the power that had accompanied their mission; devils were subject to their word. The Lord replies that in effect, these tokens of power had made present to

His mind the full establishment of the kingdom; Satan cast out entirely from heaven (an establishment, of which these miracles were only a sample); but that there was something more excellent than this, and in which they might rejoice-their names were written in heaven. The power manifested was true; its results sure, in the establishment of the kingdom; but something else was beginning to appear-a heavenly people were dawning-who should have their portion with Him, whom the unbelief of the Jews and of the world was driving back to heaven. This very clearly unfolds the position now taken. The testimony of the kingdom rendered in power leaving Israel without excuse, Jesus passed into another position; into the heavenly one. That was the true subject of joy. The disciples, however, did not yet understand it. But the person and the power of Him who was to introduce them into the heavenly glory of the kingdom-His right to the glorious kingdom of God, had been revealed to them by the Father. The blinding of human pride, and the Father's grace towards babes, became Him, who fulfilled the counsels of His sovereign grace through the humiliation of Jesus, and were in accordance with His heart who came to fulfill them. Moreover, all things were given to Jesus. The Son was too glorious to be known, save by the Father, who was Himself only known by the revelation of the Son. To Him must men come. The root of the difficulty lay in the glory of His person, who was known only to the Father, and this action and glory of the Father, which needed the Son Himself to reveal it. All this was in Jesus, there, on earth. But He could tell His disciples in private that having seen in Him the Messiah and His glory, they had seen that which kings and prophets had in vain desired to see. The Father had been proclaimed to them; yet they but little understood it. In the mind of God it was their portion; realized afterward by the presence of the Holy Ghost.

We may remark here, the power of the kingdom bestowed on the disciples, their enjoyment at that moment (by the presence of the Messiah Himself, bringing with Him the power of the kingdom which overthrew that of the enemy), of the sight of those things which the prophets had spoken of; at the same time the rejection of their testimony, and the judgment of Israel among whom it was rendered; and, finally, the call of the Lord, while acknowledging in their work all the power that shall establish the kingdom, not to rejoice in the kingdom thus established on earth, but in that sovereign grace of God who, in His eternal counsels, had granted them a place and a name in heaven, in connection with their rejection on earth. The importance of this chapter is evident in this point of view.

The extent of the dominion of Jesus in connection with this change, and the revelation of the counsels of God that accompanied it, are given us in verse 22, as well as the discovery of the relationships and the glory of the Father and of the Son: at the same time, also, the grace shown to the humble, according to the character and ' the rights of God the Father Himself. Afterward we find the development of the change as to moral character which had taken place. The teacher of the law desires to know the conditions of eternal life. This is not the kingdom, nor heaven, but a part of the Jewish revelation connected with the relationship of man with God, to the possession of eternal life - a thing possessed by the glorified in heaven, by the blessed on earth, which we now possess in these earthen vessels;-a thing which the law proposed as the result of obedience: " The man that doeth these things shall live by them." The lawyer therefore asks what it is that he must do. The answer was plain; the law (with all its ordinances, its ceremonies, all the conditions of God's government, which the people had broken, and the violation of which led to the judgment announced by the prophets-judgment that should be followed by the establishment, on God's part,

of the kingdom in grace)-the law, I say, contained the kernel of the truth in this respect, and distinctly expressed the conditions of eternal life, if man was to enjoy it according to human righteousness-righteousness wrought by himself, by which he himself should live. These conditions were summed up in a very few words. To love God perfectly, and one's neighbor as oneself. The lawyer giving this summary, the Lord accepts it, and repeats the words of the Lawgiver: "This do, and thou shalt live." But man has not done it, and is conscious that he has not. As to God He is far away; man easily gets rid of Him; he will render Him some outward services and make his boast in them. But man is near; his selfishness makes him alive to the performance of this precept which, if observed, would be his happiness. Disobedience to it is repeated every moment, in the circumstances of each day, which brings this selfishness into play. All that surrounds him-his social ties-makes man conscious of these violations of this precept even when the soul would not of itself be troubled about it. Here the lawyer's heart betrays itself. Who, he asks, is my neighbor?

The Lord's answer exhibits the moral change which has taken place through the introduction of grace-through the manifestation of this grace in man, in His own person.

Our relationships with one another are now measured by the divine nature in us, and this nature is love. Man under the law measured himself by the importance he could attach to himself, which is always the opposite of love. The flesh gloried in a nearness to God which was not real, which did not belong to participation in His nature. The priest and the Levite pass by on the other side. The Samaritan, despised as such, did not ask who was his neighbor. The love that was in his heart made him a neighbor to any one who was in need. This is what God Himself did, in Christ; but then legal and carnal distinctions disappeared before this principle. The love that acted according to its own impulses, found the occasion of its exercise in the need that came before it. Here ends this part of the Lord's discourses. A new subject begins in verse 38.

From that verse to the end of the 13th in chap. 11, the Lord makes known to His disciples the two, great means of blessing-the Word and Prayer. In connection with the Word, we find-the energy that attaches itself to the Lord, in order to receive it from Himself, and that leaves everything in order to hear His word, because the soul is laid hold of by the communications of God in grace. We may remark, that these circumstances are connected with the change that had been wrought at that solemn moment. The reception of the Word takes place of the attentions that were due to the Messiah. These attentions were demanded by the presence of a Messiah on the earth; but, seeing the condition man was in -for he rejected the Savior,-he needed the Word, and Jesus, in His perfect love, will have nothing else. For man, for the glory of God, but one thing was needful; and it is that which Jesus desires. As to Himself, He would go without everything for that.

The prayer which He taught His disciples has respect, also, to the position into which they came before the gift of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Himself prayed, as the dependent man on earth. He had not yet received the promise of the Father, on His ascension into heaven, in order to pour it out on His disciples. They are in relationship with God, as their Father. The glory of His name, the coming of His kingdom, were to occupy their first thoughts. They depended on Him for their daily bread. They needed pardon, and to be kept from temptation. The prayer comprised the desire of a heart true to God; the need of the body, committed to their Father's care; the grace required for their walk when they had sinned; and, in order that their flesh should not manifest itself, that they might

be saved from the power of the enemy. The Lord then dwells on perseverance, that petitions should not be those of a heart indifferent to the result. He assures them that their prayers should not be in vain; also that their heavenly Father would give the Holy Spirit to those that asked Him. He puts them into His own relationship on earth with God. Harkening to God, applying to Him as a Father,-it is the whole of practical Christian life.

Afterward, the two great weapons of His testimony are shown forth, namely, casting out devils and the authority of His Word. He had manifested the power that cast out devils-they attributed it to the prince of the devils. Nevertheless, He had bound the strong man-He spoiled his goods; and this proved that the kingdom of God was indeed come. In such a case as this, God being come to deliver man, everything took its true place, everything was either of the devil or of the Lord. Moreover, if the unclean spirit had gone out, if God was not there, the wicked spirit would come back with others more wicked than himself; and the last state is worse than the first.

These things were taking place at that time. But miracles were not all. He had proclaimed the Word. A woman, sensible to the joy of having a Son like Jesus, declares aloud the value of such a relationship to Him after the flesh. The Lord puts this blessing, as He did in the case of Mary, on those who heard and kept His Word. The Ninevites had hearkened to Jonah, the queen of Sheba to Solomon, without even one miracle being wrought; and a greater than Jonah was now among them. There were two things there-the testimony plainly set forth (ver. 33), and the motives which governed those that heard it. If the true light shone fully into the heart, there remained no darkness in it. If the perfect truth was presented, according to God's own wisdom, it was the heart that rejected it. The eye was evil. The notions and motives of a heart at a distance from God only darkened it. A heart that had but one object, God and His glory, would be full of light. Moreover, light does not merely display itself, it enlightens all around it.

37-52. He judges the condition of the nation, and of those in it who pretended to have light, announcing the mission of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, the rejection of whom would fill up the measure of Israel's iniquity, and bring to a final test those who hypocritically built the tombs of the prophets their fathers had killed. And then all the blood, with respect to which God had exercised His long-suffering, sending testimonies to enlighten thee people, and which had been shed on account of those testimonies, should at length be required at the hand of the rebels. The Lord's words did but stir up the malice of the Pharisees, who sought to entangle Him in His talk. In a word, we have, on one side, the Word of the testimony set in full relief, in place Of the Messiah fulfilling the promises; and, on the other, the judgment of a nation that had rejected both, and would also reject even that which should afterward be sent to bring them back.

Chapter 12 puts the disciples into this place of testimony, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and with the world opposed to them, after the Lord's departure. It is the Word and the Holy Ghost, instead of the Messiah, on the earth. They were neither to fear opposition, nor to trust in themselves, but to fear God and trust to His help, and the Holy Ghost would teach them what to say. All things should be revealed. God reaches the soul, man can only touch the body. Here, that which goes beyond present promises, the connection of the soul with God, is put forward. It is coming out from Judaism to be before God. Their calling was to manifest God in the world, at all costs; to manifest Him to faith, before all things were made manifest. It might cost them dear before men; Jesus would confess them before angels.

Nor this only. Blasphemy against the witness given would, in their case, be worse than blaspheming Christ. That might be forgiven; it has been, indeed, and will be, at the end, to the Jews as a nation; but whosoever spoke in blasphemy against the testimony of the disciples, blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. It should not be forgiven. The Lord encourages them by three things-. 1st. The protection of Him who counted the hairs of their head, whatever might be the trials of their faith; 2nd. The fact that in heaven and before the angels, their faithfulness to Christ in this painful mission should be acknowledged by Him; and 3rd. The importance of their mission, its rejection being more fatally condemning than the rejection of Christ Himself. For God had taken a step, and a final step, in His grace and in His testimony. The bringing to light of all things, the care of God, their being confessed by Christ in heaven, the power of the Holy Ghost with them, these are the motives and the encouragements here given to the disciples, for their mission after the Lord's departure.

That which follows brings out yet more distinctly the position in which the disciples were placed, according to the counsels of God, by the rejection of Christ. Ver. 13. The Lord formally refuses to execute justice in Israel. That was not His place. He deals with souls, and directs their attention to another life, which outlasts the present; and instead of dividing the inheritance between the brothers, He warns the multitude to beware of covetousness, instructing them by the parable of the rich man who was suddenly called hence, in the midst of his projects. What became of his soul?

But having established this general basis, He teaches His disciples the great practical principles that were to guide their walk. They were not to think of the morrow, but to trust in God. Moreover, they had no power over it. Let them seek the kingdom of God, and all that they needed should be added. This was their position in the world that rejected Him; but, in compensation, they were to fear nothing, it was the Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. Strangers and pilgrims here, their treasure was to be in heaven; and thus their heart would be there also. Besides this, they were to wait for the Lord. Three things were to influence their souls-the Father would give them the kingdom their heart's treasure in heaven, and the expectation of the Lord's return. Until the Lord should come, they were required to watch, to have their lamps burning; their whole position should manifest the effect of the continual expectation of the Lord-should express this expectation. They were to be as men who waited for Him; and in that case, when all should be according to the Lord's own heart, re-established by His power, He would make them sit down, and in His turn, gird Himself to serve them.

Nothing can be more exquisite than the grace expressed in these verses-the 36th and 37th.

On the inquiry of Peter, desirous of knowing to whom Jesus addressed these instructions, the Lord refers him to the responsibility of those to whom He committed duties during His absence. Thus we have the two things that characterize the disciples after the rejection of Christ, the expectation of His return, and service. The expectation, the vigilance that watches with girded loins to receive Him, finds its reward in rest, and in the feast, at which. Jesus girds Himself to serve them; faithfulness in service, by having rule over all that belongs to the Lord of glory. We have seen, besides these special relations between the walk of the disciples and their position in the world to come, the general truth of the renunciation of the world in which the Savior had been rejected, and the possession of the kingdom by the gift of the Father.

In that which He says afterward of the service of those who bear His name during His absence, the Lord also points out those who will be in this position, but unfaithful; thus characterizing those who, while publicly exercising ministry in the Church, should have their portion with the unbelievers. The secret of the evil that characterizes their unbelief would be found in this, that their hearts would put off the return of Jesus, instead of desiring it and hastening it by their aspirations, and serving with humility, in the desire of being found faithful. They will say, He is not coming immediately, and, in consequence, they will do their own will, accommodate themselves to the spirit of the world, and assume authority over their fellow-servants. What a picture of that which has taken place! But their Master-for He was so, although they had not truly served Him-would come at a moment when they did not expect Him, as a thief in the night; and, although professing to be His servants, they should have their portion with the unbelievers. Nevertheless, there would be a difference between the two, for the servant who knew his own Master's will and did not make ready for Him, as the fruit of His expectations, and did not perform his Master's will, should be severely punished; whilst he who had not the knowledge of His will, should be punished less severely. I have added "own" to the word "Master," according to the original, which signifies a recognized relationship with the Lord, and its consequent obligation. The other was ignorant of the explicit will of the Lord, but he committed the evil which in any case He ought not to have done. It is the history of true and false servants of Christ; of the professing Church, and of the world in general.

If it shall be required of persons according to their advantages, who will be so guilty as those that call themselves the ministers of the Lord, if they do not serve Him as in expectation of His return?

Nevertheless, the Lord-thus rejected-was come to bring conflict and fire on the earth. His presence kindled it before His rejection in the baptism of death through which He was to pass was accomplished. It was not, however, till after this that His love would have full liberty to develop itself in power. Thus His heart, which was love even according to the infinitude of the Godhead, was straitened until the atonement gave free course to it, and to the accomplishment of all the purposes of God, in which His power should be manifested according to that love, and to which this atonement was absolutely necessary as the basis of the reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth. 51-53, He shows in detail the divisions that would be the result of His mission. The world would no more endure faith than the Savior, who was its object, and whom it confessed.

He then addresses Himself to the people, to warn them of the existing signs of the times in which they lived. He puts this testimony on a two-fold ground-the evident signs which God gave, and the moral proofs which, even without the signs, conscience ought to acknowledge and thus oblige them to receive the testimony.

Be they ever so blind, they are in the way to the judge -once delivered up, they should not come out till the chastisement of God was fully executed upon them. Compare Isa. 40:2.

Now, at this moment, they reminded Him of a terrible judgment that had fallen upon some among them. He declares to them that neither this case, nor another which He recalls to their minds, are exceptional, that except they repent the same thing should happen to them all. And He adds a parable, in order to make them understand their position. Israel was the fig-tree in the vineyard of God. For three years He had been threatening to cut it down; it did but spoil His vineyard, but encumber and uselessly cover the ground. But Jesus was trying, for the last time, all that could be

done to make it bear fruit; if this did not succeed, grace could but make way for the just judgment of the master of the vineyard. Why cultivate that which only did harm? Nevertheless He acts in grace and in power towards the daughter of Abraham, according to the promises made to that people, and demonstrates that their resistance, pretending to oppose the law to grace, was but hypocrisy. However, the kingdom of God was to take an unexpected form, in consequence of His rejection. Sown by the Word, and not introduced in power, it would grow on the earth until it became a worldly power; and as an outward profession and doctrine, would penetrate the whole sphere prepared for it in the sovereign counsels of God. Now, this was not the kingdom established in power, acting in righteousness but left to the responsibility of man, although the counsels of God were being accomplished.

At last, the Lord takes up, in a direct manner, the question of the position of the remnant and of the fate of Jerusalem.

As He went through the cities and villages, fulfilling the work of grace, in spite of the contempt of the people, some one asked Him whether the remnant, those that would escape the judgment of Israel, should be many. He does not reply as to the number; but addresses Himself to the conscience of the enquirer, urging Him to put forth all his energy that he might enter in at the strait gate. Not only would the multitude not enter it, but many, neglecting that gate, would desire to enter into the kingdom and not be able. And, moreover, when once the master of the house was risen up, and the door was shut, it would be too late. He would say unto them, "I know you not; whence ye are." They would plead that He had been in their city. He would declare that He knew them not; workers of iniquity; there was no peace for the wicked. The gate of the kingdom was moral, real; before God-conversion. The multitude of Israel would not go in at it; and outside, in tears and anguish, they should see the Gentiles sitting with the depositaries of the promises; while they, the children of the kingdom, according to the flesh, were shut out, and so much the more miserable that they had been nigh unto it. And those who had appeared to be the first, should be the last, and the last, first.

The Pharisees, under pretense of consideration for the Lord, advise Him to go away. Thereupon, He refers finally to the will of God as to the fulfillment of His work. It was no question of the power of man over Him. He should accomplish His work, and then go away; because Jerusalem had not known the time of her visitation. Himself, her true Lord, Jehovah, how often would He have gathered the children of this rebellious city under His wings, and they would not. Now, His last effort in grace was accomplished, and their house left desolate, until they should repent, and, returning to the Lord, say, according to Psa. 118, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then He would appear, and they should see Him.

Nothing can be plainer than the connection and the force of these conversations. For Israel, it was the last message; the last visitation of God. They rejected it. They were forsaken of God (though still beloved) until they should call upon Him whom they had rejected. Then, this same Jesus would appear again, and Israel should see Him. That would be the day that the Lord had made.

His rejection-admitting the establishment of the kingdom as a tree and as leaven, during His absence-bore its fruit among the Jews until the end; and the revival amid that nation in the last days, and the return of Jesus on their repentance, will have reference to that great act of sin and rebellion. But this gives rise to farther important instructions with regard to the kingdom.

Some moral details are unfolded in the next chapter (14). The Lord being invited to eat with a Pharisee, vindicates the rights of grace over that which was the seal of the old covenant, judging the hypocrisy which at any rate broke the Sabbath when their own interest was in question. He then shows the spirit of humility and lowliness that became man in the presence of God, and the union of this spirit with love when there was the possession of worldly advantages. By such a walk, in opposition to the spirit of the world, one's place there would be lost; the reciprocations of society would not exist; but another hour was beginning to dawn through His rejection, and which, in fact, was its necessary consequence—the resurrection of the just. Cast out by the world from its bosom, they should have their place apart, in that which the power of God should effect. There would be a resurrection of the just. Then should they have the reward of all that they had done, through love to the Lord and for His name's sake. We see the force with which this allusion applies to the Lord's position at that moment, ready to be put to death in this world. And the kingdom, what would then become of it? With reference to it at that moment, the Lord gives its picture in the parable, ver. 16-24. Despised by the chief part of the Jews, when God invited them to come in, He then sought out the poor of the flock. But there was room in His house, and He sends out to seek the Gentiles, and bring them in by His call that went forth in efficacious power, when they sought Him not. It was the activity of His grace. The Jews, as such, should have no part in it. But those who entered in must count the cost. All must be forsaken in this world, every link with this world must be broken, the nearer anything was to the heart, the more dangerous, the more it must be abhorred.

Not that the affections are evil things; but Christ being rejected by this world, everything that binds us to earth must be sacrificed for Him. Cost what it may, He must be followed; and one must know how to hate one's own life, and even to lose it, rather than to grow lax in following the Lord. All was lost here, in this life of nature. Salvation, the Savior, eternal life, were in question. To take up one's cross, therefore, and follow Him, was the only way to be His disciple. Without this faith, it were better not to begin building; and, being conscious that the enemy is, outwardly, much stronger than we are, it must be ascertained whether, come what may, we dare, with settled purpose, go out to meet him by faith in Christ. Everything connected with the flesh, as such, must be broken with.

Moreover, they were called to bear a peculiar testimony, the character of God Himself, as He was rejected in Christ, of which the Cross was the true measure. If the disciples were not this, they were nothing worth. They were disciples in this world for no other purpose. Has the Church maintained this character? A solemn question for us all.

Having thus unfolded the difference in character between the two dispensations, and the circumstances of the transition from the one to the other, the Lord turns to higher principles, the sources of the one that was brought in by grace.

It is indeed a contrast between the two; as well as the chapters we have been going through. But this contrast rises to its glorious source in God's own grace, contrasted with the miserable self-righteousness of man.

The publicans and sinners draw near to hear Jesus. Grace had its true dignity to those who needed it. Self-righteousness repulsed that which was not as contemptible as itself, and God Himself at the same time, in His nature of love. The Pharisees and the Scribes murmured against Him who was a witness of this grace in fulfilling it.

I cannot meditate on this chapter which has been the joy of so many souls, and the subject of so many testimonies to grace, from the time that the Lord pronounced it, without enlarging upon grace, perfect in its application to the heart. This is a difficulty that constantly presents itself in this portion of the Word. Nevertheless, I must confine myself here to great principles, leaving their application to those who preach the Word.

1st. The great principle which the Lord exhibits, and on which He founds the justification of God's dealings (sad state of heart that requires it-marvelous grace and patience that gives it); the great principle, I repeat, is that God finds His own joy in showing grace. What an answer to the horrid spirit of the Pharisees who made it an objection.

It is the Shepherd who rejoices when the sheep is found; the woman, when the piece of money is in her hand; the Father, when His child is in His arms. What an expression of that which God is How truly is Jesus the one to make it known 1 It is on this that all the blessing of man can alone be founded. It is in this that God is glorified in His grace.

But there are two distinct parts in this grace. The love that seeks, and the love with which one is received. The two first parables describe the former character of this grace. The shepherd seeks his sheep, the woman her piece of money; the sheep and the piece of silver are passive. The shepherd seeks-and the woman also-until he finds; because he has an interest in the matter. The sheep, wearied with its wanderings, has not to take one step in returning. The shepherd lays it on his shoulders and carries it home. He takes the whole charge; happy to recover his sheep. This is the mind of Heaven, whatever the heart of man on earth may be. It is the work of Christ, the good Shepherd. The woman sets before us the pains which God takes in His love; so that it is more the work of the Spirit which is represented by that of the woman. The light is brought-she sweeps the house until she finds the piece she had lost. Thus God acts in the world, seeking sinners. The hateful and hating jealousy of self-righteousness finds no place in the mind of Heaven, where God dwells and produces, in the happiness that surrounds Him, the reflex of His own perfections.

But although neither the sheep nor the piece of silver do anything towards their own recovery, there is a real work wrought in the heart of one who is brought back; but this work, necessary as it is for the finding or even the seeking of peace, is not that on which the peace is grounded. The return and the reception of the sinner are therefore described in the third parable. The work of grace, accomplished solely by the power of God, and complete in its effect, is presented to us in the two first. Here, the sinner returns, with sentiments which we will now examine; sentiments produced by grace, but which never rise to the height of the grace manifested in his reception until he has returned.

First, his estrangement from God is depicted. As guilty at the moment that he crosses the paternal threshold in turning his back upon his father, as when he eats husks with the swine, man, deceived by sin, is here presented in the last state of degradation to which sin conducts him. Having expended all that fell to him, according to nature, the destitution in which he finds himself does not incline him towards God, but leads him to content himself with that which Satan's country (where nothing is given) can supply; and he finds himself among the swine. But grace operates; and the thought of the happiness of his father's house awakes in his heart, and the goodness that blessed all around it. Where the Spirit of God works, there is the conviction that we are perishing, and a sense, feeble it may be, yet true, of the goodness of God and the happiness to be found in

His presence, although we may not feel sure of being received; and we do not remain in the place where we are perishing. There is the sense of sin, there is humiliation; but not the sense of what the grace of God really is. Grace attracts—one goes towards God, but one would be satisfied to be received as a servant. Progress, however, although real, never gives peace. There is a certain rest of heart in going; but one does not know what reception to expect, after having been guilty of forsaking God. The nearer the prodigal son drew to the house, the more would his heart beat at the thought of meeting his father. But the father anticipates his coming, and acts towards him not according to his son's deserts, but according to his own heart as a father; the only measure of the ways of God towards us. He is on his son's neck while the latter is still in his rags; before he had time to say, "Receive me as a hired servant;" it was no longer time to say it. The father's heart had decided his position by its own sentiments; by its love towards him; by the place his heart had given him towards himself. The father's position decided that of the son. This was between himself and his son; but this was not all. He loved his son, even as he was, but he did not introduce him into the house in that condition. The same love that received him as a son, will have him enter the house as a son, and as the son of such a father should be. The servants are ordered to bring the best robe and put it on him. Thus loved, and received by love, in our wretchedness, we are clothed with Christ to enter the house. We do not bring the robe, God supplies us with it; and we become the righteousness of God in Him. This is Heaven's best robe. All the rest have part in the joy, except the self-righteous man, the true Jew. The joy is the joy of the father, but all the house shares it. The elder son is not in the house. He is near it, but he will not come in. He will have nothing to do with the grace that makes the poor prodigal the subject of the joy of love. Nevertheless, grace acts; the father goes out and entreats him to come in. It is thus that God acted, in the Gospel, towards the Jew. But man's righteousness, which is but selfishness and sin, rejects grace. But God will not give up His grace. It becomes Him. God will be God; and God is love.

It is this which takes place of the pretensions of the Jews who rejected the Lord, and the accomplishment of the promises in Him.

That which gives peace, and characterizes our position, is not the sentiments wrought in our hearts, although they indeed exist, but those of God Himself.

In chap. 16, the effect of grace on conduct is presented, and the contrast that exists, the dispensation being changed, between the conduct that Christianity requires with regard to the things of the world, and the position of the Jews in that respect. Now this position was only the expression of that of man, made evident by the law. The doctrine thus embodied in the parable, is confirmed by the parabolic history of the rich man and Lazarus, lifting up the veil that hides the other world, in which the result of men's conduct is manifested.

Man is the steward of God; i.e., God has committed His goods to man. Israel stands especially in this position.

But man has been unfaithful; Israel had indeed been so. God has taken away his stewardship, but man is still in possession of the goods, to administer them, at least, in fact; as Israel was at that moment. These goods are the things of earth; that which man can possess according to the flesh. Having lost his stewardship by his unfaithfulness, and being still in possession of the goods, he uses them to make friends of his master's debtors by doing them good. This is what Christians

should do with earthly possessions, using them for others, having the future in view. The steward might have appropriated the money due to his master; he preferred gaining friends with it; i.e., he sacrifices present to future advantage. We may turn the miserable riches of this world into means of fulfilling love. The spirit of grace which fills our hearts, as ourselves the objects of grace, exercises itself with regard to temporal things, which we use for others. For us, it is in view of the everlasting habitations. "That they may receive you" is equivalent to, "that you may be received." A common expression in Luke, to designate the fact without speaking of the individuals that perform it; although using the word, they.

Observe that earthly riches are not our own things; heavenly riches, in the case of a true Christian, are his own.

These riches are unrighteous, in that they belong to fallen man, and not to the heavenly man,

Now, when the veil is lifted from the other world, the truth is fully brought to light. And the contrast between the Jewish dispensation and the Christian, is clearly unfolded; for Christianity reveals that world, and, as to its principle, belongs to heaven.

Judaism, according to God's government on earth, promised temporal blessings to the righteous; but all was in disorder, even the Messiah, the head of the system, was rejected. In a word, Israel, looked at as set under responsibility, and to enjoy earthly blessing on obedience, had entirely failed. Man, in this world, could no longer, on that footing, be the means of bearing testimony to the ways of God in government. There will be a time of earthly judgment, but it was not yet come; meanwhile, the possession of riches was anything rather than a proof of God's favor. Personal selfishness, and, alas, indifference to a brother in distress at his door, was, instead, the characteristic of its possession among the Jews. Revelation opens the other world to our view. Man, in this world, is fallen, wicked man. If he has received his good things here, he has the portion of sinful man; he will be tormented, while the one whom he had despised, will find happiness in the other world.

It is not a question here of that which gives title to enter heaven, but of character, and of the contrast between the principles of this world and the invisible world. The Jew made choice of this world; he has lost this, and the other also. The poor man whom he had thought contemptible is found in Abraham's bosom. The whole tenor of this parable shows its connection with the question of Israel's hopes, and the idea that riches were a proof of the favor of God, an idea which false as it may be in every case, is intelligible enough if this world is the scene of blessing under the government of God. The subject of the parable is shown also by that which is found at the end of it. The miserable rich man desires that his brethren might be warned by some one who had risen from the dead. Abraham declares to him the uselessness of this means. It was all over with Israel. God has not again presented His Son to the nation who rejected Him, despising the law and the prophets. The testimony of His resurrection met with the same unbelief that had rejected Him when living, as well as the prophets before Him. There is no consolation in the other world if the testimony of the Word to the conscience is rejected in this. The gulf cannot be crossed. A returning Lord would not convince those who had despised the Word. All is in connection with the judgment of the Jews, which should close the dispensation; as the preceding parable shows what the conduct of Christians should be, with regard to things temporal. All flows from the grace which, in love on God's part, accomplished the salvation of man, and set aside the legal dispensation and

its principles, by bringing in the heavenly things.

Grace is the spring of the Christian's walk, and furnishes directions for it. He cannot with impunity (17) despise the weak. He must not be weary of pardoning his brother. If he have faith but as a grain of mustard seed the power of God is, so to speak, at his disposal. Nevertheless, when he has done all, he has but done his duty (5-10). The Lord then shows (11-37) the deliverance from Judaism, which He still recognized; and after that, its judgment. He was passing through Samaria and Galilee, the ten lepers come towards Him, entreating Him, from a distance, to heal them. He sends them to the priests. This was, in fact, as much as to say, you are clean. It would have been useless to have them pronounced unclean; and they knew it. They take Christ's word-go away with this conviction, and are immediately healed on their way. Nine of them, satisfied with reaping the benefit of His power, pursue their journey to the priests, and remain Jews, not coming out of the old sheep-fold. Jesus, indeed, still acknowledged it; but they only acknowledge Him so far as to profit by His presence, and remain where they were. They saw nothing in His person, nor in the power of God in Him, to attract them. They remain Jews. But this poor stranger-the tenth-recognizes the good hand of God. He falls at the feet of Jesus, giving him glory. The Lord bids him depart in the liberty of faith-" Go thy way, thy faith hath saved thee." He has no longer need to go to the priests. He had found God and the source of blessing in Christ, and goes away freed from the yoke which was soon to be judicially broken for all. For the kingdom of God was among them. To those who could discern it, the king was there in their midst. The kingdom did not come in such a manner as to attract the attention of the world. It was there, so that the disciples would soon desire to see one of those days which they had enjoyed during the time of the Lord's presence on earth, but would not see it. He then announces the pretensions of false Christs, the true having been rejected, so that the people would be left a prey to the wiles of the enemy. His disciples were not to follow them. In connection with Jerusalem they would be exposed to these temptations, but they had the Lord's directions for guidance through them.

Now, the Son of Man, in His day, would be like the lightning; but, before that, He must suffer many things from the unbelieving Jews. The day would be like that of Lot, and that of Noe; men would be at ease, following their carnal occupations, like the world overtaken by the flood, and Sodom by the fire from heaven. It will be the revelation of the Son of Man-His public revelation, sudden and vivid. This referred to Jerusalem. Being thus warned, their concern was to escape the judgment of the Son of Man which, at the time of His coming, would fall upon the city that had rejected Him; for this Son of Man whom they had disowned would come again in His glory. There must be no looking back-that would be to have the heart in the place of judgment. Better lose all, life itself, rather than be associated with that which was going to be judged. If they should escape, and have their lives spared, through unfaithfulness, the judgment was the judgment of God; He would know how to reach them in their bed, and to distinguish between two that were in it, and between two women who ground the corn of the household at the same mill.

This character of the judgment shows that it is not the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus that is meant. It was the judgment of God that could discern, take away, and spare, Neither is it the judgment of the dead, but a judgment on earth-they are in bed, they are at the mill, they are on the house-tops and in the fields. Warned by the Lord, they were to forsake all, and to care only for Him who came to judge. If they asked where this should be? Wherever the dead body lay there would be the judgment that would come down like a vulture, which they could not see, but from which the

prey would not escape.

But, in the presence of all the power of their enemies and oppressors, for there would be such, as we have seen, so that they might even lose their lives, there was a resource for the afflicted remnant. They were to persevere in prayer-the resource, moreover, at all times, of the faithful, of man, if he understand it. God would avenge His elect, although as to the exercise of their faith, He would, indeed, try it. But when He came, would the Son of Man find this faith that waited for His intervention? That was the solemn question, the answer to which is left to the responsibility of man. A question which implies that it could hardly be expected, although it ought to exist. Nevertheless, should there be any, acceptable to Him who seeks it, it will not be disappointed or confounded.

It will be observed, that the kingdom (and that is the subject) is presented in two ways among the Jews at that time-in the person of Jesus, and in the execution of the judgment; in which the elect alone should be spared, and the vengeance of God should be executed in their behalf. On this account, they were only to think of pleasing Him; however oppressive and at ease the world might be. It is the day of the judgment of the wicked, and not that in which the righteous will be caught up to heaven. Enoch and Abraham are more the types of the latter; Noe and Lot of those who 'will be spared to live on the earth. Only there are oppressors, of whom the remnant are to be avenged. The 31st verse shows that they must think only of the judgment, and connect themselves with nothing as men. Detached from everything, their only hope would be in God at such a moment.

The Lord then resumes, in verse 9 of chap. 18, the description of those characters which were suitable to the kingdom, to enter it now by following Him. From ver. 35, the great transition draws near historically.

The eighth verse, then, of chap. 18, ends the prophetic warning with respect to the last days. The Lord afterward resumes the consideration of the characters which befit the state of things introduced by grace. Self-righteousness is far from being a recommendation for entrance into the kingdom. The most miserable sinner-, confessing his sin, is justified before God rather than the self-righteous. He that exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. What a pattern and witness of this truth was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

The spirit of a little child-simple, believing all that he is told, confiding, of little importance in his own eyes, who must give way to all -this was meet for the kingdom of God. What else would He admit?

Again, the principles of the kingdom, as established by the rejection of Christ, were in full contrast with the temporal blessings attached to obedience to the law; excellent as that law was in its place.

The young man who had fulfilled it in his outward walk is called to leave everything that he may follow the Lord. Jesus knew his circumstances and his heart, and put His finger on the covetousness that ruled him, and was fed by the riches he possessed. He was to sell all that he had and follow Jesus. He should have treasure in heaven. The young man went away sorrowful. The riches that, in the eyes of men, appeared to be a sign of God's favor, were but a hindrance when the heart and heaven came in question. The Lord announces at the same time, that whosoever should forsake anything that he prized, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, should receive much more in this world; and in the next, life everlasting: We may remark that it is only the principle which is here laid down, in reference to the kingdom.

At last, the Lord plainly tells His disciples in private, that He was going to be delivered up, to be ill-treated and put to death, and then to rise again. It was the fulfillment of all that the prophets had written. But the disciples understood none of those things.

If the Lord was to make those who' followed Him share His cross, He could not but bear it Himself. He went before His sheep in this path of self-denial and devotedness, to prepare the way. He went alone. It was a path which His people had not yet trodden, nor indeed could they till after Him.

The history of His last journey to Jerusalem now commences (ver. 36).

Here then He presents Himself anew as the Son of David, and for the last time; laying on the conscience of the nation His pretensions to that title, while displaying the consequences of His rejection. Near Jericho, the place of malediction, He gives sight to a blind man who believes in His title of Son of David. This, indeed, was the case with those who possessed that faith; and they saw yet greater things than these. In Jericho he sets forth grace; in spite of the Pharisaic spirit. Nevertheless, it is as a son of Abraham that He points out Zacchaeus, who-in a false position indeed as such-had a tender conscience and a generous heart, by grace. His position did not, in the eyes of Jesus, take from him the character of son of Abraham (if it had that effect, who could have been blessed?); and did not bar the way to that salvation which was come to save the lost. It entered with Jesus into the house of this son of Abraham. He brought salvation, whoever might be heir to it.

Nevertheless, He does not conceal from them His departure, and the character which the kingdom would assume, owing to His absence. As for them, Jerusalem and the expectation of the coming kingdom, filled their minds. The Lord therefore explains to them what would take place. He goes away to receive a kingdom, and to return. Meanwhile, He commits some of His goods (the gifts of the Spirit) to His servants, to trade with during His absence. The difference between this parable and that in the Gospel by Matthew, is this-Matthew presents the sovereignty and the wisdom of the giver, who varies his gifts according to the aptitude of his servants. In Luke, it is more particularly the responsibility of the servants, who each receive the same sum, and the one gains by it, in his master's interest, more than the other. Accordingly, it is not said " Enter into the joy of your Lord;" the same thing to all, and the more excellent thing; but to the one it is authority over ten cities that is given; to the other, over five; that is to say, a share in the kingdom according to their labor. The servant does not lose that which he has gained, although it was for his master. He enjoys it. Not so with the servant who made no use of his talent; that which had been committed to him is given to the one who had gained ten.

That which we gain spiritually here, in spiritual intelligency and in the knowledge of God in power, is not lost in the other world. On the contrary, we receive more; and the glory of the inheritance is given us in proportion to our work. All is grace.

But there was yet another element in the history of the kingdom. The citizens (the Jews) not only reject the king, but when he is gone away to receive the kingdom, send a messenger after him to say, that they will not have him to reign over them. Thus, the Jews, when Peter sets their sin before them, and declares to them that if they repent, Jesus would return, and with Him the times of refreshing, reject the testimony, and, so to say - send Stephen after Jesus, to testify that they would have nothing to do with Him. When He returns in glory, the perverse nation is judged before

His eyes. The avowed enemies of Christ, they receive the reward of their He had declared that which the kingdom was-that which it should be. He comes to present it, for the last time; in His own person, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Zechariah. This remarkable scene has been considered in its general aspect, when studying Matthew and Mark; but some particular circumstances require notice here. All is gathered round his entrance. The disciples and the Pharisees are in contrast. Jerusalem is in the day of her visitation, and she knows it not.

Some remarkable expressions are uttered by his disciples., moved by the Spirit of God, on this occasion. Had they been silent, the stones would have broken out in proclamation of the glory of the rejected One. The kingdom, in their triumphant acclamations, is not simply the kingdom in its earthly aspect. In Matthew it was, " Hosanna to the Son of David, and blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." That was indeed true; but here we have something more. The Son of David disappears. He is indeed the King, who comes in the name of the Lord; but it is no longer the remnant of Israel who seek salvation in the name of the Son of David, acknowledging His title, it is, "peace in heaven and glory in the highest." The kingdom depends on peace being established in the heavenly places. The Son of Man exalted on high, and victorious over Satan, has reconciled the heavens. The glory of grace in His person is established for the everlasting and supreme glory of the God of love. The kingdom on earth is but a consequence of this glory which grace has established. The power that cast out Satan, has established peace in heaven. At the beginning of Luke we have, in the manifested grace, Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth; the good pleasure of God in men. To establish the kingdom, peace is made in heaven; the glory of God is fully established in the highest.

It will be remarked here, that as He draws nigh to Jerusalem, the Lord weeps over the city. It is not now as in Matthew, where, while discoursing with the Jews, He points it out to them as that which-having rejected and slain the prophets-Emanuel, the Lord, who would so often have gathered her children under His wings, having been ignominiously rejected, was now given up to desolation until His return.

It is the hour of her visitation, and she has not known it. If only she had, even now, hearkened to the call of the testimony of her God. She is given up into the hands of the Gentiles, her enemies, who will not leave her one stone upon another. That is to say, not having known this visitation of God in grace, in the person of Jesus, she is set aside-the testimony goes no farther-she gives place to a new order of things. Thus the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is here prominent. It is the moral character of the temple also of which the Lord here speaks. The Spirit does not notice here that it is to be the temple of God for all nations. It is simply (20:16) the vineyard is given to others.

In His reply to the Sadducees, three important things are added to that which is said in Matthew. It is not only the condition of those who are raised, and the certainty of the resurrection; it is an age, which a certain class only, who are accounted worthy of it, shall obtain (ver. 35). 2nd, This class is composed of the children of God, as being the children of the resurrection (ver. 36). 3rd, While waiting for this resurrection, their souls survive death; all live unto God, although they may be hidden from the eyes of men (ver. 38).

The parable of the wedding feast is omitted here. In chap. 14 of this Gospel we find it, with characteristic elements; a mission to the lanes of the city, to the despised of the nation, which is

not in Matthew, who gives us instead, the judgment of Jerusalem, before announcing the evangelization of the Gentiles. All this is characteristic. In Luke it is grace, a moral condition of man before God, and the new order of things founded on the rejection of Christ. I will not dwell upon those points which Luke relates in common with Matthew. They naturally meet in the great facts that relate to the Lord's rejection by the Jews, and its consequences.

If we compare Matt. 23 and Luke 20:45-47, we shall see at once the difference. In Luke, the Spirit gives us in three verses that which, morally, puts the Scribes aside. In Matthew, their whole position with respect to the dispensation is developed; whether as having a place, so long as Moses continued, or with reference to their guiltiness before God in that place.

The Lord's discourse in chap. 21 displays the character of the Gospel in a peculiar manner. The spirit of grace, in contrast with the Judaic spirit, is seen in the account of the poor widow's offering. But the Lord's prophecy requires more detailed notice. The 6th verse, as we saw at the end of chap. 19 speaks only of the destruction of Jerusalem as she then stood. This is true also of the disciples' question. The Lord afterward enters upon the duties and the circumstances of His disciples, previous to that hour. In the 8th verse it is said, "The time draweth near," which is not found in Matthew. He goes much more into detail with regard to their ministry during that period, encourages them, promises them, the necessary help. Persecution should turn to them for a testimony. From the middle of verse 11 to the end of verse 19, we have details relative to His disciples, that are not found in the corresponding passage in Matthew; they present the general state of things in the same sense, adding the condition of the Jews, of those especially who, more or less, professedly received the Word. The whole stream of testimony, as rendered in connection with Israel, but extending to the nations, is found in Matthew to the end of verse 14. In Luke, it is the coming service of the disciples, until the moment when the judgment of God should put an end to that which was virtually terminated by the rejection of Christ. Consequently, the Lord says nothing in verse 20, of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, but gives the fact of the siege of Jerusalem, and its then approaching desolation-not the end of the age, as in Matthew. These were the days of vengeance on the Jews, who had crowned their rebellion by rejecting the Lord, therefore Jerusalem should be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled, i.e., the time destined to the sovereignty of the Gentile empires, according to the counsels of God revealed in the prophecies of Daniel. This is the period in which we now live, There is a break here in the discourse. Its principal subject is ended; but there are still some events of the last scene to be revealed, which close the history of this Gentile supremacy.

We shall see also that although it is the commencement of the judgment from which Jerusalem will not arise until all is accomplished, and, the Sons of Isa. 40 is addressed to her, nevertheless, the great tribulation is not mentioned here. There is great distress, and wrath upon the people, as was indeed the case in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus; and the Jews were also led away captive. Neither is it said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days." Nevertheless, without designating the epoch; but after having spoken of the times of the Gentiles, the end of the ages comes. There are signs in heaven of the distress on earth, a mighty movement in the waves of human population. The heart of man, moved by a prophetic alarm, foresees the calamities which, still unknown, are threatening him; for all the influences that govern men are shaken. Then shall they see the Son of Man--once rejected from the earth--coming from heaven with the ensigns of Jehovah, with power and great glory;-the Son of Man, of whom this Gospel has always spoken.

There the prophecy ends. We have not here the gathering together of the elect Israelites who had been dispersed, of which Matthew speaks. That which follows consists of exhortations, in order that the day of distress may be a token of deliverance to the faith of those who, trusting in the Lord, obey the voice of His servant. The generation (a word already explained when considering Matthew) should not pass away till all was fulfilled. The length of the time that has elapsed since then, and that must elapse until the end, is left in darkness. Heavenly things are not measured by dates. Moreover, that moment is hidden in the knowledge of the Father. Still, heaven and earth should pass away, but not the words of Jesus. He then tells them that, as dwelling on earth, they must be watchful lest their own hearts should be overcharged with things that would sink them into this world, in the midst of which they were to be witnesses. For that day would come as a snare upon all those who had their dwelling here, who were rooted here. They were to watch and pray, in order to escape all those things, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man. This is still the great subject of our Gospel. To be with Him, as those who have escaped from the earth, to be among the 144,000 on Mount Zion, will be an accomplishment of this blessing, but the place is not named, so that, supposing the faithfulness of those whom He was personally addressing, the hope awakened by His words, would be fulfilled in a more excellent manner in His heavenly presence in the day of glory.

In chap. 22 commence the details of the end of our Lord's life. The chief priests, fearing the people, seek how they may kill Him. Judas, under the influence of Satan, offers himself as an instrument, that they might take Him in the absence of the multitude. The day of Passover comes, and the Lord pursues that which belonged to His work of love in these immediate circumstances. I will notice the points that appertain to the character of this Gospel, the change that took place in immediate and direct connection with the Lord's death. Thus, He desired to eat this last Passover with His disciples, because He would eat thereof no more until it was fulfilled in the kingdom of God, i.e. by His death. He drinks wine no more until the kingdom of God shall come. He does not say, until He shall drink it new in the kingdom of His Father, but only that He will not drink it till the kingdom shall come. Observe, also, what a touching expression of love we have here: His heart needed this last testimony of affection before leaving them.

The new covenant is founded on the blood here drank. The old was done away. Blood was required to establish the new. At the same time, the covenant itself was not established; but everything was done on God's part. The blood was not shed to give force to a covenant of judgment; it was shed for those who received Jesus, while waiting for the time when the covenant itself should be established with Israel.

The disciples, believing the words of Christ, do not know themselves, and they ask one another which of them it could be that should betray Him; and at the same time, thinking of the kingdom in a carnal way, they dispute for the first place in it. And this, in the presence of the Cross, at the table where the Lord was giving them the last pledges of His love. But as to Himself, He had taken the lowest place, and that-as the most excellent for love-was His alone. They had to follow Him as closely as they could. His grace recognizes their having done so, as if He was their debtor, for their care during His time of sorrow on earth. He remembered it. In the day of His kingdom they should have twelve thrones, as heads of Israel, among whom they had followed Him.

But now it was a question of passing through death; and, having followed Him thus far, what an opportunity for the enemy to sift them, since they could no longer follow Him as men living on the earth. All that belonged to a living Messiah was completely overthrown, and death was there. Who could pass through it? Satan would profit by this, and desired to have them that he might sift them. Jesus does not seek to spare His disciples this sifting,-it was not possible, for He must pass through death, and their hope was in Him,- they cannot escape it, the flesh must be put to the test of death. But He prays for them, that the faith of the one whom He especially names may not fail. Simon, ardent in the flesh, was exposed more than all to the danger into which a false confidence in the flesh might lead him, but in which it could not sustain him. Being, however, the object of this grace on the Lord's part, his fall would be the means of his strength. Knowing what the flesh was, and also the perfection of grace, he would be able to strengthen his brethren. Peter asserts that he could do anything, the very things he should entirely fail in. The Lord briefly warns Him of what he would really do.

Jesus then takes occasion to forewarn them that all was about to change. During His presence here below, -the true Messiah, Emanuel,-He had sheltered them from all difficulties; when He sent them throughout Israel, they had lacked nothing. But now (for the kingdom was not yet coming in power) they would be, like Himself, exposed to contempt and violence. Humanly speaking, they would have "to take care of themselves." Peter, ever forward, taking the words of Christ literally, was permitted to lay bare his thoughts by exhibiting two swords. The Lord stops him by a word that showed him it was of no use to go farther. They were not capable of it at that time. As to Himself, He pursues with perfect tranquility His daily habits.

Pressed in spirit by that which was coming, He exhorts His disciples to pray, that they enter not into temptation; that is to say, that when the time came that they should be put to the test, walking with God, it should be for them obedience to God, and not a means of departure from Him. There are such moments, if God permits them to come, in which everything is put to the proof, by the enemy's power.

The Lord's dependence, as man, is then displayed in the most striking manner. He prays, He submits to His Father's will; an angel strengthens Him; this was their service to the Son of man. Afterward, in deep conflict, He prays more earnestly: dependent Man, He is perfect in His dependence. The deepness of the conflict deepens His intercourse with His Father. The disciples were overwhelmed by the shadow only of that which caused Jesus to pray. They take refuge in the forgetfulness of sleep. The Lord, with the patience of grace, repeats His warning-and the multitude arrive. Peter, confident when warned, sleeping at the approach of temptation when the Lord was praying, strikes when Jesus allows Himself to be led as a sheep to the slaughter. But, submissive as the Lord was to His Father's will, He plainly shows that His power had not departed from Him. He heals the wound that Peter inflicted on the high priest's servant, and then permits Himself to be led away, with the remark that it was their hour and the power of darkness. Sad and terrible association!

In all this scene, we behold the complete dependence of the man, the power of death felt as a trial in all its force; but, apart from that which was going on in His soul and before His Father, in which we see the reality of these two things, there was the most perfect tranquility, the most gentle calmness towards men-grace that never belies itself. Thus, when Peter denied Him, as He had

foretold, He looks upon him at the fitting moment. All the parade of His iniquitous trial does not distract His thoughts, and Peter is broken down by that look. When questioned, He has little to say; His hour was come. Subject to His Father's will, He accepted the cup from His hand. His judges did but accomplish that will, and bring Him the cup. He makes no answer to the question whether He is the Christ. It was no longer the time to do so. They would not believe it, would not answer Him if He had put questions to them that would have brought out the truth, neither would they have let Him go. But He bears the plainest testimony to the place which, from that hour, the Son of man took. This we have repeatedly seen in reading this gospel. He would sit on the right hand of the power of God. We see, also, it is the place He takes at present. They immediately draw the right conclusion-" Thou art; then, the Son of God?" He bears testimony to this truth, and all is ended; that is to say, He waves the question, whether He was the Messiah-that was gone by for Israel, He was going to suffer. He is the Son of man, but thenceforth only as entering into glory; and He is the Son of God. It was all over with Israel, as to their responsibility; the heavenly glory of the Son of man, the personal glory of the Son of God, was about to shine forth; and Jesus is led away to the Gentiles, that all may be accomplished.

The Gentiles, however, are not presented in this Gospel as being voluntarily guilty. We see, no doubt, an indifference which is flagrant injustice in a case like this, and an insolence which nothing could excuse; but Pilate does what he can to deliver Christ, and Herod, disappointed, sends Him back unjudged. The will is altogether on the side of the Jews. That is the characteristic of this part of the history in Luke's Gospel. Pilate would rather not have burdened himself with this useless crime, and he despised the Jews; but they were resolved on the crucifixion of Jesus, and require Barabbas to be released-a seditious man and a murderer. See 20-25.

Jesus, therefore, as He was led to Calvary, announced to the women who, with natural feeling, lamented for Him, that it was all over with Jerusalem, that they had to bewail their own fate, and not His; for days were coining, upon Jerusalem which would make them call those happy who had never been mothers-days in which they would in vain seek refuge from terror and judgment. For in Him, the true green tree, these things were done, what would become of the dry tree of Judaism without God. Nevertheless, at the moment of His crucifixion, the Lord intercedes for them. They knew not what they did. Intercession to which Peter's discourse to the Jews is the remarkable answer by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. The rulers among the Jews, completely blinded, as well as the people, taunt Him with being unable to save Himself from the Cross-not knowing that it was impossible because all was taken from them, and God was establishing another order of things, in the power of eternal life, by the resurrection. Dreadful blindness-of which the poor soldiers were but imitators, according to the malignity of human nature. But the judgment of Israel was in their mouth, and (on God's part) upon the Cross. It was the king of the Jews who hung there. Abased, indeed-for a thief hung by His side could rail on Him, but in the place to which love had brought Him, for the everlasting and present salvation of souls. This was manifested at the very moment. The insults that reproached Him for not saving Himself from the Cross, had His answer in the fate of the converted thief, who rejoined Him the same day in Paradise.

This history is a striking demonstration of the change to which this Gospel leads us. The King of the Jews, by their own confession, is not delivered-He is crucified. What an end to the hopes of this people! but at the same time, a gross sinner, converted by grace on the very gibbet, goes

straight to Paradise. A soul is eternally saved. It is not the kingdom, but a soul-out of the body-in happiness with Christ.

I would say a few words on the condition of this soul, and on the reply of Christ. We see every mark of conversion, and of the most remarkable faith. Conscience upright and vigorous, knowledge of the perfect sinless righteousness of Christ., whom this poor sinner acknowledges to be the Lord, when His own disciples had forsaken and denied Him, and when there was no sign of His glory or of the dignity of His person. He was accounted by men as one like Himself, His kingdom was but a subject of scorn to all. But the poor thief is taught of God, and all is plain. He is a comfort to Jesus upon the Cross, and makes Him think (in answering his faith) of the Paradise that awaited Him when He should have finished the work that His Father had given Him to do. Observe the state of sanctification this poor man was in by faith. In all the agonies of the Cross, and while believing Jesus to be the Lord, he seeks no relief at His hands, but asks that He will remember him in His kingdom. He is filled with one thought-to have his portion with Jesus. He believes that the Lord will return; he believes in the resurrection. He believes in the kingdom, while the King is rejected and crucified, and when-as to man-there was no longer any hope. Now the reply of Jesus adds that which brings in, not the kingdom but everlasting life, the happiness of the soul. The thief had asked Jesus to remember him when He returned in His kingdom. The Lord replies that he should not wait for that day of manifested glory which would be visible to the world, but that that very day he should be with Him in Paradise. Precious testimony, and perfect grace I Jesus crucified, was more than king -He was Savior. The poor malefactor was a testimony to it, and the joy and consolation of the Lord's heart, the first-fruits of the love which had placed them side by side; the Lord of glory and the malefactor, in the same condemnation. And the sins of the latter forever put away, they no longer existed, their remembrance was only that of the grace which had taken them away, and which had forever cleansed his soul from them, making him that moment as fit to enter Paradise as Christ Himself

The Lord then, having fulfilled all things, and still full of strength, Himself gives up His spirit to His Father. He commits it to Him, the last act of that which composed His whole life-the perfect energy of the Holy Ghost acting in a perfect confidence in His Father, and dependence upon Him. He commits His Spirit to His Father, and expires. For it was death that He had before Him, but death in absolute faith, which trusted in His Father. Death, with God, by faith; and not the death that separated from God. Meantime, nature veiled itself, acknowledged the departure from this world of Him who had created it. All is darkness. But on the other hand, God reveals Himself-the veil of the temple is rent in twain from the top to the bottom. God had hidden Himself in thick darkness-the way into the holiest had not yet been manifested. But now there is no longer a veil, that which has put sin away, causes perfect love to shine forth, and the holiness of God's presence is joy to the heart, and not torment. Our communion is with Him through Christ, holy and unblameable before Him in love.

The poor centurion, struck with all that had taken place, confesses-such is the power of the Cross upon the conscience--that this Jesus whom he has crucified was certainly the righteous man. I say conscience, because I do not pretend to say that it went any further than that, in the case of the centurion. We see the same effect on the spectators; they went away smiting their breasts. They perceived that something solemn had happened; that they had fatally compromised themselves with God.

But the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, had prepared everything for the burial of His Son, who had glorified Him by giving Himself up to death. He is with the rich in His death. Joseph, a just man, who had not consented to the sin of his people, lays the Lord's body in a tomb that had never yet been used. It was the preparation before the sabbath; but the sabbath was near. At the time of His death, the women-faithful (though ignorant) to their affection for Him while living-see where the body is laid, and go to prepare all that was needed for its embalming. Luke only speaks in general terms of these women, we shall therefore enter on the details elsewhere; following our Gospel as it presents itself'. The women come-find the stone rolled away, and the sepulcher no longer containing the body of Him whom they had loved. While perplexed at this, they see two angels near them, who asked why they came to seek the living among the dead, and remind them of the plain words which Jesus had spoken to them in Galilee. They go and tell these things to all the disciples, who cannot believe their account; but Peter runs to the sepulcher, sees everything in order, and departs, wondering at that which had come to pass. In all this, there was no faith in the words of Jesus, nor in that which the Scriptures had spoken. In the journey to Emmaus, the Lord connects the Scriptures with all that had happened to Himself He awakens that ardent attention which the heart feels whenever it is touched. He then reveals Himself in breaking bread-the sign of His death-not that this was the Eucharist, but this particular act was linked with that event. Then their eyes were opened, and He disappears. It was the true Jesus; but in resurrection. Here, He Himself, explained all that the Scriptures had spoken, and presented Himself in life, with the symbol of His death. The two disciples return to Jerusalem.

The Lord had already shown Himself to Simon; an appearance, of which we have no details. Paul also mentions it as the first, with reference to the apostles. While the two disciples related that which had happened to them, Jesus Himself stood in their midst. But their minds were not yet formed to this truth, and His presence alarms them. They cannot realize the idea of the resurrection of the body. The Lord uses their confusion (very natural, humanly speaking) for our blessing, by giving them the most sensible proofs that it was Himself risen; but Himself, body and soul the same as before His death. He bids them touch Him, and He eats before their eyes. It was indeed Himself.

An important thing remained-the basis of true faith. The words of Christ, and the testimony of Scripture. This He sets before them. But two things were yet required. They needed capacity to understand the Word - He opens their understanding therefore, that they might understand the Scriptures, and establishes them as witnesses that were not only able to say, " Thus it is, for we have seen it;" but, " Thus it must needs have been, for so path God said in His Word;" and the testimony of Christ Himself was fulfilled in His resurrection.

But now, grace was to be preached-Jesus, rejected by the Jews; slain and risen again for the salvation of souls, having made peace, and bestowing life according to the power of resurrection, the cleansing of sin being accomplished, and pardon already granted by bestowing life. Grace was to be preached among all nations; that is to say, repentance and pardon to sinners; beginning at that place with which the patient grace of God still owned a link, through the intercession of Jesus; and in which, sin the most aggravated, rendered pardon the most necessary. They were to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The Jew, a child of wrath even as others, must come in on the same ground. The testimony had a higher source, although it was said " to the Jew first."

But something more was needed for the accomplishment of this mission, i.e., Power. They were to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. Jesus would send the Holy Ghost whom He had promised; of whom the prophets also had spoken.

While blessing His disciples, Jesus was parted from them and carried up into heaven; and they returned to Jerusalem with joy.

It will have been remarked, that the narrative of Luke is very general; and contains the great principles on which the doctrine and the proofs of the resurrection are founded; the unbelief of the natural heart, so graphically painted in the most simple and touching accounts; the disciples' attachment to their own hopes of the kingdom, and the difficulty with which the doctrine of the Word took possession of their hearts, although, in proportion to their realization, their hearts opened to it with joy; the person of Jesus risen; the doctrine of the Word; the understanding of the Word bestowed; the power of the Holy Ghost given all that belonged to the truth and to the eternal order of things, made manifest. Nevertheless, Jerusalem still recognized as the starting point on earth, according to God's dispensations towards her. Yet she was not, even as a place, the point of contact and connection between Jesus and His disciples. He does not bless them from Jerusalem, although, in the dealings of God with the earth, they were to tarry there for the gift of the Holy Ghost. For themselves and their relationship with Him, He leads them out to Bethany. From thence He had set out to present Himself as king to Jerusalem. It was there that the resurrection of Lazarus took place; that the family, which presents the character of the remnant attached to His person, in the most striking manner, received Jesus. It was thither He retired when His testimony to the Jews was ended, that His heart might rest for a few moments among those whom He loved, who through grace loved Him. It was there that He established the link (as to circumstances) between the remnant attached to His person, and heaven. From thence He ascends.

Jerusalem is but the public starting point of their ministry, as it had been the last scene of His. For themselves, it was Bethany and heaven, which were connected in the person of Jesus. From thence was the testimony to come for Jerusalem herself.

NOTE.-In the text, I have strictly followed the passage; I add some developments here, connecting this gospel with the others.

There are two distinct parts in the sufferings of Christ -1st. That which He suffered from the efforts of Satan -as man in conflict with the power of the enemy who has dominion over death,-this, in communion with His Father, presenting His requests to Him; and 2nd. That which He suffered to accomplish expiation for sin, bearing the wrath of God, drinking the cup which the will of His Father had given Him to drink.

When speaking on the Gospel of John, I shall enter more on the character of the temptations; but I would notice here, that at the commencement of His public life the tempter endeavored to turn Jesus aside, by setting before Him the attractiveness of all that which, as privilege, belonged to him-all that might be agreeable to Christ as man. Satan departed from Him for a season. In Gethsemane he returns, using the fear of death to throw anguish into the heart of the Lord. And He must needs go through death, if man was to be delivered from it, for it was man's portion; and He alone, by going down into it, could break its chains. He had become man, that man might be

delivered and 'even glorified. The distress of His soul was complete. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Thus His soul was that which the soul of a man ought to be in the presence of death, when Satan puts forth all his power in it. Only He was perfect in it; it was a part of His perfection, put to the test in all that was possible to man. But with tears and supplications, He makes His request to Him who had power to save Him from death. For the moment, His agony increases. Presenting, it to God makes it more acute. This is the case in our own smaller conflicts. But thus the thing is settled according to perfection before God. His soul enters into it with God, He prays more fervently. It is now evident that this cup-which He puts before His Father's eyes, when Satan presents it to Him as the power of death in His soul-must be drunk. As obedience to His Father, He takes it in peace. To drink it is but perfect obedience, instead of being the power of Satan. But it must be drunk in reality; and, upon the cross, Jesus, the Savior of our souls, enters into the second phase of His sufferings. He goes under death as the judgment of God, the separation of the soul from the light of His countenance. All that a soul, which enjoyed nothing except communion with God, could suffer in being deprived of it, the Lord suffered, according to the perfect measure of the communion which was interrupted. Yet He gave glory to God-" But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." The cup of wrath-for I pass over the outrages and insults of men we may spare them-the cup of wrath was drunk. Who can tell the horrors of that suffering? The true pains of death, understood as God understands it, felt-according to the value of His presence-divinely, as by a man who depended on that presence as man. But all is accomplished; and that which God required in respect to sin is done, exhausted, and He is glorified as to it: so that He has only to bless whosoever comes to Him through a Christ who is alive and was dead, and who lives forever a man for men before God.

The sufferings of Christ in His body, real as they were, the insults and upbraidings of men, were but the surface of His affliction, which, by depriving Him, as man, of all consolation, left Him wholly to His sufferings in connection with the judgment of sin, when the God, who would have been His full comfort, was, as forsaking Him, the source of sorrow which left all the rest as unfelt and forgotten.

## Mark

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The Gospel according to Mark has a character that differs in certain respects from all the others. Each Gospel, as we have seen, has its own character; each is occupied with the person of the Lord in a different point of view. As the Son of God, as the Son of man, as the Son of David, the Messiah presented to the Jews. But Mark is occupied with none of these titles. It is the Servant we find here-and in particular His service as bearing the word-the active service of Christ in the Gospel. The glory of His divine person shows itself, it is true, in a remarkable manner through His service, and, as it were, in spite of Himself, so that He avoids its consequences. But still service is the subject of the book. Doubtless we shall find the character of His teaching developing itself (and truth consequently shaking off the Jewish forms under which it had been held), as well as the account of His death, on which all depended for the establishment of faith. But that which distinguishes this Gospel, is the character of service and of Servant that is attached to the life of Jesus: the work that He came to accomplish personally as living on the earth. On this account, the history of His birth is not found in Mark. It opens with the announcement of the beginning of the Gospel. John the Baptist is the herald, the fore-runner, of Him who brought this good news to man.

The message is new-at least in the absolute and complete character it assumes, and in its direct and immediate application. It was not the Jewish privileges which should be obtained by repenting and returning to the Lord. The Lord was coming according to His promise. To prepare His way before Him, John was preaching repentance for the remission of sins. It was this they needed; remission of sins was the great thing, the formal object of John's mission. The prophets had indeed announced pardon if the people returned to the Lord; but here it was the present object of the address. The people go out in a body to avail themselves of it. Conscience, at least, was stirred; and whatever might be the pride of their leaders, the sense of Israel's condition was felt by the people, as soon as anything outside the routine of religion acted on the heart and conscience-that is to say, when God spoke. They confess their sins. With some, perhaps, it was only natural conscience; but at any rate, it was wrought upon by the testimony of God.

But John, rigidly separate from the people, and living apart from human society, proclaims another, mightier than he, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to unloose: He would not merely preach repentance, accepted by the baptism of water, He would bestow the Holy Ghost, power, on those who received His testimony. Here, our Gospel passes on rapidly to the service of Him whom John thus declared. It only sets forth summarily that which introduced Him into this service.

The Lord takes His place among the repentant of His people, and submitting to John's baptism, He sees heaven open to Him, and the Holy Ghost descending upon Him like a dove. The Father acknowledges Him as His Son on earth, in whom He is well-pleased. He is then led by the Holy Ghost into the wilderness, where He undergoes the temptation of Satan for forty days; He is with the wild beasts, and angels exercise their ministry towards Him. Here we see His whole position-the character which the Lord takes on earth-all its features and relations with that which surrounded Him, gathered into these two or three verses.

After this, John disappears from the scene, giving place to the public ministry of Christ, of whom he was only the herald; and Christ Himself appears in the place of testimony, declaring that the time was fulfilled, that it was now no question of prophecies, or of days to come; that God was going to set up His kingdom, and that they ought to repent and receive the good news which at that very moment was proclaimed to them.

Our Evangelist passes rapidly on to every branch of the service of Christ. Having presented the Lord as undertaking the public ministry which called on men to receive the good news as a present thing, the time of the fulfillment of the ways of God being come; he exhibits Him as calling others to accomplish this same work, in His name, by following Him. His word does not fail in its effect; those whom He calls forsake all and follow Him. He goes into the city, to teach on the Sabbath-day. His word does not consist of arguments which evidence the uncertainty of man, but comes with the authority of one who knows the truth which he proclaims-authority which in fact was that of God, who can communicate truth. He speaks also as one who possesses it; and He gives proof that he does. The Word which thus presents itself to men, has power over devils. A man possessed by an evil spirit was there. The spirit bore testimony in spite of himself to Him who spake, and whose presence was insupportable to him; but the Word that aroused him had power to cast him out. Jesus rebukes him; commands him to hold his peace and to come out of the man; and the evil spirit, after manifesting the reality of his presence, and his malice, submits, and departs from the man. Such was the power of the Word of Christ. It is not surprising that the fame of this act should spread through all the country; but the Lord continues His path of service wherever work presented itself. He goes into the house of Peter, whose wife's mother lay sick of a fever. He heals her immediately; and when the Sabbath was ended, they bring Him all the sick. He, ever ready to serve (precious Lord!), heals them all.

But it was not to surround Himself with a crowd that the Lord labored; and in the morning, long before day, He departs into the wilderness to pray. Such was the character of His service-wrought in communion with His God and Father, and in dependence upon Him.

He goes alone into a solitary place. The disciples find Him, and tell Him that all are seeking Him; but His heart is in His work-the general desire does not bring Him back. He goes on His way to fulfill the work which was given him to do-preaching the truth among the people-for that was the service to which He devoted Himself. But, however devoted to this service, His heart was not made rigid by preoccupation. A poor leper comes to Him, acknowledging His power, but uncertain as to His will. Now, this dreadful disease defiled every one who even touched the sufferer. But nothing stops Jesus in the service to which His love calls Him. The leper was wretched, an outcast from his fellow-creatures and from society. But the power of God was present. The leper must be assured with respect to the good-will on which his dejected heart could not reckon. Who would care for such a wretch as he? He had faith; but his thoughts of himself concealed from him the extent of the love that had visited him. Jesus puts forth His hand and touches him. The lowliest of men approaches sin and that which was the token of sin, and dispels it. The Man who in the might of His love touched the leper without being defiled, was the God who alone could remove the leprosy which made one afflicted with it miserable.

The Lord speaks with an authority, that declares at once His love and His divinity. "I will, be thou clean." I will-here was the love of which the leper doubted, the authority of God who alone has the

right to say I WILL. The effect followed the expression of His will. This is the case when God speaks. And who healed leprosy except Jehovah only? Was He the only one who had come down low enough to touch this defiled being, who defiled every other that had to do with him? Yes, the only one; but it was God who had come down, Love which had reached so low, and which in thus doing, showed itself mighty for every one who trusted in it.

He hides Himself from human acclamations, and bids the man who had been healed, to go and skew himself to the priests, according to the law of Moses. But this submission to the law bore testimony, in fact, to His being Jehovah. This miracle, being noised abroad, by attracting the multitude, sends Jesus away into the wilderness. Afterward he goes again into the city, and immediately the multitude gather together. What a living picture of the Lord's life of service! He preaches to them. That was His object and His service (see chap. 1:38). But again, in devoting Himself to the humble accomplishment of it as committed to Him, His service itself; His love-for who serves like God when He deigns to do it?-bring out His divine rights. He knew the Teal source of all these evils, and He could bring in its remedy. "Thy sins," said He to the poor paralytic man, who was brought to Him with a faith that overcame difficulties, " thy sins are forgiven thee." To the reasonings of the Scribes He gives an answer that silenced every gainsayer. He exercises the power that authorized Him to pronounce the pardon of the poor sufferer. The murmuring of the Scribes brought out, doctrinally, who was there; as the verdict of the priests who pronounced the leper clean, put the seal of their authority upon the truth that Jehovah, the Healer of Israel, was there. That which Jesus carries on is His work, His testimony. The effect is to make it manifest that Jehovah is there, and has visited His people. It is Psa. 103 which is fulfilled with respect to the rights, and the revelation of the person of Him who wrought.

Jesus leaves the city-the people flock around Him, and again He teaches them the call of Levi gives occasion for a new development of His ministry. He was come to call sinners, and not the righteous. He healed the sick. After this He tells them that He could not put the new divine energy, unfolded in Himself, into the old forms of Pharisaism. And there was another reason for it-the presence of the bridegroom. How could the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom was with them? He should be taken from them, and then would be the time to fast. He proceeds to insist on the incompatibility between the old Jewish vessels and the power of the gospel. The latter would but spoil Judaism, to which they sought to attach it.

That which took place when the disciples went through the corn-fields confirms this doctrine.

Ordinances lost their authority in the presence of the King ordained of God, rejected and a pilgrim on the earth. Moreover, the sabbath-a sign of the covenant between God and the Jews-was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore He, the Son of Man, was Lord of the sabbath. As Son of David, the ordinances were subordinate to Him. As Son of Man, possessor, in the sight of God, of all the rights which God had bestowed on man, He was Lord of the Sabbath which was made for man. In principle, the old things were passed away. But this was not all. It was, in fact, the new things of grace and power which did not admit of the old order of things. But the question was whether God could act in grace, and bestow blessing, in sovereignty, on His people. Whether He must submit to the authority of men availing themselves of His ordinances, or do good according to His own power and love, as being above all. Was man to limit the operation of God's goodness? And this, in truth, was the new wine which the Lord brought to man. Such was the

question raised in the synagogue on the occasion of the man with the withered hand. The Lord sets it publicly before their conscience, but neither heart nor conscience answered Him, and He acts in His service according to the goodness and the rights of God, and heals the man. The Pharisees, and their enemies, the Herodians, -for all were against God and united in this-consult together how they might destroy Christ. Jesus departs to the sea-coast. There the multitude follow Him, because of all that He had done; so that He is obliged to have a boat, that he may be outside the crowd. Spirits are subject to Him, compelled to own that He is the Son of God; but He forbids them to make Him known.

Service, in preaching, and in seeking souls, in devoting Himself to all, showing Himself by His acts to be the possessor of divine power, hiding Himself from the notice of men-in order to fulfill, apart from their applause, the service He had undertaken-such was His human life on earth. Love and divine power were disclosed in the service which that love impelled Him to accomplish, and in the accomplishment of which, that power was exercised. But this could not be circumscribed by Judaism, however subject the Lord was to the ordinances of God, given to the Jews.

But, God being thus manifested, the carnal opposition of man soon shows itself. Here, then, the description of Christ's service ends, and its effect is manifested. This effect is developed in that which soon follows, both with respect to the iniquity of man and to the counsels of God. Meanwhile, the Lord appoints twelve of His disciples to accompany Him, and to go forth preaching in His name. He could communicate the power He possessed, and that, by way of authority. He goes back into the house, and the multitude reassemble. And here the thoughts of man display themselves, at the same time as those of God. His friends search for Him as one who was beside himself. The Scribes, possessing influence as learned men, attribute to Satan a power which they could not deny. The Lord answers them by showing that in general all sin could be pardoned, but that to acknowledge the power and attribute it to the enemy, thus blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, was a sin that could never be pardoned. The "strong man" was there-but Jesus was stronger than he, for He cast out the devils. Would Satan endeavor to overthrow his own house? The fact that the power of Jesus manifested itself in this manner, left them without excuse. God's "strong man" was then come-Israel rejected Him; and, as regards their leaders, by blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, they brought themselves under hopeless condemnation. The Lord, therefore, immediately distinguishes the remnant who received His word from all natural connection he had with Israel. His "brethren" are the disciples who stand around Him, and those who do the will of God.

Chapter 4. This introduces the true character and result of His own service, and all the history of the service that should be accomplished unto a far distant future; as well as the responsibility of His disciples, with regard to the share they would have in it, and the quietness of one who trusted in God while thus laboring; the storms also that should occur, that should exercise faith while Jesus apparently took no notice of them; and the just confidence of faith, as well as the power that sustained it.

The whole character of the work, at that moment, and until the Lord's 'return, is described in this fourth chapter.

The Lord resumes in it His habitual work of instruction, but in connection with the development that had just taken place of His relationship with the Jews. He sows. In ver. 11, we see that the

distinction between the Jews and His disciples is marked. To the latter it was given to know the mystery of the kingdom, but to those that were without, all these things were done in parables. I do not repeat the remarks I made in speaking of the contents of this parable in Matthew. But that which follows in ver. 21, belongs essentially to the gospel by Mark. We have seen that the Lord was occupied in preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and that He committed the preaching of this gospel to others also. He was a sower and He sowed the word. That was His service, and it was theirs likewise. But, is a candle lit to be hidden? Moreover, nothing should be hidden. If man did not manifest the truth he had received, God would manifest all things. Let every one take heed to it.

In ver. 24 He applies this principle to His disciples. They must take heed to what they hear, for God would act towards them according to their fidelity in the administration of the word committed to them. The love of God sent the word of grace and of the kingdom unto men. That it should reach their conscience was the object of the service committed to the disciples. Christ communicated it to them, they were to make it known to others in all its fullness. According to the measure with which they gave free course to this testimony of love (conformably to the gift they had received), so should it be measured unto them in the government of God. If they hearkened unto that which He communicated to them they should receive more; for, as a general principle, he who made that which reached him his own, should have yet more, and from him who did not truly make it his own, it should be taken away.

The Lord then shows them how it should be with regard to Himself. He had sown, and even as the seed springs up and grows without any act on the sower's part, so would Christ allow the Gospel to spread in the world without interposing; it being the peculiar character of the kingdom, that the king was not there. But, when harvest-time comes, the sower has again to do with it. So should it be with Jesus; He would return to look after the harvest.

The Lord makes use of another similitude to describe the character of the kingdom. The small seed that he sowed should become a great system, highly exalted in the earth, capable of affording temporal protection to those that took shelter in it. Thus we have the work of preaching the word; the responsibility of the laborers to whom the Lord would entrust it during His absence; His own action at the beginning and at the end, at seed-time and at harvest, Himself remaining at a distance during the interval; and the formation of a great earthly power as the result of the truth which He preached, and which created a little nucleus around Himself. One part of the history of His followers was yet to be shown. They should find most serious difficulties in their way. The enemy would raise up a storm against them. Apparently Christ took no notice of their situation. They call upon Him, and awake Him by cries, which He answers in grace. He speaks to the wind and the sea, and there is a great calm. At the same time He rebukes their unbelief. They should have counted on Him, and on His divine power, and not have thought that He was going to be swallowed up by the waves. They should have remembered their own connection with Him, that, by grace, they were associated with Him. What tranquility was His-the storm does not disturb Him. Devoted to His work, He took His rest at the moment when service did not require His activity. He rested during the passage. His service only afforded Him those moments snatched by circumstances from labor. His divine tranquility, which knew no distrust, allowed Him to sleep during the storm. It was not so with the disciples; and forgetful of His power, unaware of the glory of Him who was with them, they think only of themselves, as though Jesus had forgotten them.

One word on His part, displays in Him the Lord of creation. This is the real state of the disciples when Israel is set aside. The storm arises. Jesus appears to take no heed. Now, faith would have recognized that they were in the same ship with Him. That is to say, if Jesus leaves the seed He has sown to grow until the harvest, He is, none the less, in the same vessel; He shares not the less truly the lot of His followers, or rather they share in His.

But in another sense they are not with Him. They are called to serve when He quits the scene of His labor. We learn this from the demoniac legion, delivered from his miserable condition. Man-and Israel in particular-was completely under the power of the enemy. Christ, as to the work of His power, completely delivered the one in whose behalf this power was exercised. He is clothed-not naked-in His right mind, and sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear His words. But the people of the place are afraid, and send Jesus away; and in the history of the herd of swine we have the picture of Israel after the remnant has been healed; they are unclean, and Satan drives them to destruction. Now, when Jesus departs, he who had personally experienced the mighty effects of His love, would have liked to be with Him; but he was to go home, and bear testimony to those around him of all that Jesus had done. He was to serve in the absence of Jesus. In all these narratives, we see the work and the devotedness of the servant, but, at the same time, the divine power of Jesus manifested in this service.

In the circumstances that follow the cure of the demoniac, we find the true position of Jesus portrayed in His work. He is called upon to heal the daughter of Jairus-even as He came to heal the Jews, had that been possible. As He went towards the house of Jairus to perform this work, a poor, incurable woman touches the hem of His garment with faith, and is instantly healed. This was the case with Jesus during His passage among the Jews. In the multitude that surrounded Him some souls, through grace, touched Him by faith. In truth, their disease was in itself incurable; but Jesus had life in Himself according to the power of God, and faith drew out its virtue by touching Him. Such are brought to acknowledge their condition, but they are healed. Outwardly, He was in the midst of all Israel-faith reaped the benefit in the sense of its own need, and of the glory of His person. Now, with respect to the one who was the object of His journey, remedy was unavailing. Jesus finds her dead, but does not miss the object of His journey. He raises her again, for He can give life. Thus, too, with respect to Israel. On the way, those who had faith in Jesus were healed, incurable as they were in themselves; but, in fact, as to Israel, the nation was dead in trespasses and sins. Apparently this put a stop to the work of Jesus. But grace will restore life to Israel in the end. We see the perfect grace of Jesus, intercepting the effect of the bad tidings brought from the ruler's house. He says to Jairus, as soon as the messenger has told Him of his daughter's death, and the inutility of troubling the Master any farther, "Be not afraid, only believe." In effect, although the Lord restores life to a dead Israel, in the end of the ages, nevertheless it is by faith that it takes place. The case of the poor woman, although in its direct application it does not go beyond the Jews yet applies in principle to the healing of every Gentile who, through grace, is brought to touch Jesus by faith.

This history, then, gives the character of His service, the manner in which-on account of man's condition-it had to be accomplished.

In that which follows, the history (properly so called) of His service is resumed. Only we see Him already rejected by a blinded people in spite of the power which He had manifested, and which

bore testimony to the glory of His person. Nevertheless He pursues His service, and sends forth His disciples in order that nothing might be wanting; but with the testimony of the judgment that awaited those who should be guilty of the rejection of His mission—a rejection that was already taking place. The Lord, however, continues to give proofs in mercy and in goodness that Jehovah, who had compassion on His people, was there; until at length He had to prepare His disciples for the certain result of His work, namely, His death by the hand of the Gentiles, to whom the chief priests would deliver Him.

To the Jews He was the carpenter, the son of Mary. Their unbelief stopped the beneficent hand of God with regard to themselves. Jesus carries on His work elsewhere, and sends forth His disciples; an act which implied the possession of divine power. It was still to Israel that the mission they received from Him directed them, and they were to pronounce judgment upon the land of Emanuel, the land of Israel, as a polluted land, wherever their testimony should be rejected. They were to go forth, resting on the mighty protection of Him who sent them, and they should lack nothing; He was sovereign Lord; all things were at His disposal. Christ can not only communicate blessings as the channel of blessing Himself, but can also confer on His disciples the power of casting out devils. The disciples fulfill their task. This passage shews forth in a remarkable manner the position and glory of Christ. He is the servant: for men, the carpenter's son. He takes, in His new service, no place but the filling up of that which God had given Him to do. He could do no mighty works there, because of their unbelief. Ever ready to serve, but shut up, straitened in the exercise of His love where no door opened to receive its influence, and nature, judging according to sight, never does. Only where a need was, His love, never tired, works, must work. The few sick folk profit by a love that despises none, because it never seeks itself. But in the following verse, he 'who could not work mighty works, because His service was dependent on divine conditions, in which God could found and carry on His intercourse with men, in order to reveal Himself, now gives power to others over all unclean spirits, a power which is divine. Any can work miracles, if God gives the power; but God alone can give it. They are to lack nothing, for Emanuel was there; and to announce judgment if their message was rejected. Divine love had made Him entirely a dependent servant, but the dependent servant was God present in grace and righteousness. But the effect of all these manifestations of power is, that the conscience of their king who then reigned in Israel is awakened; and the evangelist opens to us the history of the murderous opposition of the authorities in Israel to the witnesses for the truth. Herod had put John to death, in order to gratify the iniquity of a woman who pleased him,—iniquity that he shared with her. A dance was worth the life of the prophet of God. Such was the ruler of Israel.

The apostles return. Jesus withdraws them from the inquisitive and needy crowd, by going into a desert place; but the multitude follow Him. Jesus, rejected as he is, by the land He loved, has compassion on the poor of the flock, and manifests in their behalf the power of Jehovah to bless them, according to Psa. 132. Having sent the people away, He crosses the sea on foot; and, rejoining His disciples, the wind ceases; a figure, of which we have spoken when meditating on Matthew. Their work was finished. As to themselves, in spite of all His miracles, their hearts at that time were still hard, and forgot the miracles, one after the other, The Lord pursues His work of blessing. It was but to touch Him and be healed.

The ruling power in exercise among the Jews, had shown itself hostile to the testimony of God, and had put to death the one whom He had sent in the way of righteousness. The scribes and

those who pretended to follow righteousness, had corrupted the people by their teaching, and had broken the law of God.

They washed cups and pots, but not their hearts; and provided that the priests-religion-gained by it, they set aside the duties of children to their parents. But God looked at the heart, and from the heart of man proceeded every kind of impurity, iniquity, and violence. It was that which defiled the man. Such is the judgment on religiousness without conscience and without fear of God, and the true discernment of what the heart of man is in the sight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

But God must also show His own heart; and if Jesus judged that of man with the eye of God, if He manifested His ways and His faithfulness to Israel; He displayed, nevertheless, through it all, what God was to those who felt their need of Him and came to Him in faith, owning and resting upon His pure goodness. From the land of Tire and Sidon comes a woman of the condemned race, a Gentile and a Syro-phoenician. The Lord replies to her, on her request that He would heal her daughter, that the children (the Jews) must first be filled, that it was not right to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. An overwhelming answer, if the sense she had of her need and of the goodness of God, had not gone beyond, and set aside, every other thought. These two things made her humble of heart, and ready to own the sovereign favor of God towards the people of His choice in this world. Had He not a right to choose a people-and she was not one of them. But that did not destroy His goodness and His love. She was but a Gentile dog, yet such was the goodness of God that He had bread even for dogs. Christ, the perfect expression of God, the manifestation of God Himself in the flesh, could not deny His goodness. and His grace, could not say that faith had higher thoughts of God than were true, for He was Himself that love. The sovereignty of God was acknowledged. No pretension made to any right whatsoever. The poor woman rested only upon grace. Her faith, with an intelligency given of God, laid hold of the grace which went beyond the promises made to Israel. She penetrates into the heart of the God of love, as He is revealed in Jesus; even as He penetrates into ours.

In the next miracle, we see the Lord, by the same grace, bestowing hearing and speech upon a man who was deaf and unable even to express his thoughts. He might have received no fruit from the word, from God, and could give no praise to Him. The Lord is returned into the place where He arose as light on Israel; and here He deals with the remnant alone. He takes him apart from the multitude. It is the same grace that takes the place of all pretensions to righteousness, and that manifests itself to the destitute. Its form, though exercised now in favor of the remnant of Israel, is suited to the condition of Jew or Gentile-it is grace. But as to these, too, it is the same. He takes the man apart from the crowd, that the work of God may be wrought; the crowd of this world had no real part therein. We see Jesus here, His heart moved at the condition of man, and more especially at the state of His ever-loved Israel-of which this poor sufferer was a striking picture. He causes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. So was it individually, and will it be with the whole remnant of Israel in the latter days. He acts Himself, and He does all things well. The power of the enemy is destroyed, the man's deafness, his inability to use his tongue as God gave it him, are taken away by His love who acts with the power of God.

The miracle of the loaves bore witness to the presence of the God of Israel, according to His promises; this, to the grace that went beyond the limits of these promises, on the part of God, who

judged the condition of those who asserted a claim to them according to righteousness, and that of man, evil in himself; and who delivered man and blessed him in love, withdrawing him from the power of Satan, and enabling him to hear the voice of God, and to praise him.

There are yet some remarkable features in this part of the history of Christ, which I desire to point out. They manifest the spirit in which Jesus labored at this' moment. He departs from the Jews, having shown the emptiness and hypocrisy of their worship, and the iniquity of every human heart as a source of corruption and sin.

The Lord-at this solemn moment, which displayed the rejection of Israel-goes far away from the people to a place where there was no opportunity for service among them, to the stranger and Canaanite cities of Tiro and Sidon: and (His heart oppressed) would have no one know where He was. But God had been too plainly manifested in His goodness and His power, to allow Him to be hidden whenever there was need. The report of what He was had gone abroad, and the quick eye of faith discovered that which alone could meet its need. It is this that finds Jesus (when all that had apparently, a right to the promises, are deceived by the pretension itself and by their privileges) faith, it is, that knows its need, and knows that only, and that Jesus alone can meet it. That which God is to faith, is manifested to the one that needs it according to the grace and power that are in Jesus. Hidden from the Jews, He is grace to the sinner. Thus, also, when he heals the deaf man of his deafness and of the impediment in his speech, He takes him aside from the multitude, and looks up to heaven and sighs. His heart oppressed by the unbelief of the people, He takes the object of the exercise of His power aside, looks up to the sovereign Source of all goodness, of all help for man, and grieves at the thought of the condition in which man is found. This case, then, exemplifies more particularly the remnant according to the election of grace from among the Jews, who are separated by divine grace from the mass of the nation; in these few, being in exercise. The heart of Christ is far from repulsing His (earthly) people. His soul is overwhelmed by the sense of the unbelief that separates them from Him and from deliverance; nevertheless, He takes away from some the deaf heart, and looses their tongue, in order that the God of Israel may be glorified.

Thus also, on the death of Lazarus, Christ grieves at the sorrow which death brings upon the heart of man. There, however, it was a public testimony.

We shall find in chapter 8 another example of that which we have been noticing. Jesus leads the blind man out of the town. He does not forsake Israel wherever there is faith; but he separates the one who possesses it from the mass, and brings him into connection with the power, the grace, the heaven, whence blessing flowed-blessing consequently which extended to the Gentiles. Power was not exercised in the midst of manifest unbelief. This clearly marks out the position of Christ with regard to the people. He pursues His service, but He retires to God because of Israel's unbelief; but it is to the God of all grace.

It is on this account, as it appears to me, that we have the second miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. The Lord acts again in favor of Israel; no longer as administering Messianic power in the midst of the people (which was implied, as we have seen, in the number twelve), but, in spite of His rejection by Israel, continuing to exercise His power in a divine manner and apart from man. The number seven has always the force of super-human perfection-that which is complete. This, however, applied to what is complete in the power of evil as well as of good, when it is not human

and subordinate to God. It is that intervention of God which is unwearied, and which is according to His own power, is the principal object of the repetition of the miracle.

Afterward, the condition both of the heads of Israel and of the remnant is displayed. The Pharisees require a sign; but no sign should be given to that generation. The Lord departs from them. But the blind and unintelligent condition of the remnant is also manifested. The Lord warns them to beware of the spirit and the teaching of the Pharisees, the false pretenders to a holy zeal for God; and of the Herodians, the servile votaries of the spirit of the world, who, to please the emperor, set God entirely aside.

In using the word "leaven," the Lord gives the disciples occasion to show their deficiency in spiritual intelligency. If the Jews learned nothing from the Lord's miracles, but still asked for signs, even the disciples did not realize the divine power manifested in them. I do not doubt that this condition is set forth in the blind man of Bethsaida.

Jesus takes him by the hand and leads him out of the town, away from the multitude, and uses that which was of Himself, that which possessed the efficacy of His own person, to perform the cure. The first effect well depicts the condition of the disciples. They saw, doubtless, but in a confused manner, "men, as trees, walking." But the Lord's love is not wearied by their unbelief. He acts according to the power of His own intention towards them, and causes them to see clearly. Afterward-L.- away from Israel-the uncertainty of unbelief is seen in juxtaposition with the certainty of faith (however obscure its intelligency may be), and Jesus, forbidding the disciples to speak of that which they certainly believed (the time was gone by for convincing Israel of Christ's rights as Messiah), announces to them that which should happen to Himself, for the accomplishment of God's purposes in grace, after His rejection by Israel. So that everything is now, as we may say, in its place. Israel does not recognize the Messiah in Jesus; consequently He no longer addresses the people in that character. His disciples believe Him to be the Messiah, and He tells them of His death and resurrection.

Now, there may be true faith without the heart being formed according to the full revelation of Christ-without the flesh being crucified in proportion to the measure of knowledge one has of the object of faith. Peter acknowledged indeed, by the teaching of God, that Jesus was the Christ; but he was far from having his heart pure according to the mind of God in Christ; and when the Lord announces His death, and that before all the world, the flesh of Peter-wounded by the idea of a Master thus despised and rejected-shows its energy by daring to rebuke the Lord Himself. This attempt of Satan's to discourage the disciples by the dishonor of the cross, stirs up the Lord's heart. All His affection for His disciples, and the sight of those poor sheep before whom the enemy was putting a stumbling-block, brings a vehement censure upon Peter, as being the instrument of Satan and speaking on his part. Alas! for us, the reason was plain-he savored the things of men, and not those of God; for the cross comprises in itself all the glory of God. Man prefers the glory of man, and thus Satan governs him. The Lord calls the people and His disciples, and explains distinctly to them, that if they would follow Him, they must take part with Him and bear His cross. For thus, in losing their life, they would save it, and the soul was worth all beside. Moreover, if any one was ashamed of Jesus and of His words, the Son of man would be ashamed of him, when He should come in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. For glory belonged to Him, whatever might be His humiliation. He then sets this before His chief disciples, in order to strengthen their

faith.

Chapter 9. In Matthew we saw the transfiguration announced in terms that related to the subject of that Gospel. The rejected Christ taking His glorious position as Son of man. In each of the Gospels, it is in connection with the moment when this transition is clearly set forth; but in each case with a particular character. In Mark, we have seen the humble and devoted service of Christ in proclaiming the kingdom, whatever might be the divine glory that shone through His humiliation. Accordingly, the manifestation of the transition to glory is here announced as the coming of the kingdom in power. There is nothing that very particularly distinguishes the recital here from that in Matthew, excepting that the isolation of Jesus and the three disciples, at this moment, is more strongly marked, in ver. 2, and that the facts are related without addition. The Lord afterward charges them to tell no one what they had seen, until after His resurrection from among the dead.

We may remark here, that it is indeed the kingdom in power that is manifested; it is not the power of the Holy Ghost bringing the holy member of the body into connection with Christ the Head, revealing to it the heavenly glory of Christ, as He is, at the right hand of the Father. Christ is on earth. He is there in connection with the great witnesses of the Jewish economy, but witnesses who give place entirely to Him, while participating with Him in the glory of the kingdom. But Christ is manifested in glory on the earth-the man in glory is recognized as Son of God, as He is known in the cloud. It was the glory as it shall be manifested on the earth, the glory of the kingdom, and God is still in the cloud. This is not our position without a veil.

But this position of glory could not be taken by the Lord, nor the glorious reign be established, excepting in a new order of things. Christ must rise from the dead to establish it. It did not accord with His presentation as Messiah, as He then was. Therefore He commands His disciples not to make it known till after His resurrection. It would then be a powerful confirmation of the doctrine of the kingdom in glory. This manifestation of the glory confirmed the faith of the disciples at that time. (as Gethsemane taught them the reality of His sufferings, and of His conflicts with the prince of darkness); and would afterward form a subject of their testimony and its confirmation, when Christ should have taken His new position.

We may see the character of this manifestation, and its relation to the earthly kingdom of glory, of which the prophets had spoken; 2 Peter 1:19, read, "We have the word of prophecy confirmed."

The disciples had stopped at the threshold. In fact, although their eyes were opened, they saw, "men as trees walking." What could this "rising from among the dead" mean, they questioned between themselves. Resurrection was known to them; but this power, which delivered from the condition in which man, and even the saints, were found-of this they were totally ignorant. That there was a resurrection in which God would raise up all the dead at the last day, they had no doubt. But that the Son of Man was the resurrection and the life-the absolute triumph over death of the second Adam, the Son of God having life in Himself, manifested by His resurrection from among the dead (a deliverance that shall be accomplished in the church in due time), of this they understood nothing. Doubtless, they received the Lord's words as true, as having authority, but His meaning was incomprehensible to them.

Now, unbelief never fails to find out difficulties that justify it in its own eyes (which refuse to perceive the divine proofs of the truth)-difficulties great enough in appearance, and which may

trouble the minds of those who through grace are inclined to believe, or who have believed, but are still weak in the faith.

The prophets had said that Elias must first come. The scribes insisted on this. Struck with the glory that undeniably confirmed the pretensions of Christ, the disciples speak to Him of this difficulty. The conviction which the sight of the glory brought to their mind, made them confess the difficulty with regard to which they had previously been silent, not daring to bring it forward. But now the proof is strong enough to embolden them to face the difficulty.

In fact, the Word spoke of it, and Jesus accepts it as the truth; Elias was to come and restore all things. And he shall, indeed, come before the manifestation of the glory of the Son of Man; but first of all the Son of Man must suffer and be rejected. This also was written, as well as the mission of Elias. Moreover, before this manifestation of Christ, which tested the Jews as to their responsibility, God had not failed to supply them with a testimony according to the spirit and power of Elias; and they had ill-treated him as they listed. It was written that the Son of Man should suffer before His glory, as truly as that Elias should come. However, as we have said, in point of testimony to the Jews, he who took morally the place of Elias, had come. They had treated him as they were going to treat the Lord. Thus also John had said that he was not Elias, and he quotes Isa. 40, which speaks of the testimony, but never quotes Mal. 4, which relates to Elias personally. The Lord (Matt. 11:10) applies Mal. 3:1; but John, Isaiah.

Come down from the mountain, the people rush towards Him, astonished-apparently-at this mysterious absence from His disciples, and salute Him with the reverence with which His whole life had inspired them. But that which had taken place only confirmed the solemn truth that He must depart, which had just been demonstrated by a more glorious testimony. The remnant even, they who believed, knew not how to profit by the power which was now on earth. The faith, of those even who believed, did not realize the presence of the Messiah-the power of Jehovah, the Healer of Israel; wherefore, then, still remain among the people and the disciples? The poor father expresses his affliction in a touching manner, in words that show a heart brought by the sense of its need to a right condition, but very weak in faith. The miserable state of his child is related, and his heart presents a true picture of the condition of the remnant - faith that required support on account of the unbelief under which it was buried. Israel was in no better condition than the poor child. But power was present, capable of all things. That was not the difficulty. Is there faith to profit by it? was the question. "If thou canst," said the afflicted father to Jesus. "If thou canst," replied the Lord, "applies to thy faith; if thou canst believe, all things are possible." The poor father, true of heart, confesses his own state with grief, and seeks help for his failure in the goodness of Christ. Thus the position of Israel was plainly shown forth. Almighty power was present to heal them, to deliver them from the power of Satan. It was to be done through faith, for the soul was to return to God. And there was faith in those who, touched by the testimony of His power, and moved by the grace of God, sought in Jesus the remedy for their woes and the foundation for their hopes. Their faith was weak and wavering; but wherever it existed Jesus acted with the sovereign power of His own grace and of the goodness of God, that finds its measure in itself.

Nevertheless, for this power to be exercised by man himself (to which God called him), it was needful that he should draw very near to God-that he to whom it was committed should accustom himself to communion with God, by withdrawing from all that connected him with the world and the

flesh.

Let us here recapitulate the principles of this narrative with respect to their general application. The Lord, who was going away, to be seen no more of the world until He came in glory, finds, on coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration, a case of the power of Satan over man, over the Jewish people. It had continued from almost the commencement of the child's existence. The faith that recognizes the intervention of God in Christ, and takes shelter in it from present evil, is weak and wavering, preoccupied with the evil; the sight of which conceals in great measure the power that masters and takes it away. Still the sense of need is deep enough to make them have recourse to that power. It is the unbelief which knows not how to count on the power that is present, which puts an end to the relations of Christ with man; it is not his misery that does so-it was this that brought Him down to earth. But the Almighty power is present-it only needs faith to profit by it. But if the heart, on account of the enemy's power, turns to Jesus, it can bring its unbelief to Him as well as all the rest. There is love and power in Him for every kind of weakness. The people crowd around, attracted by the sight of the enemy's power. Can the Lord heal him? But, can He allow the testimony of Satan's power to invade their hearts? This is the curiosity of men whose imagination is filled with the effect of the enemy's presence. But, whatever might be the unbelief of man, Christ was present, the testimony of a power that, in love to men, destroyed the effects of the power of the enemy. The people gather round-Jesus sees it, and with a word casts out the enemy. He acts according to the necessity of His power, and the purposes of the love of God. Thus the effort of the enemy occasioned the intervention of Jesus, which the weakness of the father's faith tended to arrest. Nevertheless, if we lay all our infirmity, as well as our misery, before Christ, He answers according to the fullness of His power. On the other hand, if the flesh meddles with the thoughts of faith, it hinders intelligency in the ways of God. While journeying, Christ explained His death and His new condition in resurrection. Why blame the lack of intelligency which hid all this from them, and filled their minds with ideas of earthly and Messianic glory? The secret of their want of intelligence lay here. He had told it them plainly; but on the way, they disputed among themselves which should have the first place in the kingdom. The thoughts of the flesh filled their heart, in regard to Jesus, with exactly the opposite of that which engaged the mind of God respecting Him. Infirmity, presented to Jesus, finds an answer in power and in sovereign grace; the flesh and its desires hide from us, even when thinking of Him, all the import of the thoughts of God. It was their own glory they were seeking in the kingdom; the cross-true path to glory-was unintelligible to them.

After this the Lord resumes with His disciples the great subject before Him at this moment; and which was, in every way, that which now must be decided. He was to be rejected; and He separates Himself from the multitude, with His disciples, to instruct them on this point. Pre-occupied with His glory, with His rights as Messiah, they do not understand it. Their faith even-such as it was-blinds them to all beyond that; because, while rightly attaching itself to the person of Christ, it connected-or rather, their own hearts, in which the faith existed, connected with Christ the accomplishment of that which their flesh desired and sought in Him for themselves. How subtle is the heart! This betrays itself in their dispute for preeminence. Their faith is too weak to bear elucidations that contradicted their ideas (ver. 32). These ideas are manifested without disguise among themselves. Jesus reproves them, and gives them a little child for an example, as He had so often done before. He that would follow Christ must have a spirit quite opposite to that

of the world-a spirit belonging to that which was weak and, despised by the pride of the world. In receiving such a one, they would receive Christ; in receiving Christ, they would receive the Father. It was eternal things that were in question.

The world was so contrary to Christ, that he who was not against Him was for Him. The Son of man was to be rejected. Faith in His person was the thing, not now individual service to Him. Alas! the disciples were still thinking of themselves: " He followeth not us." They must share His rejection; and if any one gave them a cup of cold water, God would remember it. Whatever would cause them to stumble in their walk, were it even their own right eye or hand, they would do well to cut off; for it was not the things of an earthly Messiah that were in question, but the things of Eternity. And all should be tested by the perfect holiness of God, and that, in judgment, by one means or another. Every one should be salted with fire-the good and the bad. Where there was life, the fire would only consume the flesh; for when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. If the judgment reaches the wicked-and assuredly it shall reach them-it is condemnation, a fire that is not quenched. But, for the good, there was also something else-they should be salted with salt. Those who were consecrated to God, whose life was an offering to Him, should not lack the power of holy grace, which binds the soul to God, and inwardly preserves it from evil. Salt is not the gentleness that pleases (which grace produces without doubt), but that energy of God within us which connects everything in us with God, and dedicates the heart to Him, binding it to Him in the sense of obligation and of desire, rejecting all in oneself that is contrary to Him;-obligation that flows from grace, but which acts all the more powerfully on that account. Thus, practically, it was distinctive grace, the energy of holiness, which separates from all evil; but by setting apart for God. Salt was good-here the effect produced in the soul, the condition of the soul, is so called, as well as the grace that produces this condition. Thus, they who offered themselves to God were set apart for Him-they were the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savor, wherewith can it be salted? It is used for seasoning other things; but if the salt needs it for itself, there is nothing left that can salt it. So would it be with Christians; if they who were of Christ did not render this testimony, where should anything be found, apart from Christians, to render it to them and produce it in them. Now this sense of obligation to God which separates from evil, this judgment of all evil in the heart, must be in oneself; it is not a question of judging others, but of placing oneself before God, thus becoming the salt, having it in oneself'. With regard to others, one must seek peace; and real separation from all evil is that which enables us to walk in peace together.

In a word, Christians were to keep themselves separate from evil and near to God, in themselves; and to walk with God in peace among one another.

No instruction could be more plain, more important, more valuable. It judges, it directs the whole Christian life in a few words.

But the end of the Lord's service drew near. Having described in these principles, the exigencies of Eternity, and the character of Christian life, He brings back all the relations of God with man to their original elements, setting aside the world and its glory, and Jewish glory also, as to its immediate accomplishment; and pointing out the path of eternal life in the cross, and in the saving power of God. Nevertheless, He takes the place of obedience Himself, and of service-the true place of man-'in the midst of all this. God Himself being introduced, on the other hand, in His

proper character as God, in His nature and in His divine rights. The special glory that belongs to dispensations, and the relationships proper to them, being left out.

Chapter 10 It is a striking principle that meets us here. The relationships of nature, as God had Himself created them at the beginning, re-established in their original authority, and the cross the sole means of drawing nigh to the God who was their creative source. On earth Christ could offer nothing but the cross to those who followed Him. The glory to which the cross would lead, had been shown to some of them, but as to Himself He took the place of servant. It was the knowledge of God by Him, that should form them for this glory and lead them to it; for in fact that was life eternal. All other intermediate ways in the hands of men had become hostile to the God who had granted them, and therefore to His manifestation in the person of Christ.

We find then (vers. 1-12) the original relationship of man and wife as formed by the creative hand of God. Vers. 13-16: the interest which Jesus took in young children, their place in the compassionate eye of God; the moral value of that which they represented before men. Ver. 17: we come to the law, to the world, and to the heart of man in presence of the two. But, at the same time, we see that Jesus takes pleasure in that which is amiable in the creature, as a creature-a principle of deep interest unfolded in this chapter-while still applying the touchstone morally to his heart. With respect to the law, as the natural heart can see it, that is, the outward action it requires, the young man had kept it; and with a [natural] sincerity, an uprightness, that Jesus could appreciate as a creature-quality, and which we ought always to recognize where it exists. It is important to remember, that He who, as man, was perfectly separated unto God-and that because He had the thoughts of God - could recognize the unchangeable obligations of the relationships established by God Himself; and also, whatever there was of amiable and attractive in the creature of God, as such. Having the thoughts of God-being God manifest in the flesh-how could He but recognize that which was of God in His creature? But, while doing this, He must establish the obligations of the relationships in which He has placed him, and exhibit the tenderness He felt for the infant representatives of the spirit which He prized; He must love the natural uprightness that may be developed in the creature. But He must judge the true condition of man fully brought out, and the affections that rested on objects raised up by Satan, and the will that rejected and turned away from the manifestation of God that called him to forsake these vanities and follow Him, thus putting his heart morally to the proof.

Jesus exhibits the absolute perfection of God in yet another manner. The young man saw the exterior of Christ's perfection, and trusting to the power of man to perform that which is good, and seeing its practical fulfillment in Jesus, applies to Him-and, humanly speaking, with sincerity-to learn from one in whom he saw so much perfection, the rule of eternal life. This thought is expressed in his sincere and cordial salutation. He runs, he kneels to the teacher who, morally, stood so high in his estimation, saying, " Good Master." The human limit of his ideas of this goodness, and his confidence in the powers of man are manifested by the words, " What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The Lord-taking up the whole import of his words-replies, " Why tallest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God." What God has created, he who knows God will respect, when it presents itself as such in its true place. But God alone is good. Man, if intelligent, will not make himself out good before God, nor dream of human goodness. This young man had, at least, the hope of becoming good by the law, and he believed that Jesus was so, as a man. But the greatest advantages which the flesh could recognize and which answered to

its nature, did but more effectually shut the door of life and heaven to man; the flesh used the law for self-righteousness, man being not good but a sinner-and, in fact, if we have to seek for righteousness, it is because we have it not, that is to say, because we are sinners and cannot attain this righteousness in ourselves. Moreover, worldly advantages, which appeared to render man more capable of doing good, bound his heart to perishing things, and strengthened selfishness, and made him attach little value to the image of God.

But the instructions of this chapter carry on still further the subject of man's condition before God. The ideas of the flesh accompany and give their form to the heart's affections, in one who is already quickened by the Spirit of grace acting through the attraction of Christ, until the Holy Ghost Himself communicates to those affections the strength of His presence, by giving them the glory of Christ in heaven for their object; and at the same time causing the light of that glory to shine (for the believer's heart) upon the cross, investing it with all the value of the redemption it accomplished, and of the divine grace that was its source, and producing conformity to Christ in every one that bears it with him. Peter did not understand how any one could be saved, if such advantages as the Jews possessed in their relationship to God only barred up the way to the kingdom of God. The Lord meets him upon this very ground; for man in the presence of God was now the question. As far as man was concerned, it was impossible-a second profound truth with respect to his condition. Not only was there none good excepting God, but no one could be saved, according to what man was. Whatever advantages he might have as means, they would avail him nothing in his state of sin. But the Lord introduces another source of hope-" with God all things are possible."

But the flesh, the carnal mind, enters yet farther into the career of the life of grace. Peter reminds the Lord that the disciples had forsaken all to follow Him, The Lord replies, that every one who had done so should have everything that would make him happy in his social affections, as God had formed him, together with the opposition that He Himself met with in this world; but in the world to come (Peter was not thinking of that), not some private individual advantage, but everlasting life. He went beyond the sphere of promise connected with the Messiah on earth, to enter, and make others enter, into that which was eternal. As to individual reward, that could not be judged of according to appearances.

But further, they followed indeed Jesus, and thought of the reward, but thought little of the cross which led to it. Therefore they were amazed at seeing Jesus deliberately going up to Jerusalem, where people sought to kill Him, and they were afraid. Although following Him, they were far from the height of realizing all that the path implied. Jesus sedulously explains it to them-His rejection, and His entrance into the new world by resurrection. John and James-little affected by the Lord's communications -use their faith in the royalty of Christ, to present the carnal desires of their heart, namely, to be on His right and left hand in the glory. Again, the Lord assures them that they should participate in the cross with Him; and takes the place Himself of the accomplishment of His service and of bringing others into fellowship with His sufferings. As for the glory of the kingdom, it would be theirs for whom the Father had prepared it. Its disposal was not in His hands. This is the place of service, of humiliation, and of obedience, in which this gospel always presents Him. Such should be the place of His disciples.

We have seen what the flesh was, in an upright young man whom Jesus loved, and in His disciples who knew not how to take the true position of Christ. The contrast of this with the full triumph of the Holy Ghost is remarkable, as we find it in the comparison of this chapter with Phil. 3.

We have in Saul a man outwardly blameless, according to the law, like the young man in the gospel; but he has seen Christ in glory and-by the teaching of the Holy Ghost the righteousness according to which Christ entered into the glory in which He revealed Himself to Saul. All that had been gain to him was loss for Christ. Would he have a carnal righteousness, a human righteousness, even if he could have accomplished it, when he had seen a righteousness bright with the glory of Christ? He possessed the righteousness which was of God by faith. What was that righteousness worth for which He had labored, now that he possessed the all-perfect righteousness which God gave by faith?-not sins alone were put away, human righteousness was made worthless by it. But his eyes had been opened to this by the Holy Ghost, and by seeing Christ. The things that engaged the heart of the young man and retained him in the world which Christ forsook, and which in Him had rejected God, could these things retain one who had seen Christ in the other world? They were but as dung to him. He had forsaken everything in order to possess this Christ. He considered them as utterly worthless. The Holy Ghost, in revealing Christ, had completely delivered him.

But this manifestation to the heart of Christ glorified, goes yet farther. He who thus breaks with the world, must follow the One whose glory he would reach; and this is to put himself under His cross. The disciples had forsaken all to follow Him. Grace had attached them to Christ that they might follow Him. The Holy Ghost had not yet linked them with His glory. He goes up to Jerusalem. They are amazed at it; and in following Him, although He goes before them, and they have His guidance and His presence, they are afraid. Paul seeks to know the power of His resurrection, he desires to have fellowship with His sufferings and to be conformed unto His death. Instead of amazement and fear, there is full spiritual intelligence and the desire of conformity to that death which the disciples feared; because he found Christ, morally, in it, and it was the pathway to the glory he had seen.

Moreover, this sight of Christ purifies the desires of the heart with respect even to the glory. John and James desire for themselves the best place in the kingdom-a desire that availed itself (with a carnal and selfish object) of the intelligency of faith-a half-sighted intelligency that sought the kingdom at once, and not the glory and the world to come. Paul had seen Christ-his only desire in the glory was to possess Him, "that I may win Christ;" not a good place near Him in the kingdom, but Himself. This is deliverance-the effect of the presence of the Holy Ghost revealing a glorified Christ.

We may remark, that in every case the Lord brings in the cross. It was the only passage from this world of nature to the world of glory and of eternal life. To the young man He exhibits the cross; to the disciples that followed Him He exhibits the cross; to John and James, who sought a good place in the kingdom, He exhibits the cup they would have to drink in following Him. Eternal life, although received now, was in possession and enjoyment, on the other side of the cross.

Observe, also, that the Lord was so perfectly divinely above the sin in which nature lay, that He could recognize all that was of God in it, and show at the same time the impossibility of any relation between God and man on the ground of what man is. Advantages were but hindrances.

That which is death to the flesh must be gone through, we must have divine righteousness, and enter in spirit (hereafter in fact) into another world, in order to follow Him and to be with Him-to "win Christ." Solemn lesson!

In result, God alone is good, and-sin having come in-it is impossible, if it be manifest, that man can be in relationship with God; but with Him all is possible. The cross is the only path to God. Christ leads to it, and we must follow Him in this path, which is that of eternal life. A child-like spirit enters into it by grace; the spirit of service and of self-renunciation walks in it. Christ walked in it, giving His life a ransom for many. This part of the Lord's instruction ends here. This chapter is worthy of all the attention which the Christian, through grace, can devote to it.

At the 46th verse another subject begins. The Lord enters on the path of His final relationship with Israel, presenting Himself as King, Emmanuel, rather than in the testimony of the Prophet who was to be sent. As the prophet, His ministry had been accomplished. He had been sent (He told His disciples) to preach. This had led Him to the cross, as we have seen. He must needs announce it as the result to those that followed Him. He now resumes His connection with Israel, but as the Son of David. He draws near to Jerusalem; from which He had departed, and where He was to be rejected, and the power of God manifests itself in Him. By the way of Jericho, the city of the curse, enters the One who brings blessing, at the price of the gift of Himself. The poor blind man (and such, indeed, was the nation of itself) acknowledges Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of David. The grace of Jesus replies in power to the need of His people, that expressed itself by faith, and that persevered in, spite of the obstacles put in its way by the multitude who did not feel this need, and who followed Jesus, attracted by the manifestation of His power, without being united to Him by the faith of the heart. That faith has the sense of need in others. Jesus stands still and calls him, and, before all the people, manifests the divine power which responded, in the midst of Israel, to the faith that recognized in Jesus of Nazareth the true Son of David, the Messiah. The poor man's faith had healed him, and he followed Jesus in the way, without dissimulation or fear. For the faith which then confessed Jesus to be the Christ, was divine faith, although it might, perhaps, know nothing of the cross which He had just announced to His disciples, as the result of that faith when genuine.

In that which follows, Jesus presents Himself to Jerusalem as King. His reception shows the extent to which the testimony He had rendered had acted on the hearts of the simple. God ordained, therefore, that it should take place. There is little difference between the narrative here and in Matthew. Only the kingdom is more simply presented as such: "The kingdom of our father David."

With what dignity, as the Judge of all things, Jesus now takes knowledge of all that was being done in the temple, and goes out without saying anything. The Lord had visited His temple, as also, He had entered the city riding on the ass's colt, whereon never man sat. Israel is judged in the condemned fig-tree. The glory of the Lord, of the House of Jehovah, is vindicated with authority-an authority which He claims, and which He exercises in His own person. The scribes and chief priests draw back before the ascendancy that His word had given Him over the people, and He goes out of the city without being molested, notwithstanding their malice. The next day He assures His disciples, who were astonished at seeing the fig-tree withered away, that whatsoever they asked in faith should be accomplished; but that they must act in grace, if they would enjoy this privilege. The scribes and priests, and elders, are confounded, and demand His authority. He

addresses their conscience, but in such a manner as to demonstrate their incompetency to ask Him such a question, exposing, at the same time, their insincerity. They could not decide with respect to the baptism of John; by what right, then, could they subject Him to their questions respecting His own doctrines? They could not decide when the case was before them. On the other hand, they must either sanction His work by their reply, or lose their authority with the people by denying the baptism of John who had borne testimony to Christ. It was no longer a question of winning these men-but what an empty thing is the wisdom of man in the presence of God and His wisdom.

The change of dispensation has a more definite place in Matthew, and the sin which rejected the King. In Mark, it is more the service of Christ as the Prophet. Afterward, as we have seen, He presents Himself as King. And, in both Gospels, we see that it is Jehovah who fills the offices which He has deigned to undertake.

Consequently, we find in Matthew more personal accusations, as in the parable of the two sons (21:28-32); and the detail of the change of dispensation, in the parable of the marriage feast (22:1-14). Neither of which are in Mark. In our Gospel, the unchangeable dignity of His person, and the simple fact, that the Prophet and King were rejected (rejection that led to Israel's judgment), are set before us by the Spirit of God.

The Lord afterward gives the substance of the whole law, as the principle of blessing between the creature and God, and that which formed the touchstone for the heart in the rejection of Christ. I say for the heart, because the trial was really there, although it was in the understanding that it appeared. Even when there were really orthodox principles, Christ being rejected, the heart that was not attached to His person could not follow Him in the path to which His rejection led. The system of God's counsels which depended on it was a difficulty. Those who were attached to His person followed Him, and found themselves in it, without having well understood it beforehand. Thus the Lord gives the pith of the law - the whole law-as essentially divine instruction, and the point at which the counsels of God are transplanted into the new scene, where they will be fulfilled apart from the weakness or of man. So that in these few verses (12:28-37) the law and the Son of David are presented, and the latter taking His place as Son of man-the Lord-at the right hand of God. This was the secret of all that was going on. The union of His body the Church with Himself was all that remained behind. Only in Mark the Prophet recognizes the moral condition, under the law, that tends towards entrance in the kingdom (ver. 34). This scribe had the spirit of understanding.

The picture of the condition that would bring in judgment, which we find in Matt. 23, is not given here. It was not His subject (see ante, p. 112). Jesus, still as the Prophet, warns His disciples morally; but the judgment of Israel, for rejecting the Son of David, is not here before His eyes in the same manner; that is to say, it is not the subject of which the Holy Ghost is here speaking. The real character of the Scribes' devoutness is pointed out, and the disciples are warned against them. The Lord makes them feel also what it is that, in the eyes of God, gives true value to the offerings that were brought to the temple.

In chap. 13 the Lord takes up much more the service of the apostles in the circumstances that would surround them, than the development of the dispensations and the ways of God with respect to the kingdom-a point of view more presented in Matthew, who treats of this subject.

It will be observed, that the disciples' question takes only a general view of the subject which pre-occupied them. They ask when the judgment upon the temple, and all these things, shall be fulfilled. And from ver. 9 to 13, although some circumstances found in Matt. 24 are included, the passage relates even more to that which is said in Matt. 10 It speaks of the service which the disciples would accomplish in the midst of Israel, and in testimony against persecuting authorities, the Gospel being preached in all nations before the end came. They were, as preachers, to fill the place which Jesus had occupied among the people, only that the testimony was to extend much farther. It would be in the face of all possible suffering and most trying persecutions.

But there would be a moment when this service should end. The well-known sign of the abomination that maketh desolate would point it out. They were then to flee. These would be the days of unparalleled distress, and of signs and wonders, which, if it were possible, would deceive the very elect. But they were forewarned. Everything should be shaken after that time, and the Son of man should come. Power should take the place of testimony, and the Son of man should gather together His elect (of Israel) from all parts of the earth.

It appears to me that in this Gospel, more than in any other, the Lord brings together the judgment on Jerusalem then at hand, and that which is yet to come, because He is here more occupied with the conduct of His disciples during those events. Israel, the whole system into which the Lord had come, was to be set aside, provisionally, in order to bring in the Church and the Kingdom in its heavenly character, and afterward the Millennium; i.e., the Church in its glory and the Kingdom established in power, when the legal system and Israel under the first covenant should be finally set aside. At these two periods the general position of the disciples would be the same; but the events of the latter period would be more definitive and important, and the Lord speaks of them in particular. Nevertheless, that which was the most imminent, and which, for the present, set aside Israel and the testimony, required that a warning should be addressed to the disciples, on account of their immediate danger, and they receive it accordingly.

The effort of the Jews to re-establish their system at the end, in despite of God, will but lead to open apostasy and definitive judgment. This will be the time of unequalled affliction, of which the Lord speaks. But from the time of the first destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, until the coming of the Lord, the Jews are considered as set aside and under this judgment, in what degree soever it may have been accomplished.

The disciples are commanded to watch, for they know not the hour. It is the conduct of the disciples in this respect which is here especially before the eyes of the Lord. It is of this great day, and the hour of its arrival, that the angels and even the Son, as Prophet, know not. For Jesus must sit at the right hand of God until His enemies are made His footstool, and the time of His rising up is not revealed. The Father has kept it, says Jesus, in His own power (see Acts 3). Peter proposes to the Jews the Lord's return. They rejected it; and now they wait for the full accomplishment of all that has been spoken. Meantime, the servants are left to serve during the Master's absence. He commanded the porter in particular to watch. They knew not at what hour the Master would come. This applies to the disciples in their connection with Israel, but at the same time it is a general principle. The Lord addresses it to all.

Chapter 14 resumes the thread of the history, but with the solemn circumstances that belong to the close of the Lord's life.

The Scribes and Pharisees were already consulting how they might take Him by craft and put Him to death. They feared the influence of the people, who admired the works, and goodness and meekness of Jesus; therefore they wished to avoid taking Him at the time of the feast, when the multitude flocked to Jerusalem: but God had other purposes. Jesus was to be our Paschal Lamb, blessed Lord! and He offers Himself as the victim for propitiation. Now, the counsels of God and the love of Christ being such, Satan was not wanting in suitable agents to perform all that he could do against the Lord. Jesus offering Himself for it, the people would soon be induced to give up, even to the Gentiles, the One who had so much attracted them; and treachery would not be wanting to throw Him, without difficulty, into the hands of the priests. Still, God's own arrangements, which owned Him and displayed Him in His grace, should have the first place; and the supper at Bethany and the supper at Jerusalem should precede the one, the proposal and the other, the act of Judas. For, let the wickedness of man be what it may, God always takes the place He chooses, and never allows the enemy power to hide His ways from faith, nor leaves His people without the testimony of His love.

This portion of the history is very remarkable. God brings forward the thoughts and the fears of the leaders of the people, in order that we may know them; but everything is absolutely in His own hands; and the malice of man, treachery, and the power of Satan, when working in the most energetic manner (never had they been so active), only accomplish the purposes of God for the glory of Christ. Before the treachery of Judas, He has the testimony of Mary's affection. God puts the seal of this affection upon Him who was to be betrayed. And on the other hand, before being forsaken and delivered up, He can testify all His affection for His own, in the institution of the Lord's supper, and at His own last, supper with them. What a beautiful testimony to the interest with which God cares for and comforts His children in the darkest moments of their distress. Remark also in what manner love to Christ finds, amid the darkness that gathers round His path, the light that directs its conduct, and directs it precisely to that which was suitable to the moment. Mary had no prophetic knowledge, but the imminent danger in which the Lord Christ was placed by the hatred of the Jews, stimulates her affection to perform an act which was to be made known wherever the death of Christ and His love for us should be proclaimed in the whole world. This is true intelligency-true guidance in things moral. Her act becomes an occasion of darkness to Judas-it is clothed with the light of divine intelligency by the Lord's own testimony. This love for Christ discerns that which is suitable-apprehends the good and the evil in a just and seasonable manner. It is a good thing to care for the poor. But at that moment the whole mind of God was centered on the sacrifice of Christ. They had always opportunity to relieve the poor, and it was right to do so. To put them in comparison with Jesus at the moment of His sacrifice, was to put them out of their place, and to forget all that was precious to God. Judas, who cared only for money, seized the position according to his own interest. He saw, not the preciousness of Christ, but the desire of the Scribes. His sagacity was of the enemy, as that of Mary was of God. Things advance; Judas arranges with them his plan to deliver up Jesus for money. The thing in fact is settled according to his thoughts and theirs. Nevertheless, it is very remarkable to see here the way in which-if I may it speak-God Himself governs the position. Although it is the moment when the malice of man is at its height, and when the power of Satan is exerted to the utmost, yet all is accomplished exactly at the moment, in the manner, by the instruments, chosen of God. Nothing, not the least thing, escapes Him. Nothing is accomplished but that which He wills, and as He wills, and when He wills. What consolation for us! and, in the circumstances which we are considering,

what a striking testimony! The Holy Ghost has, therefore, reported the desire (easy to be understood), of the chief priests and scribes, to avoid the occasion of the feast. Useless desire! This sacrifice was to be accomplished at that time: and it is accomplished.

But the time drew near for the last feast of the Passover that took place during the life of Jesus—the one in which He was Himself to be the Lamb, and leave no memorial to faith except that of Himself and of His work. He therefore sends His disciples to prepare all that was needed to keep the feast. In the evening He sits with His disciples, to converse with them, and to testify His love for them as their companion, for the last time. But it is to tell them (for He must suffer everything) that one of them should betray Him. At least the heart of each one of the eleven answered, full of grief at the thought. So should one have done who was eating from the same dish with Him; but, woe to that man! Yet neither the thought of such iniquity, nor the sorrow of His own heart, could stop the outflowing of the love of Christ. He gives them pledges of this love in the Lord's supper. It was Himself, His sacrifice, and not a temporal deliverance that they were henceforth to remember. All was now absorbed in Him, and in Him dying on the cross. Afterward, in giving them the cup, He lays the foundation of the New Covenant in His blood (in a figure), giving it to them as participation in His death—true draft of life. When they had all drank of it, He announces to them that it is the seal of the New Covenant; a thing well known to the Jews, according to Jeremiah; adding that it was shed for many. Death was to come in, for the establishment of the New Covenant, and for the ransom of many. For this, death was necessary, and the bonds of earthly association between Jesus and His disciples were dissolved. He would drink no more of the fruit of the vine (the token of that connection) until in another way He should renew this association with them in the kingdom of God. When the kingdom should be established, He would again be with them, and would renew these bonds of association; in another form, and in a more excellent way no doubt, yet really. But now, all was changing. They sing, and go out, repairing to the accustomed place in the Mount of Olives.

The connection of Jesus with His disciples here below, should indeed be broken, but it would not be by His forsaking them. He strengthened or at least He manifested the sentiments of His heart, and the strength (on His part) of these bonds, in His last supper with them. But they would be offended at His position, and would forsake Him. Nevertheless, the hand of God was in all this. He would smite the Shepherd. But when once raised from the dead, Jesus would resume His relationship with His disciples, with the poor of the flock. He would go before them to the place where this relationship commenced, to Galilee, afar from the pride of the nation, where the light had appeared among them according to the word of God.

Death was before Him. He must pass through it, in order that any relationship whatsoever between God and man might be established. The Shepherd should be smitten by the Lord of Hosts; death was the judgment of God. Could man sustain it? There was but One who could. But the depth of man's wretchedness and estrangement from God made him insensible to it, in proportion to its depth. Peter, loving Christ too well to forsake Him in heart, enters so far into the path of death as to draw back again, thus giving a testimony all the more striking to his own inability to traverse the abyss that opened before his eyes in the person of his disowned Master. After all, to Peter it was but the outside of what death is. The weakness that his fears occasioned, made him unable to look into the abyss which sin has opened before our feet. At the moment when Jesus announces it, he undertakes to face all that was coming. Sincere in his affection, he knew not what man was laid

bare before God, and in the presence of the power of the enemy who has death for his weapon. He had trembled already-but the sight of Jesus which inspires affection, does not say that the flesh which prevents our glorifying Him is, in a practical sense, dead. Moreover, he knew nothing of this truth. It is the death of Christ which has brought our condition out into full light, while ministering its only remedy. Death, and life in resurrection. Like the ark in Jordan, He went down into it alone, that His redeemed people might pass through dryshod. They had not passed this way before.

Jesus approaches the end of His trial, a trial which only brought out His perfection and His glory, and at the same time glorified God His Father-but, a trial which spared Him nothing that would have had power to stop Him, if anything could have done so, and which went on even unto death, and unto the burthen of the wrath of God in that death.

He approaches the conflict and the suffering, not with the lightness of Peter, who plunged into it because he was ignorant of its nature, but with full knowledge; placing Himself in the presence of His Father, where all is weighed, and where the will of Him who laid this task upon Him is clearly stated in His communion with Him; so that Jesus accomplishes it, even as God Himself looked upon it, according to the extent and the intention of His thoughts and of His nature, and in perfect obedience to His will.

Jesus goes forward alone, to pray. And, morally, He passes through the whole compass of His sufferings, realizing all their bitterness, in communion with His Father. Having them before His own eyes, He brings them before His Father's heart, in order that if it were possible, this cup might pass from Him. If not, it should at least be from His Father's hand that He received it. This was the piety on account of which He was heard and His prayers ascended up on high. He is there as a man - glad to have his disciples watch with Him against men, glad to isolate Himself and pour out his heart into the bosom of His Father, in the dependent condition of a man who prays. What a spectacle!

Peter, who would die for his Master, is not able even to watch with Him. The Lord meekly sets his inconsistency before him, acknowledging that his spirit, indeed, was full of good will, but that the flesh was worthless in conflict with the enemy and in spiritual trial.

The narrative of Mark, which passes so rapidly from one circumstance that displays the whole moral condition of the men with whom Jesus was associated) to another, in such a manner as to place all these events in connection with each other-is as touching as the development of the details found in the other gospels. A moral character is imprinted on every step we take in the history, giving it, as a whole, an interest that nothing could surpass, excepting that which is above all things, above all thoughts, save that only One, the person of Him who is here before us. He, at least, watched with His Father -for, after all, dependent as He was, by grace, what could man do for Him? Completely man as He was, He had to lean on One alone, and thus was the perfect man.

He awakens His disciples, for the hour was come in which they could do no more for Him. Judas comes with his kiss. Jesus submits. Peter, who slept during the earnest prayer of his Master, awakes to strike when his Master yields Himself as a lamb to the slaughter. He smites one of the assistants and cuts off his ear. Jesus reasons with those who were come to take Him, reminding them that when He was constantly exposed to their power they had laid no hands upon Him; but there was a very different reason for its now taking place-the counsels of God and the word of God

must be fulfilled. It was the faithful accomplishment of the service committed to Him. All forsake Him; for who besides Himself could follow this path to the end. One young man indeed sought to go farther, but as soon as the officers of justice laid hold of him, seizing his linen garment, He fled and left it in their hands. Apart from the power of the Holy Ghost, the farther one ventures into the path in which the power of the world and of death is found, the greater the shame with which one escapes, if God permits escape. He fled from them naked.

The witnesses fail, not in malice but in certainty of testimony-even as force could do nothing against Him until the moment God had appointed. The confession of Christ, His faithfulness in declaring the truth in the congregation, is the means of His condemnation'. Man can do nothing-although he did everything, as regards his will and his guilt. The testimony of His enemies, the affection of His disciples, everything fails: this is man. It is Jesus who bears witness to the truth, it is Jesus who watches with the Father, Jesus who yields Himself to those who were never able to take Him until the hour came that God had appointed. Poor Peter! he went farther than the young man in the garden, and we find him here, the flesh in the place of testimony, in the place where this testimony is to be rendered before the power of its opposer and of his instruments. Alas! he will not escape. The word of Christ shall be true, if that of Peter is false; His heart faithful and full of love, if that of Peter (alas! like all ours) is unfaithful and cowardly. He confesses the truth, and Peter denies it. Nevertheless, the grace of our blessed Lord does not fail him; and, touched by it, he hides his face and weeps.

The word of the prophet has now again to be fulfilled. He shall be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. There, He is accused of being a king, the confession of which must assuredly cause His death. But it was the truth.

The confession that Jesus had made before the priests, relates-as we have seen in other cases in this gospel-to His connection with Israel. His service was to preach in the congregation of Israel. He had indeed presented Himself as King, as Emmanuel. He now confesses that which He is to Israel, the hope of the people, and which hereafter He will be. "Art Thou," had the high priest said, "the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" That was the title, the glorious position of Him who was the hope of Israel, according to Psa. 2 But He adds that which He shall be, that is to say, the character He would assume, being rejected by this people, that in which he would present Himself to the rebellious people; it should be that of Psa. 8 and 110, and also Dan. 7, with its results. That is to say, the Son of man at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Psa. 8 only presents Him in a general manner. It is Psa. 110 and Dan. 7 which speak of the Messiah in that particular manner, according to which Christ here announces Himself. The blasphemy which the high priest attributed to Him, was only the rejection of His person. For that which He said was written in the Word.

Before Pilate, He only witnesses a good confession, a testimony to the truth where the glory of God required it, and where this testimony stood opposed to the power of the adversary. To all the rest He answers nothing. He lets them go on-and the evangelist enters into no details. To render this testimony was the last service and duty he had to perform. It is rendered. The Jews make choice of the seditious murderer Barabbas, and Pilate-hearkening to the voice of the multitude, won over by the chief priests-delivers Jesus to be crucified. The Lord submits to the insults of the soldiers, who mingle the pride and insolence of their class with the hard-heartedness of the

executioner, whose function they performed. Sad specimens of our nature. The Christ who came to save them was, for the moment, under their power. He used his own power, not to save Himself but to deliver others from that of the enemy. At length they lead Him away to Golgotha to crucify Him. There they offer Him a soporific mixture, which He refuses; and they crucify Him, with two thieves, one on His right hand and the other on His left, thus accomplishing (for it was all they did or could do) everything that was written concerning the Lord. It was now the Jews' and the priests' hour; they had, alas! for them, the desire of their heart. And they make manifest, without knowing it, the glory and perfection of Jesus. The temple could not rise again without being thus cast down; and, as instruments, they established the fact which He had then announced. He saved others and not himself. These are the two parts of the perfection of the death of Christ with reference to man. But whatever might be the thoughts of Christ and His sufferings with regard to men (those dogs, those bulls of Bashan), the work which He had to accomplish contained depths far beyond these outward things. Darkness covered the earth-divine and sympathetic testimony of that which with far deeper gloom covered the soul of Jesus, forsaken of God for sin; but thus displaying, incomparably more than at any other time, His absolute perfection. This passed between Him and His God. Little understood by others, all is between Himself and God; and crying again with a loud voice He gives up the ghost. His service was completed. What more had He to do in a world wherein He only lived to accomplish the will of God. All was finished, and He necessarily departs. I do not speak of physical necessity, for He still retained His strength; but, morally rejected by the world, there was no longer room in it for His mercy towards it; the will of God was by Himself entirely fulfilled. He had drunk in His soul the cup of death and of judgment for sin, there was nothing left Him but the act of dying; and He expires, obedient to the end, in order to commence in another world, whether for His soul separate from the body or in glory, a life where evil could never enter, and where the new man will be perfectly happy in the presence of God.

His service was completed. His obedience had its turn in death-His obedience, and, therefore, His life, as carried on in the midst of sinners. What would a life have meant, in which there was no more obedience to be fulfilled. In dying now His obedience was perfected, and He dies. The way into the Holiest is now opened-the veil is rent from top to bottom. The Gentile centurion confesses in the death of Jesus, the person of the Son of God. Until then, the Messiah and Judaism went together. In His death, Judaism rejects Him, and He is the Savior of the world. The veil no longer conceals God. In this respect, it was all Judaism could do. The manifestation of perfect grace is there for the Gentile who acknowledged - because Jesus gave up His life with a cry that proved the existence of so much strength-that the Prince of Life, the Son of God, was there. Pilate also is astonished that He is already dead. He only believes it when certified of its truth by the centurion. As to faith-far from grace and even from human justice-he did not trouble himself at all on that point.

The death of Jesus did not tear Him from the hearts of those feeble ones who loved Him; who, perhaps, had not been in the conflict, but whom grace had now brought out from their retreat; those pious women who had followed Him and had often ministered to His wants, and Joseph who, although touched in conscience, had not followed Him until now, strengthened by the testimony of the grace and perfection of Jesus. (The integrity of the counselor finding in the circumstances not an occasion of fear, but that which induced Him to declare Himself.) These women and Joseph, are alike occupied about the body of Jesus. This tabernacle of the Son of

God is not left without those services which were due from man to Him who had just quitted it. Moreover, the providence of God, as well as His operation in their hearts, had prepared for all this. The body of Jesus is laid in the tomb, and they all wait for the end of the Sabbath, to perform their service to it. The women had taken knowledge of the place.

The last chapter is divided into two parts-a fact which has even given rise to questions as to the authenticity of verses 9-20. The first part of the chapter, from verse 1 to 8, relates the end of the history, in connection with the re-establishment of that which has always been before us in this Gospel-the relationship of the Prophet of Israel, and of the kingdom, with the people; or, at least, with the remnant of the chosen people. The disciples and Peter, whom he acknowledges in spite of his denial of his Master, were to go and meet Him in Galilee, as He had said unto them. There the connection was reestablished between Jesus in resurrection and the poor of the flock who waited for Him. They alone being now recognized as the people before God. The women say nothing to any others. The testimony of Christ risen was committed only to His disciples, to these despised Galileans. Fear was the means employed by the providence of God, to prevent the women speaking of it as they would naturally have done.

Ver. 9-20. This is another testimony. The disciples do not appear here as an elect remnant, but in the unbelief natural to man. The message is sent to the whole world. Mary Magdalene, formerly possessed by seven devils, the absolute slave of that dreadful power, is employed to communicate the knowledge of His resurrection to the companions of Jesus. Afterward Jesus Himself appears to them, and gives them their commission. He tells them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. It is no longer specifically the Gospel of the kingdom. Whosoever, throughout the world, believed and joined Christ by baptism, should be saved. He who believed not should be condemned. It was a question of salvation or condemnation. The believer saved; he who refused the message, condemned. Moreover, if any one was convinced of the truth, but refused to unite with the disciples by confessing the Lord, his case would be so much the worse. Therefore it is said, " he who believes and is baptized." Signs of power should accompany believers, and they should be preserved from that of the enemy.

The first sign should be their dominion over evil spirits; the second, the proof of that grace which went beyond the narrow limits of Israel, addressing itself to all the world-they should speak divers languages.

Besides this, with respect to the power of the enemy manifested in doing harm, the venom of serpents, and poisons, should have no effect upon them, and diseases should yield to their authority.

In a word, it should be the overthrow of the power of the enemy over man, and the proclamation of grace unto all men.

Having thus given them their commission, Jesus ascends to heaven, and sits at the right hand of God; the place from which this power shall come forth to bless, and from which He will return to put the poor of the flock in possession of the kingdom. Meanwhile, the disciples occupy His place, extending their sphere of service unto the ends of the earth; and the Lord confirms their word by the signs that follow them.

It may, perhaps, be thought that I have dwelt little on the sufferings of Christ in that which I have written on Mark. Never will this subject be exhausted; it is as vast as the person and the work of Christ must be; blessed be God for it! But I follow the order of thought which the Gospel sets before me, and it appears to me that with regard to the crucifixion of Christ, it is the accomplishment of His service that the evangelist has in view. His great subject was the prophet. He must needs relate His history unto the end, and we possess in a brief narrative a very complete picture of the events that mark the end of the Lord's life-of that which He had to fulfill as the servant of His Father. I have followed this order of the Gospel.

## Matthew

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In pursuing these Scripture studies, it is with a certain kind of fear that I approach the New Testament, great as may be the blessing attendant on so doing. The concentration of divine light in this precious gift of God; the immense reach of the truths contained in it; the infinite variety of the aspects and true applications of one and the same passage, and of its relations with the whole circle of divine truths; the immense importance of these truths, whether considered in themselves, or with reference to the glory of God, or in relation to the need of man; the manner in which they reveal God, and meet that need:-all these considerations, which I can but imperfectly express, would cause any humble-minded person to retire from the pretension of giving a true and (in principle) adequate idea of the purpose of the Holy Ghost in the books of the New Testament. And the more is truth itself revealed, the more true light shines, the more one's incapacity to speak of it must be felt, and the more one must fear to darken that which is perfect. The more pure the truth is with which we have to do-and here it is truth itself-the more difficult it is to endeavor to lay it before others, without in some respect injuring its purity; and the more fatal also is this injury. In meditating on such or such a passage, we may communicate the measure of light granted us for the profit of others. But in attempting to give an idea of the book as a whole, all the perfection of the truth itself, and the universality of the purpose of God in the revelation He has made of it, present themselves to the mind; and one trembles at the thought of undertaking to give a true and general idea, if it be not a complete one, which no really Christian person would pretend to do.

The Old Testament may perhaps appear more difficult to some persons than the New, and with respect to the interpretation of certain isolated passages, it may be so; but although the inspired writers of that part of Scripture reveal the mind of God as communicated to them by Him, and we can admire the wisdom there unfolded; yet God himself was still hidden behind the veil. We may mistake or overlook the meaning of an expression, and we suffer loss, for it was God who spoke; but in the New Testament it is God Himself, meek, gentle, human, on earth, in the Gospels; instructing with divine light in the subsequent communications of the Holy Ghost; yet still God, who manifests Himself. But if the light is brighter both for our personal guidance and for the knowledge of Himself, it becomes a yet more serious thing to misinterpret these living communications, or to disguise, by our own thoughts, that which is the truth itself. For we must remember that Christ is The Truth. He is the Word. It is God who speaks in the person of the Son, who, being man, manifests also the Father.

As regards even interpretation itself, even the truth, the light, eternal life, being in that which is revealed to us in the New Testament, it may be looked at in so many aspects, that the practical difficulty is much greater. For this truth may be looked at in its intrinsic and essential value, we may view it as the manifestation of the eternal nature of God, or in its manifestation with respect to the glory of the Son. We may examine its connections and its contrasts with the partial communications of the Old Testament, which it fulfills and eclipses by its own brightness, with the economy of earthly government, which it set aside, in order to introduce that which is eternal and heavenly. It may be viewed in its relations to man, for the life was the light of men, God having

been pleased to manifest and to glorify Himself in man, to make Himself known to man, and to constitute him the means of the revelation of Himself to his other intelligent creatures. On every passage there would be some thing to say with respect to each of these aspects; for the truth is one, even as it, is of God, but it shines on all things, and displays their true character.

Two things, however, encourage me. First, that we have to do with a God of perfect goodness, who has given us these wondrous revelations that we may profit by them. And in the second place, that although the source of truth is infinite and perfect, although these revelations flow from the fullness of truth in God, and its communication to us is perfect, after the perfection of Him that made it, nevertheless, it is made by means of divers instruments, in themselves of a limited capacity, of which God makes use in communicating this or that portion of truth to us. This pure and living water has been in no wise corrupted; but in each communication it has been limited by the purpose of God, in the instrument used by Him to dispense it; while still in connection with the whole, according to the perfect wisdom of Him who has communicated all truth. The channel is not infinite. The water which flows through it is infinite, but not infinite in its communication. They prophesied in part, and we know in part. The aspect and the application of truth has even an especial character, according to the vessel through which it is communicated. The living water is there in its perfect pureness. As it exists in its source, so it gushes forth: the form of the fountain through which it flows before men, is according to His wisdom who has formed it to be His instrument for that purpose. The Holy Ghost acts in man, in the vessel thereunto prepared. God had created, formed, fashioned, and adapted it morally and intellectually, for such and such a service in respect to the truth. He acts in the vessel, according to the object for which He has prepared it. Christ was and is the truth. Others have communicated it, each one according to that given him, and in connection with those elements with which God had brought his mind and heart into unison, and with that object for which the Holy Ghost had thus prepared him.

Leaving, therefore, my fears behind, I address myself confidently to the accomplishment of this service, my heart resting on the perfect goodness of God, who delights to bless us. May the just sense of my responsibility prevent my hazarding anything not according to God; and may the Lord Himself, in His grace, deign to direct me, and furnish me with that which shall be a blessing to the reader.

The New Testament has evidently a very different character from the Old. That which I have already remarked constitutes the essence of this difference. The New Testament treats of the revelation of God Himself. Formerly, God had made promises, and He had executed judgments. He had governed a people on earth, and acted towards the nations with an eye to this people. He had given them His law, and bestowed on them, by means of the prophets, a growing light, which announced as nearer and nearer His coming, who should tell them all things from God. But the presence of God Himself, a man amongst men, changed the position of everything. Either man must receive, as a crown of blessing and of glory, the One whose presence was to banish all evil, and develop and perfect every element of good, furnishing, at the same time, an object which should be the center of all affections, rendered perfectly happy by the enjoyment of this object, or, by rejecting Him, our poor nature must manifest itself as being enmity against God, and must prove the necessity for a completely new order of things, in which the happiness of man and the glory of God should be based upon a new creation.

We know what happened. He who was the image of the invisible God, had to say, after the exercise of a perfect patience, " Righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." Alas! yet more than that, He had to say. " They have seen and hated both me and my Father."

Nevertheless, this condition of man has in no wise prevented God from fulfilling His counsels. On the contrary, it became the occasion of His so doing. He would not reject man until man had rejected Him. (As in the garden of Eden, man, conscious of sin, being unable to bear the presence of God, withdrew from Him, before God had driven him out of the garden.) But now that man, on his part, had entirely rejected God, come in mercy into the midst of his misery, God was free-if one may venture to speak thus, and the expression is morally correct-to carry out His eternal purposes. But it is not judgment that is carried into effect, as was the case in Eden, when man had already departed from God. It is sovereign grace which, when man is evidently lost, and has declared himself the enemy of God, carries on its work to magnify His glory, before the whole universe, in the salvation of poor sinners who had rejected Him.

But in order that the perfect wisdom -of God should be manifested, even in the details, this work of sovereign grace, in which God revealed Himself, must be seen as co-ordinate with all his previous dealings revealed in the Old Testament, and also as leaving its full place to His government of the world.

All this is the cause that (apart from the one great idea which reigns throughout there are four subjects in this wonderful book, which unfold themselves to the eye of faith.

The great subject, the dominant fact, is, that the perfect light is manifested. God reveals Himself.

Christ, who is the manifestation of this light, who, if He had been received, would have been the fulfillment of all the promises, is then presented to man, and especially to Israel (looked at in their responsibility), with every proof personal, moral, and of power, proofs which left them without excuse.

Being rejected (a rejection by means of which' salvation was accomplished), the new order of things-the new creation-man glorified, the Church sharing with Christ in heavenly glory, is put before us.

Afterward, the connection between the old order of things upon earth, and the new, with respect to the law, the promises, the prophets, or the divine institutions on earth, is set forth; whether in exhibiting the new as the fulfillment and setting aside of that which had grown old, or in stating the contrast between the two, and the perfect wisdom of God, which is demonstrated in every detail of His ways.

Finally, the government of the world, on the part of God, is prophetically displayed; and the renewal of God's relations with Israel, whether in judgment or in blessing, is briefly but plainly stated, on the occasion of the rupture of those relations by the rejection of the Messiah.

It may be added, that everything necessary for man, as a pilgrim on earth, until God shall accomplish in power the purposes of His grace, is abundantly supplied. Come forth, at the call of God, from that which is rejected and condemned, and not yet in possession of the portion that God has prepared for him, the man who has obeyed this call needs something to direct him, and to reveal the sources of the strength he requires in walking towards the object of his vocation, and

the means by which he can appropriate this strength. God, in calling him to follow a Master whom the world has rejected, has not failed to supply him with all the light and all the directions needed to guide and encourage him on his way.

Every reader of the Bible will understand that these subjects are not treated methodically and separately in the New Testament. Were it so, they would be much less perfectly understood. It is in life and in power, whether that of Christ or that of the Holy Ghost in the inspired writers, that they develop themselves to our hearts.

The Gospels in general set Christ before us as light and grace, presented to men in this world, as well as the One in whom the promises made to Israel would be accomplished. The Revelation, -the government, on God's part, of this world, in reference to the responsibility under which its relations to a revealed God have placed it. The writings of Paul, -the new creation, and the church according to the counsels of God, the mystery of God. These various subjects are, however, found everywhere (except the Church, the body of Christ, which, in the Epistles, is only found in Paul's writings), and each separate development of one of these subjects, throws light upon all the rest. The writings of John, we may add, treat particularly of the manifestation of God, and of the divine life in man, as corresponding to one another. Those of Peter, -of the Christian's pilgrimage, founded on resurrection, and of the moral government of the world. But, I repeat it, whether in the person of Christ or in the communications of the Holy Ghost (His life, being, in one way or other, the light of men), the truth shines out in the living manifestation of God, and in its living application to men; and also, according to the wisdom of God, it is connected with the progressive development inherent to truth when communicated to man, and adapted to the especial wants and to the spiritual capacities of the men to whom it was addressed.

No doubt the revelations of the New Testament are for the Church in all ages; but they were addressed, speaking historically, to living men, and adapted to their condition. But this circumstance weakens in no manner the truth communicated: it is of God, even as the Apostle expresses it, " We are not as many which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ." And again, "Not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." He adds nothing to this pure wine, he does not adulterate it. That which he received, flows from him as pure as he received it.

But the Word of God, addressed to men, has even greater reality; it is more immediately of God. We have not men's ideas with respect to God, nor the reasonings of men's minds even with truth for their subject; nor is it even truth, as it is in God, submitted abstractedly to the capacity of men that they may judge it. It is God who addresses Himself to man, who speaks to him, who communicates His thoughts as being His own. For if man is to judge them, they are not the words of God, proclaimed as such. " Ye received them," says the apostle, " not as the words of men, but as they were in truth the words of God."

The effect produced on man, which causes him to own the truth and authority of the Word, has been often confounded with a judgment formed by man upon the Word, as upon something submitted to him. Never can the Word thus present itself. It would be denying its own nature; it would be saying, It is not my God who speaks. Can God say that He is not God? If not, He could not speak and say that His Word has not authority in itself.

The Word is adapted to the nature of man: the life is the light of men. There are many things that produce an effect according to the nature of the thing to which they are applied, without their being judged by that thing. It is the case in all chemical action. A medicine is administered to me; I experience its effect. It has this effect according to my nature; thus I am convinced of this effect, and of the power of the medicine. It is not a question of my forming a judgment on the medicine as submitted to my capacity. It is the same thing with the revelation of Christ, save that the wicked will of man opposes and rejects it, so that it becomes a savor of death unto death. The Word of God is never judged when it produces its effect; "it judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Man is subject to it. He does not judge it.

When man has received the Word of truth, which addresses itself to him as such, he is in a condition to understand all its bearings by the help of the Holy Ghost; and, in this case, the circumstances of the persons to whom it was addressed historically, become a means of understanding the intention of the mind of God in that part of the Word which is under consideration. These circumstances, as we have seen, do not at all affect the divine pureness of the Word; but since God speaks to men according to their condition, this condition, as set before us in the Word itself, is a very great assistance in understanding that which is said. This condition itself is only understood by the Word, and by the help of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes it is the effect of the wickedness of the human heart. Sometimes it partly depends on the dispensations of God. Whatever it may be, grace addresses itself to men according to their condition, and according to the faithfulness of God to His promises, and in connection with His ways, which He has already taught them. It is not that (the true light being come) this light is dimmed or lowered to accommodate it to the darkness. Were this done, it would no longer be capable of raising man by delivering him from the condition he is in; but it is so communicated as to be within the reach of men, and able to be applied to their condition. It was this which they needed, it was this which was worthy of God. He alone could do it. And this is applicable to the subjects of which the Lord speaks, and to those spoken of by the Holy Ghost through the apostles. He may address Himself to Jews, converted, but still attached to the Jewish system, in order to bring out the intentions of God (ever faithful to His promises), with regard to this people; as He might also, when raised on high, communicate by His Spirit all the consequences of the union of the church with Himself in the heavenly places, outside all the dealings of God upon the earth. And to those souls that were feeding on worldly elements, contrary to this heavenly elevation, and who did not lay hold, in it, of that which would deliver them from this worldly and carnal tendency-to such He might display the proofs of the evil into which they were falling; and this He might do by means that would bring them into unison with the eternal truths of God, in a manner which, although elementary, would judge this carnal disposition that is found at all times in those who do not rise to the height of God's purposes. Or the Spirit might reveal the truth more simply, in the elevation proper to it. He might dwell upon the essential characteristics of the nature of God, in order to judge all that pretended, under the most plausible forms, to be Christian light, but which sinned against that nature in the most simple things; and thus link the most simple and most immature souls with the most exalted qualities of God Himself, in the essence of His nature.

The understanding (derived from the scriptures themselves, in which these things are found), of the position of those persons to whom they are addressed, is of great use-under the guidance of the Holy Ghost-in apprehending the divine truth contained in them; truth which is absolute, but, by

the grace of God, applied truth, practical truth, realized in the soul by the power of God working in it, and guarding it by means of this truth, from the carnal tendency of the heart to fall into those evils which were the occasion of the Scriptures that speak of them,-truth that comes down to us, whatever our condition may be, not by altering its own character to accommodate itself to us, nor by taking a form according to our condition; but, in order to raise us up to the source from whence it came down, and from which it never separates itself (for the truth communicated to us is ever the truth in God and in Christ), in order to raise us up morally to all the height of its own nature; "which thing is true in Him and in us, because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth." It is the effect of the intervention of Christ, to whom we are united by the Holy Ghost, and who is one with God the Father.

This truth, that the communications of God are adapted to the position of those who, historically received them, brings us into intelligency of all the counsels of God, for He reveals Himself in His authority, His wisdom, and His sovereignty, in these counsels, as He makes Himself known in His nature by the revelation of Himself in Christ. Christ is the center of these counsels, but every family in heaven and earth is ranged under the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Angels, principalities, powers, Jews, Gentiles, everything that is named, shall be placed under His authority; the church being united to Him in His glory. Now, the counsels of God with respect to us are revealed in His Word; and, although God does not speak to us in order to gratify our curiosity, many subjects outside salvation, strictly speaking, which are connected with this supremacy of Christ, are connected also with that which God sets before us for our instruction, as the development of this His dealings here below. Thus, although His intentions with regard to the Jews may, naturally, be much more developed in the Old Testament, yet the connection of their history with the subjects of the New, the historical transition from the old economy to the new, the reconciling the promises made to the Jews, with the universality of the gospel economy, all these subjects must necessarily have a place in the New Testament, if the ways of God are to be known by us. I say, the ways of God; for we have not to think of the Jews only, it is God who acts and who makes Himself known in His dealings. Thus, although the full light displays itself in the New Testament, we find there things addressed to the Jews, and to the disciples who had formed a part of that people, and which reveal the dealings of God towards them. And without these revelations, and if they did not refer to the position of that people, there would be no harmony in the ways of God; at least it would be hidden from us, and would not exist morally. This refers to doctrine, to history (that is, to the presentation of the Messiah), to prophecy, which shows the faithfulness of God, and to the judgment upon that people. In order that we may know God-the God who has condescended to interpose in the affairs of this world- mere light is not enough. He must be known, not only as He -is in His nature, although that is the essential and principal thing, but as He has revealed Himself in the totality of His ways; in those details in which our little narrow hearts can learn His faithful patient condescending love; in those dealings which develop the abstract idea of His wisdom, so as to render it accessible to our limited intelligence, which can trace in it things which have been realized amongst men, although entirely above and beyond all their pre-vision, but which have been declared by God, so that we know them to be of Him. Above all, God has been pleased to connect Himself in a special way with man in all these things: marvelous privilege of His feeble creature! Philosophy, senseless, narrow-minded, and even essentially stupid in its arguments, would have it that the world is too small for God thus to expend Himself on an impotent being like man-on that which is but a mere point in an immense universe. Contemptible folly! As if the

material extent of the theater were the measure of the moral manifestations wrought upon it, and the war of principles which is there brought to an issue. That which takes place in this world, is the spectacle that unfolds to all the intelligences of the universe, the ways and the character and the will of God. It is for us to receive thereby, through grace, understanding and power, that we may enjoy it, and that in us God may be glorified; not only by us, which will be true of all things, but in us. This is our privilege, through the grace that is in Christ, and by our union with Him who is the wisdom of God and the power of God. The more we are as little children, obedient and humble, the more we shall realize this glorious position. Hereafter we shall know as we are known. Meanwhile, the more Christ is objectively our portion and our occupation, the more shall we resemble Him subjectively. Thanks be to God! He has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and has revealed them unto babes. "Howbeit," says the apostle, "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 the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."

Let us now present a general idea of the contents of the New Testament, or rather of the order in which the truths contained in it are revealed.

We need not depart from the order in which the books are usually placed; without, however, attaching any importance to it.

The first subject that presents itself is the history and person of the Lord Jesus Himself, contained in the four gospels.

The second is the establishment of the church, and the propagation of the gospel in the world after His ascension. The history of this is given in the Acts of the Apostles.

Afterward, the development of the true doctrine of Christ; the care bestowed by the apostles on the churches and on individual souls; with the directions necessary for a walk that would glorify the Lord; the refutation of errors by which the enemy sought to corrupt the faith, and the instructions needful to preserve the faithful from the seductions of the instruments of his malice. These subjects, the first especially, include all the personal glory of the Lord. We refer evidently to the contents of the epistles.

In the last place, we find the prophecies, which announce the evil that would tarnish and corrupt the testimony rendered to Christ in the world, and which, when fully developed, would lead to judgment. These prophecies reveal also the progress of God's judgments, which will end with the destruction of those enemies who will dare to rebel openly against the Lamb, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; and likewise the glory and blessing which will succeed those judgments. This last subject links Christian teaching with the revelation of the ways of God as to the government of the world. It is largely developed in the Revelation; but in divers epistles its connection with the decay of the church is exhibited.

We shall naturally begin with the gospels which give us the history of the Lord's life, and present Him to our hearts, whether by His actions or by His discourses, in the various characters which make Him precious in every way to the souls of the redeemed, according to the measure of intelligence bestowed on them, and according to their need: characters which together form the plenitude of His personal glory, so far as we are capable of apprehending it here below in these

our earthen vessels.

It is evident, that, according to the counsels of God, and according to the revelations of His Word, the Lord must unite in Himself more than one character on earth, for the accomplishment of His glory, and for the maintenance and manifestation of the glory of His Father. But, that this might take place, He must also be something that He might be viewed in the light of His real nature, as walking down here. He must needs accomplish the service which it behooved Him to render to God, as being Himself the true servant; and that, as serving God by the Word, in the midst of His people, according to Psa. 40 for instance, ver. 8, 9, 10. Isa. 49:4,5; and many other passages.

A multitude of testimonies had announced that the Son of David should sit, on the part of God, on His Father's throne; and the accomplishment of God's counsels with regard to His earthly people, is linked in the Old Testament with Him who should thus come; and who on earth should stand in the relation of Son of God, to the Lord God.

The Christ, the Messiah, or, which is but the same word translated, the Anointed, was to come and present Himself to Israel, according to the revelation and the counsels of God.

But this character of Messiah, although the expectation of the Jews scarcely went beyond it-and even that they looked at in their own way, merely as the exaltation of their own nation, having no sense of their sins or of the consequences of their sins-this character of Messiah was not all that the prophetic word, which declared the counsels of God, had announced with respect to the One whom even the world was expecting.

He was to be the Son of Man-a title which the Lord Jesus loves to give himself-a title of great importance to us. It appears to me, that the Son of Man is, according to the Word, the heir of all that the counsels of God destined for man as his portion in glory, all that God would bestow on man according to those counsels (see Dan. 7:13,14; and Psa. 8:5,6). But in order to be the heir of all that God destined for man, He must be a man. The Son of man was truly of the race of man -precious and comforting truth! born of a woman, really and truly a man, and, partaking of flesh and blood, made like unto His brethren.

In this character he was to suffer, and be rejected; that he might inherit all things, He was to die, and to rise again; the inheritance being defiled, and man being in rebellion: the co-heirs as guilty as the rest.

He was then to be the servant, the Son of David, and the Son of Man, and therefore truly a man on the earth, born under the law, born of a woman, of the seed of David, heir to the rights of David's family, heir to the destinies of man, according to the purpose and the counsels of God.

But who was to be all this? Was it only an official glory which the Old Testament had said a man was to inherit? The condition of men, manifested under the law, and without law, proved the impossibility of making them partakers of the blessing of God as they were. The rejection of Christ was the crowning proof of this condition. And in fact, man needed above all to be himself reconciled to God, apart from all dispensation and special government of an earthly people. Man had sinned, and redemption was necessary, for the glory of God and the salvation of men. Who could accomplish it? Man needed it himself. An angel had to keep and fill his own place and could do no more; he could not be a Savior. And who among men could be the heir of all things, and

have all the works of God put under his dominion, according to the Word? It was the Son of God who should inherit them. It was their Creator who should possess them. He then who was to be the Servant, the Son of David, the Son of Man, the Redeemer, was the Son of God, God the Creator.

The gospels, in general, develop these characters of Christ,-not in a dogmatic manner, that of John alone having, to a certain degree, that form; but by so relating the history of the Lord, as to present Him in these different characters, in a much more living way than if it were only set before us in doctrine. The Lord speaks according to such or such a character, He acts in the one or in the other, so that we see Him Himself accomplishing that which belonged to the different positions that we know to be His according to scripture.

Thus, not only is the character much better known in its moral details, according to its true scriptural import, as well as the meaning and purpose of God therein revealed, but Christ Himself becomes in these characters more personally the object of faith, and of the heart's affections. It is a person whom we know, and not merely a doctrine. By this precious means which God has deigned to use, truths with respect to Jesus are much more connected with all that went before, with the Old Testament history. The change in God's dealings is linked with the glory of the person of Christ, in connection with which, this transition from God's relations with Israel and the world to the heavenly and Christian order took place. This heavenly system, while possessing a character more entirely distinct from Judaism, than would have been the case if the Lord had not come, is not a doctrine that nullifies by contradicting that which preceded it. When Christ came, He presented Himself to the Jews as, on the one hand, subject to the law, and on the other, as the seed in whom the promises were to be fulfilled. He was rejected; so that this people forfeited all right 'to the promises. God could then bring in the fullness of His grace. At the same time, the types, the figures, had their accomplishment. The curse of the law was executed. The prophecies that related • to the humiliation of Christ were fulfilled; and the relations of all souls with God-always necessarily attached to His person, when once he had appeared--were connected with the position taken by the Redeemer in heaven. Thence, the door opened to the Gentiles, and the purpose of God with respect to a church, the body of the ascended Christ, fully revealed. Son of David, according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from among the dead; He was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His, mercy; He was the first-born from the dead, the head of His body, the church; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.

The glory of the new order of things was so much the more excellent, so much the more exalted above all the earthly order that had preceded it, that it was attached to the person of the Lord Himself, and to Him glorified in the presence of God His Father. And at the same time that which took place put its seal upon all that had preceded it, as having had its true place, and having been ordained of God; for the Lord presented Himself on earth in connection with the system that existed before he came.

Let us now consider the Gospel by St. Matthew. This gospel sets Christ before us in the character of the Son of David and of Abraham, that is to say, in connection with the promises made to Israel. It is He who, being received, should have accomplished them (and hereafter He will do so), in

favor of this beloved people. This gospel is, in fact, the history of His rejection by the people, and, consequently, that of the condemnation of the people themselves, so far as their responsibility was concerned, for the counsels of God cannot fail.

In proportion as the character of the King and of the kingdom develops itself, and arouses the attention of the leaders of the people, they oppose it, and deprive themselves, as well as the people who follow them, of all the blessings connected with the presence of the Messiah. The Lord declares to them the consequences of this, and spews his disciples the position of the kingdom which should be set up in the earth after His rejection, and the glories in general which should result from it to Himself and to His people with Him. And, as far as regards His person, the foundation of the church even is revealed.

At length, after His resurrection, a new commission, addressed to all nations, is given to the apostles in virtue of the exaltation of Jesus.

The object of the Spirit of God, in this gospel, being to present the Lord as fulfilling the promises made to Israel, and the prophecies that relate to the Messiah, He commences with the genealogy of the Lord, starting from David and Abraham, the two stocks from which the messianic genealogy sprang, and to which the promises had been made. The genealogy is divided into three periods, conformably to three great divisions of the history of the people: from Abraham to the establishment of royalty; from the establishment of royalty, in the person of David, to the captivity; and from the captivity to Jesus.

We may observe that the Holy Ghost mentions, in this genealogy, the grievous sins committed by the persons whose names are given, magnifying the sovereign grace of God, who could bestow a Savior in connection with such sins as those of Judah, with a poor Moabitess brought in amidst His people, and with crimes like those of David.

It is the legal genealogy that is given here, that is to say, the genealogy of Joseph, of whom Christ was the rightful heir, according to Jewish law. The evangelist has omitted three kings of the parentage of Ahab, in order to have the fourteen generations in each period. Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim are also omitted. The genealogy is not at all affected by this circumstance.

The evangelist briefly relates the facts concerning the birth of Jesus,-facts which are of infinite and eternal importance, not only to the Jews, who were immediately interested in them, but to ourselves, facts in which God has deigned to link his own glory with our interests, with man.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph; her posterity was consequently that of Joseph, as to rights of inheritance, but the child she carried in her womb was of divine origin, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. The angel of the Lord is sent, as the instrument of Providence, to satisfy the tender conscience and upright heart of Joseph, by communicating to him that that which Mary had conceived, was of the Holy Ghost.

We may remark here, that the angel, on this occasion, addresses Joseph as "Son of David." The Holy Ghost thus draws our attention to the relationship of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, to David; Mary being called his wife. The angel gives at the same time the name of Jesus, i.e. Jehovah the Savior, to the child that should be born. He applies this name to the deliverance of Israel from the condition into which sin had plunged them. All these circumstances happened, in

order to fulfill that which the Lord had said by the mouth of His prophet, "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us."

Here then is that which the Spirit of God sets before us in these few verses. Jesus, the Son of David, conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; Jehovah, the Savior, who delivers Israel from their sins; God with them; He who accomplished those marvelous prophecies which, more or less plainly, drew the outline that the Lord Jesus alone could fill up.

Joseph, a just man, simple in heart and obedient, discerns without difficulty the revelation of the Lord and obeys it.

But, already, how wonderful this revelation of Him by whom the words and promises of the Lord were to be fulfilled; what a ground-work of truth for the understanding of what this glorious and mysterious person was, of whom the Old Testament had said enough to awaken the desires and to confound the minds of the people to whom He was given.

Born of a woman, born under the law, heir to all the rights of David according to the flesh, also the Son of God, Jehovah the Savior, God with His people. Who could comprehend or fathom the mystery of His nature in whom all these things were combined! His life, in fact, as we shall see, displays the obedience of the perfect man, the perfections and the power of God.

The titles which we have just named, and which we read in chap. 1:20, 23, are connected with His glory in the midst of Israel. That is to say, the heir of David, Jesus the Savior of His people, and Emmanuel. His birth, of the Holy Ghost, accomplished (Psa. 2:7) with regard to Him as a man born on the earth. The name of Jesus, and His conception by the power of the Holy Ghost, no doubt go beyond this, but are linked also in an especial manner with His position in Israel.

Chapter 2 Thus born, thus characterized by the angel, and fulfilling the prophecies that announced the presence of Emmanuel, He is formally acknowledged King of the Jews by the Gentiles, who are guided by the will of God acting on the hearts of their wise men. That is to say, we find the Lord, Emmanuel, the Son of David, Jehovah the Savior the Son of God, born King of the Jews, recognized by the heads of the Gentiles. This is the testimony of God in Matthew's gospel, and the character in which Jesus is there presented. Afterward, in the presence of Jesus thus revealed, we see the leaders of the Jews, in connection with a foreign king, knowing, however, as a system, the revelations of God in His word, but wholly indifferent to Him who was their object; and this king, the fierce enemy of the Lord, the true King and Messiah, seeking to put Him to death.

The providence of God watches over the child born unto Israel, employing means that leave the responsibility of the nation its full place; and that accomplish at the same time all the intentions of God with regard to this only true remnant of Israel, this only true source of hope for the people. For, out of Him, all would fall, and suffer the consequences of being connected with the people.

Gone down into Egypt to avoid the cruel design of Herod to take away His life, He becomes the true Branch, He recommences, i.e. morally, the history of Israel in His own person; as well as (in a wider sense) the history of man, as the second Adam in relation with God. It is not only the prophecy of Hosea which thus applies to this true beginning of Israel in grace (as the beloved of God), and according to His counsels; the people having entirely failed, so that without this, God

must have cut them off. We have seen in Isaiah, Israel the servant giving place to Christ the servant, who gathers a faithful remnant (the children whom God has given Him while He hides His face from the house of Jacob), that become the nucleus of the new nation of Israel according to God. The 49th chapter of that prophet gives this transition from Israel to Christ, in a striking manner. Moreover, this is the basis of all the history of Israel, looked at as having failed under the law, and being re-established in grace. Christ is, morally, the new stock from which they spring (compare Isa. 49:3,5\*).

(\* In ver. 5, Christ assumes this title of Servant.)

Herod being dead, God makes it known to Joseph, in a dream, commanding him to return, with the young child and its mother, into the land of Israel. We should remark, that the land is here mentioned by the name that recalls the privileges bestowed by God. It is neither Judea nor Galilee; it is the land of Israel. But, can the son of David, in entering it, approach the throne of His fathers? No. He must take the place of a stranger, among the despised of His people. Directed by God, in a dream, Joseph carries Him into Galilee, whose inhabitants were objects of sovereign contempt to the Jews, as not being in habitual connection with Jerusalem and Judea, the land of David, of the kings acknowledged by God, and of the temple, and where even the dialect of the language common to both betrayed their practical separation from that part of the nation who, by the grace of God, had returned to Judea from Babylon.

Even in Galilee, Joseph establishes himself in a place, the very name of which was a reproach to one who dwelt there, and a blot on his reputation.

Such was the position of the Son of God when He came into this world, and such the relations of the Son of David with His people, when, by grace and according to the counsels of God, he stood amongst them. On the one hand, Emmanuel, Jehovah their Savior, on the other, the Son of David; but, while taking His place among His people, associated with the poorest and most despised of the flock, sheltered in Galilee from the iniquity of a false king who, by help of the Gentiles of the fourth monarchy, was reigning in Judea, and with whom the priests and rulers of the people were in connection. The latter, unfaithful to God and dissatisfied with men, proudly detesting a yoke which their sins had brought upon them, and which they dared not shake off, although they were not sufficiently sensible of their sins, to submit to it as the just infliction of God.

Thus is it that the Messiah is presented to us by this Evangelist, or rather by the Holy Ghost, in connection with Israel. We now begin His actual history.

John the Baptist comes to prepare the way of the Lord before Him, according to the prophecy of Isaiah, proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and calling on the people to repent. It is by these three things that John's ministry to Israel is characterized in this Gospel. First, the Lord Jehovah Himself was coming. (The Holy Ghost leaves out the words "for our God," at the end of the verse, because Jesus comes as man, although acknowledged at the same time to be the Lord). In the second place, the kingdom of heaven was at hand,-that new dispensation which was to take the place of the one which, properly speaking, belonged to Sinai, where the Lord had spoken on the earth. In this new dispensation "the heavens should reign." They should be the seat of God's authority in His Christ. Thirdly, the people, instead of being blessed in their present condition, were called to repentance. John, therefore, takes his place in the wilderness, departing

from the Jews, with whom he could not associate himself, because he came in the way of righteousness (21:32). His food is that which he finds in the wilderness. Even his prophetic garments, bearing witness to the position which he had taken on the part of God, being filled with the Holy Ghost.

Thus was he a prophet, for he came from God, and addressed himself to the people of God to call them to repentance, and he proclaimed the blessing of God according to the promises of the Lord their God; but he was more than a prophet, for he declared as an immediate thing the introduction of a new dispensation, long expected, and the advent of the Lord in person. At the same time, although coming to Israel, he did not own the people, for they were to be judged; the threshing-floor of the Lord was to be cleansed; the trees that did not bear good fruit to be cut down. It would be a remnant only that the Lord would place in the new position, in the kingdom that he announced, without its being yet revealed in what manner it was to be established. He proclaimed the judgment of the people.

What a fact of immeasurable greatness was the presence of the Lord in the midst of His people, in the person of him who, although He was doubtless to be the fulfillment of all the promises, was necessarily the Judge of all the evil existing among His people.

And the more we give these passages their true application, that is to say, the more we apply them to Israel, the more we apprehend their real force.

No doubt, repentance is an eternal necessity to every soul that approaches God; but, what a light is thrown upon this truth, when we see the intervention of the Lord Himself, who calls His people to this repentance; setting aside-on their refusal-the whole system of their relations with Him, and establishing a new dispensation, a kingdom which only belongs to those who hear Him, -and causing at length His judgment to break forth against His people and the city which-He had so long cherished. "Oh, if thou hadst hearkened even in this thy day, to the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes."

This truth gives room for the exhibition of another and most highly important one, announced here in connection with the sovereign rights of God, rather than in its consequences, but which already contained in itself all those consequences.

The people in general went out to be baptized, confessing their sins. But those who, in their own eyes, held the chief place among the people, were, in the eyes of the prophet, who loved the people according to God, the objects of the judgment he announced. Wrath was impending. Who had warned these scornful men to flee from it? Let them humble themselves like the rest-let them take their true place, and prove their change of heart. To boast in the privileges of their nation or of their fathers, availed nothing before God. He required that which His very nature, His truth, demanded. Moreover, He was sovereign,-He was able of those stones to raise up children to Abraham. This is what His sovereign grace has done, through Christ, with regard to the Gentiles. There was reality needed. The ax was at the root of the trees, and those that were barren should be cut down. This is the great moral principle which the judgment was going to put in force. The blow was not yet struck, but the ax was already at the root of the trees. John was come to bring those who received His testimony into a new position. On their repentance he would distinguish them from the rest by baptism. But He who was coming after John,-He whose shoes John was not

worthy to bear,-would thoroughly purge His floor, would separate those that were truly His, morally His, from among His people Israel (that was His floor), and would execute judgment on all the rest. John, on his part, opened the door to repentance beforehand; afterward should come the judgment.

Judgment was not the only work that belonged to Jesus. Two things are, however, attributed to Him in John's testimony. He baptizes with fire,-this is the judgment proclaimed in verse 12, which consumes all that is evil. But He baptizes also with the Holy Ghost, -that divine energy in man, which brings him out from the influence of all that acts on the flesh, and sets him in connection and in communion with all that is revealed of God, with the glory into which He brings His creatures by destroying-morally, in us,-all that is contrary to the enjoyment of these privileges.

Observe here, that the only good fruit recognized by John, as the way of escape, is the sincere confession, through grace, of sin. Those only who make this confession escape the ax. There were no really good trees excepting those which confessed that they were bad.

But what a solemn moment was this for the people beloved of God! What an event was the presence of the Lord in the midst of the nation with whom He stood in relation.

Observe that John the Baptist does not here present the Messiah as the Savior come in grace, but as the Head of the kingdom, as Jehovah, who would execute judgment if the people did not repent. We shall see afterward the position which He took in grace.

In verse 13, Jesus Himself; who until now has been presented as the Messiah, and even as Jehovah, comes to. John to be baptized with the baptism of repentance. We must remember that to come to this baptism, was the only good fruit which a Jew-in his then condition,-could produce. The act proved itself to be the fruit of a work of God-of the vital work of the Holy Ghost. He who repents, confesses that he has previously walked afar from God; so that it is a new movement, the fruit of God's work in him,-of a new life, of the life of the Spirit in his soul. By the very fact of John's mission, there was no other fruit, no other admissible proof of life from God, in a Jew. We are not to infer, from this, that there were none in whom the Spirit acted vitally; but, in this condition of the people, and according to the call of God by His servant, that was the proof of this life, of the turning of the heart to God. These were the true remnant of the people, those whom God acknowledged as such,-and it was thus they were separated from the mass, who were ripening for judgment. These were the true saints-the excellent of the earth; although the self-abasement of repentance could be their only true place. It was there they must begin. When God begins in mercy and in justice, they avail themselves thankfully of the former, confessing it to be their only resource, and they bow their heart before the latter, as the just consequence of the condition of God's people.

Now Jesus presents Himself in the midst of those who do this. Although truly the Lord, Jehovah, the righteous Judge of His people, He who was to purge His floor, He nevertheless takes His place among the faithful remnant, who humble themselves before this judgment. He takes the place of the lowest of His people before God. As in the sixteenth Psalm, He calls the Lord, His Lord, saying unto Him, " My goodness extendeth not to Thee;" and to the saints and the excellent in the earth, " all my delight is in them." Perfect testimony of grace-the Savior identifying Himself; according to this grace, with the first movement of the Spirit in the hearts of His own people, humbling Himself not only in the condescension of grace towards them, but in taking His place as one of them in

their true position before God; not merely to comfort their hearts by such kindness, but in order to sympathize, as being really one of them, with all their sorrows and their difficulties; in order to be the pattern, the source, and the perfect expression of every sentiment suitable to their position; and to bring them all into relation with their God according, to the favor which rested on perfectness like His, and on the love which, by taking up His people's cause, satisfied the heart of the Lord, and even made it possible for Him to satisfy Himself with goodness. We know, indeed, that in order to this, the Savior had to lay down His life, because the condition of the Jew, like that of every man, required this sacrifice before either the one or the other could stand in relation with the God of truth. But even for this the love of Jesus did not fail. Here, however, He is leading them to the enjoyment of the blessing which should be securely founded on that sacrifice-blessing which they must reach by the path of repentance, into which they entered by John's baptism; which Jesus received with them, that they might go on together towards the possession of all the good things which the Lord had prepared for them that loved Him.

John, feeling the dignity of the person of Him who came unto him, opposes the Lord's intention. The Holy Ghost by this brings out the true character of the Lord's action. As to Himself; it was righteousness which brought Him there, and not sin. Righteousness which He accomplished in love. He, as well as John the Baptist, fulfilled that which belonged to the place assigned. Him by God. With what condescension He links Himself at the same time with John,—"It becometh us." He is the lowly and obedient servant. It was thus He ever behaved Himself on earth. Moreover, as to His position, grace brought Jesus there, where sin brought us. In confessing sin as it is, in coining before God in our sin, we find ourselves in company with Jesus. This was the case with the poor sinners who came out to John. Thus it was that Jesus took His place in righteousness and obedience among men, and, more exactly, among the repentant Jews. It is in this position of a man righteous, obedient, and fulfilling on earth in perfect humility the work for which He had offered Himself in grace, according to Psa. 40, given Himself up to the accomplishment of all the will of God in complete self-renunciation, that God His Father fully acknowledged. Him and sealed Him, declaring Him on earth to be His well-beloved Son.

Being baptized—that most striking token of the place He had taken with His people, the heavens are opened unto Him, and He sees the Holy Ghost descending on Him like a dove; and lo! a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

But these circumstances demand attention.

Never were the heavens opened to the earth before the beloved Son was there. God had, doubtless, in His long-suffering and in the way of providence, blessed all His creatures; He had also blessed His own people, according to the rules of His government on earth; besides this, there were the elect, whom He had preserved in. faithfulness; nevertheless, until now the heavens had not been opened. A testimony had been sent by God, in connection with His government of the earth, but there was no object on the earth upon which the eye of God could rest with complacency, until Jesus, sinless and obedient, His beloved Son, stood there. As soon as, in grace, He takes this place of humiliation with Israel, i.e., with the faithful remnant, presenting Himself thus before God, flailing His will, the heavens open upon an object worthy of their attention. Ever, doubtless, was He worthy of their adoration, even before the world was. But now He has just taken this place in the dealings of God, and the heavens open unto Jesus, the object

of God's entire affection on the earth. The Holy Ghost descends upon Him visibly. And He, a man on earth, a man taking His place with the meek of the people who repented, is acknowledged as the Son of God. He is not only sealed by God, but as man He is conscious of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, the seal of the Father set upon Him. Here it is evidently not His divine nature in the character of the eternal Son of the Father. The seal would not even be in conformity with that character. While He is such, He is also a man, the Son of God, on the earth, and is sealed as man. As man He has the consciousness of the immediate presence of the Holy Ghost with Him. This presence is in connection with the character of lowliness, meekness, and obedience, in which the Lord appeared down here. It is "like a dove," that the Holy Ghost descends upon Him; just as it was in the form of tongues of fire, that He came down upon the heads of the disciples, for their testimony in power in this world, according to the grace which addressed each and every one in his own language.

Remark also that there is no object presented to Jesus, as to Saul, for instance, and, in a still more analogous case, to Stephen, who, being full of the Spirit, sees the heavens opened. But here, Jesus Himself is the object; and the faith of the believer, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost with which he is filled, refer to Him. Jesus is Himself the object over whom the heavens open; it is His relationship with His Father, already existing, which is sealed. Neither does the Holy Ghost create His character (except so far as, with respect to His human nature, He was conceived in the virgin Mary's womb by the power of the Holy Ghost); He had connected Himself with the poor, in the perfection of that character, before He was sealed. Christ acts according to the energy and the power of that which He received without measure in His human life here below. Compare Acts 10:38.

We find in the Word four memorable occasions on which the heavens open. Christ is the object of each of these revelations; each has its especial character.-Here, the Holy Ghost descends upon Him, and He is acknowledged the Son of God. Compare John 1:33,34. At the end of the same chapter of John, He declares Himself to be the Son of Man. There it is the angels of God who ascend and descend upon Him. He is the object of their ministry. At the end of the seventh chapter of the Acts, an entirely new scene is opened. The Jews reject the last testimony that God sends them. Stephen, by whom this testimony is rendered, is filled with the Holy Ghost, and the heavens are opened to him. The earthly system was definitely closed by the rejection of the Holy Ghost's testimony to the glory of the ascended 'Christ. But this is not merely a testimony. The Christian, a member of the body of Christ, is filled with the Spirit, heaven is opened to him, the glory of God is manifested to him, and the Son of Man appears to him, standing at the right hand of God. This is a different thing from the heavens open to Jesus, the object of God's delight on earth. It is heaven open to the Christian himself when rejected on earth; and he sees there, by the Holy Ghost, the heavenly glory of God, and Jesus, the Son of Man, the special object of his vision, in the glory of God. The difference is as remarkable as it is interesting, to us; and it exhibits in a most striking manner, the true position of the Christian as on earth, and the change which the rejection of Jesus by His earthly people has produced. Only the church, the union of believers in one body with the Lord, in heaven was not yet revealed.

Afterward (Rev. 19) heaven opens, and the Lord Himself comes forth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Thus we see Jesus, the Son of God on earth, the object of Heaven's delight, sealed with the Holy Ghost.

Jesus, the Son of Man, the object of the ministry of heaven, angels being His servants.

Jesus on high at the right hand of God, and the believer, full of the Spirit, and suffering here for His sake, beholding the glory on high, and the Son of Man in the glory.

Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, coming forth to judge and make war against the scornful men who dispute His authority, and oppress the earth.

To return: the Father Himself acknowledges Jesus, the obedient Man on earth, who enters as the true Shepherd by the door, as His beloved Son in whom is all His delight. Heaven is opened to Him, He sees the Holy Ghost come down to seal Him, the infallible strength and support of the perfection of His human life; and He has the Father's own testimony to the relationship between them. No object on which His faith could rest, is presented to Him, as it is to us. It is His own relation to heaven and to His Father which is sealed. His soul enjoys it through the descent of the Holy Ghost and the voice of His Father.

Having thus, if I may so speak, taken up His position as man on earth, He commences His earthly career, being led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The righteous Man, the Son of God, enjoying the spiritual privileges proper to such a one, He must undergo the trial of those devices through which the first Adam fell. It is His spiritual condition which is tested. It is not now an innocent man in the enjoyment of all God's natural blessings, who is put to the proof in the midst of those blessings, which should have made him remember God. Christ, nigh to God as His beloved Son, must have his faithfulness to this position fully tried, with respect to His perfect obedience. To maintain this position, He must have no other will than that of His Father, and fulfill it or suffer it, whatever might be the consequences to Himself. He must fulfill it in the midst of all the difficulties, the privations, the isolation, which might tempt Him to follow an easier path than that appointed for the glory of His Father. He must renounce all the rights that belonged to His own person, excepting as He should receive them from God; yielding them up to Him with a perfect trust.

The enemy did his utmost to induce Him to make use of His privileges for His own relief, in order to bear witness to Himself, or to enjoy that which belonged rightly to Him, apart from the command of God, and in avoidance of the sufferings which might accompany the performance of His will.

Jesus, enjoying in His own person the full favor of God, the light of His countenance, goes into the wilderness for forty days, to be in conflict' with the enemy. He did not go away from man, and from all intercourse with man and the things of man, in order (like Moses and Elias) to be with God. Being already fully with God, He is separate from men by the power of the Holy Ghost, to be alone in His conflict with the enemy. In the case of Moses, it was man out of his natural condition, to be with God. In the case of Jesus, it is so to be with the enemy: to be with God was His natural position, the Son of Man also is in heaven.

The enemy tempts Him first by persuading Him to satisfy His bodily need, and, instead of waiting on God, to employ, according to His own will and on His own behalf, the power with which He was endowed. But, if Israel was fed in the wilderness with manna from God, the Son of God, however

great His power, would act in accordance with what Israel should have learned by that means, namely, that "man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Man, the obedient Jew, the Son of God, waited for this word, and would do nothing without it. He was not come to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. This is the principle that characterizes the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms. No deliverance is accepted but the intervention of Jehovah, at His own good time. It is perfect patience, in order to be perfect and complete in all the will of God.

In the second place, the enemy sets Him on a pinnacle of the temple, to induce Him to apply to Himself the promises made to the Messiah, without abiding in the ways of God. The faithful man may assuredly reckon on the help of God while walking in His ways. The enemy would have the Son of Man put God to the test (instead of reckoning on Him while walking in His ways), to see whether He might be trusted in. This would have been a want of confidence in God, and disobedience, and pride, presuming on its privileges, instead of counting on God in obedience. Jesus, always taking His place with Israel in the wilderness (for there remaineth a rest for the people of God), uses for His guidance that part of the Word which contains the instruction for the wilderness on this subject, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

The enemy, failing to deceive that obedient heart, even by hiding himself under the use of the Word of God, shows himself in his true character, tempting the Lord thirdly to spare Himself all the sufferings that awaited Him, by showing Him the inheritance of the Son of Man on earth, that which would be His, when He had reached it through all those paths, toilsome, yet necessary to the Father's glory, which the Father had marked out for Him. All should now be His, if He would acknowledge Satan by worshipping Him. This, in fact, was what the kings of the earth had done for only a part of these things; but He should have the whole. But if Jesus was to inherit earthly glory (as well as all other), the object of His heart was God Himself, His Father, to glorify Him. Whatever might be the value of the gift, it was as the gift of the Giver that His heart prized it. Moreover, He was in the position of a faithful Israelite; and whatever might be the trial of patience, into which the sin of the people had brought Him, be the trial ever so great, He would serve none but His God alone.

But if the devil carries temptation, sin, to the utmost, and shows himself to be the adversary [Satan], the believer has the right to cast him out. If He comes as a tempter, the believer should answer him by the faithfulness of the Word, which is man's perfect guide, according to the will of God. If he comes as the open adversary of God, the believer has a right to have nothing to do with him.

The believer's safeguard, morally (i.e., as to the state of his heart), is a single eye. If I seek only the glory of God, that which presents no other motive than my own aggrandizement, or my own gratification, whether of body or mind, will have no hold upon me; and will show itself, in the light of the Word, which guides the single eye, as contrary to the mind of God. This is not the haughtiness that rejects temptation on the ground of being good; it is obedience, humbly giving God His place, and, consequently, His Word also. "By the Word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer," from him that did his own will and made it his guide. If the heart seeks God alone, the most subtle snare is discovered, for the enemy never tempts us to seek God alone. But this supposes a pure heart, and that there is no self-seeking. This was displayed in Jesus.

Our safeguard against temptation is the Word, used by the discernment of a perfectly pure heart, which lives in the presence of God, and learns the mind of God in His Word, and therefore knows its application to the circumstances presented. It is the Word that preserves the soul from the wiles of the enemy.

Observe also, that, consequently, it is in this spirit of simple and humble obedience that power lies; for where it exists, Satan can do nothing. God is there, and accordingly the enemy is conquered.

It appears to me that these three temptations are addressed to the Lord in the three characters of man, of Messiah, and of Son of Man.

He had no sinful desires like fallen man, but He was an hungered. The tempter persuades Him to satisfy this need without God.

The promises in the Psalms belonged to Him as being made to the Messiah.

And all the kingdoms of the world were His as the Son of Man.

He always replies as a faithful Israelite, personally responsible to God; making use of the book of Deuteronomy which treats of this subject, namely, the obedience of Israel, in connection with the possession of the land, and the privileges that belonged to the people in connection with this obedience. And this, apart from the organization which constituted them a corporate body before God.

Satan departs from Him, and the angels come to exercise their ministry towards the Messiah, the Son of Man, victorious through obedience.

John being cast into prison, the Lord departs into Galilee. This movement, which determined the scene of His ministry outside Jerusalem and Judea, had great significance with respect to the Jews. The people, so far as centered in Jerusalem, and boasting in possession of the promises, the sacrifices, and the temple, and in being the royal tribe, lost the presence of the Messiah, the Son of David. He went away for the manifestation of His Person, for the testimony of God's intervention in Israel, to the poor and despised of the flock. He thus really became the true Stock, instead of being a Branch of that which had been planted elsewhere; although this effect was not yet fully manifested. We may remark here, that, in John's gospel, the Jews are always distinguished from the multitude. The language, or rather, the pronunciation, was entirely different. They did not speak Chaldee in Galilee.

At the same time, this manifestation of the Son of David in Galilee, was the fulfillment of a prophecy in Isaiah. The force of that prophecy is this:-although the Roman captivity was far more terrible than the invasions of the Assyrians when they came up against the land of Israel, there was, nevertheless, this circumstance, which altered everything, namely, the presence of the Messiah, of the true Light, in the land.

We observe that the Spirit of God here passes over the whole history of Jesus until the commencement of His ministry after the death of John the Baptist. He gives Jesus his proper position in the midst of Israel-Emmanuel, the Son of David, the Beloved of God, acknowledged His Son, the faithful One in Israel, though exposed to all Satan's temptations; afterward, His prophetic position, announced by Isaiah, and the kingdom proclaimed as at hand.

He then gathers around Him those who were definitively to follow Him in His ministry and His temptations; and, at His call, to link their portion and their lot with His, forsaking all beside.

The strong man was bound, so that Jesus could spoil his goods, and proclaim the kingdom with proofs of that power which was able to establish it.

Two things are then brought forward in the Gospel narrative. 1st. The power which accompanies the proclamation of the kingdom. In two or three verses, without other detail, this fact is announced. The proclamation of the kingdom is attended with acts of power that excite the attention of the whole country, the whole extent of the ancient territory of Israel. Jesus appears before them invested with this power. 2ndly. The character of the kingdom is announced in the Sermon on the Mount, as well as that of the persons who should have part in it.

It is evident, that in all this part of the Gospel, it is the Lord's position which is the subject of the teaching of the Spirit, and not the details of His life. The details come after, in order fully to exhibit what He was in the midst of Israel, His relations with that people, and the conduct and spirit which led to the rupture between the Son of David and the people who ought to have received Him. The attention of the whole country being thus engaged by His mighty acts, the Lord sets before His disciples-but in the hearing of the people-the principles of His kingdom.

This discourse may be divided into the following parts:-

Chapter 5:1-16, contains the complete picture of the character and position of the remnant who received His instructions. Their position, as it should be, according to the mind of God. This is complete in itself.

Ver. 17-48 establishes the authority of the law, which should have regulated the conduct of the faithful until the introduction of the kingdom, the law which they ought to have fulfilled, as well as the words of the prophets, in order that they (the remnant) should be placed on this new ground; and the despisal of which would exclude whoever was guilty of it from the kingdom. But while thus establishing the authority of the law, He gives, by enhancing its exigencies, that which was to be the conduct of His disciples, their moral law-that which was to characterize them as such. Instead of weakening that which God required under the law, He would not only have it observed until its fulfillment, but that His disciples should be perfect even as their Father in heaven was perfect. This adds the revelation of the Father to the exigencies of the law specifically understood.

Chapter 6-We have the motives, the object, which should govern the heart in doing good deeds, in living a religious life. Their eye should be on their Father. This is individual.

Chapter 7-This chapter is essentially occupied with the intercourse that would be suitable between His own people and others-not to judge their brethren,-to beware of the profane. He then exhorts them to confidence in asking their Father for what they needed, and instructs them to act towards others with the same grace that they would wish shown to themselves. This is founded on the knowledge of the goodness of the Father. Finally, He exhorts them to the energy that will enter in at the strait gate, and choose the way of God, cost what it may; for many would like to enter into the kingdom, but not by that gate; and He warns them with respect to those who would seek to deceive them, by pretending to have the word of God. It is not only our own hearts that we have to fear, and positive evil, when we would follow the Lord; but also the devices of the enemy and his

agents. But their fruits will betray them.)

The character and the portion of those who should be in the kingdom (5:1-12).

Their position in the world (13-16).

The connection between the principles of the kingdom and the law (17-48).

The spirit in which His disciples should perform good works (6:1-18).

Separation from the spirit of the world and from its anxieties (19-34).

The spirit of their relation with others (7:1-6).

The confidence in God which became them (7-12).

The energy that should characterize them, in order that they might enter into the kingdom, and the means of discerning those who would seek to deceive them, as well as the watchfulness needed that they might not be deceived (12-23).

Real and practical obedience to His sayings, the true wisdom of those that heard His words (23-29).

There is another principle that characterizes this discourse, and that is the introduction of the Father's name. Jesus puts his disciples in connection with His Father, as their Father. He reveals to them the Father's name, in order that they may be in relation with Him, and that they may act in accordance to that which He is.

This discourse gives the principles of the kingdom, but supposes the rejection of the King, and the position into which this would bring those that were His; who, consequently, must look for a heavenly reward. They would be a spectacle to the whole world; moreover, this was God's object. Their confession was to be so open that the world should refer their works to the Father. They were to act, not merely according to the spirituality of the law, but according to the Father's character in grace; to approve themselves to the Father, who saw in secret, where the eye of man could not penetrate. They were to have full confidence in Him for all their need. His will was the rule according to which there was entrance into the kingdom.

We may observe that this discourse is connected with the proclamation of the kingdom, as being near at hand, and that all these principles of conduct are given as characterizing the kingdom, and as the conditions of entrance into it. Beyond doubt, it follows that they are suitable to those who have entered in. But the discourse is pronounced in the midst of Israel, to set forth the fundamental principles of the kingdom, in connection with that people, and in moral contrast with the ideas they had formed respecting it.

In examining the beatitudes, we shall find that this portion in general gives the character of Christ Himself.

They suppose two things: the possession of the land of Israel by the meek, and the persecution of the faithful remnant who asserted the rights of the true King; heaven being set before them as their hope, to sustain their hearts.

This will be the position of the remnant in the last days, before the introduction of the kingdom. It was so, morally, in the days of the Lord's disciples, in reference to Israel, the earthly part being delayed. In reference to heaven, the disciples are looked at as witnesses in Israel, but-the only preservative of the earth-they were a testimony to the world. So that the disciples are seen as in connection with Israel, but, at the same time, as witnesses on God's part to the world; the kingdom being in view, but not yet established. The connection with the last days is evident; nevertheless, their testimony in those days had, morally, this character. Only the establishment of the earthly kingdom has been delayed, and the church, which is heavenly, brought in. Chapter 5:25, evidently alludes to the position of Israel in the days of Christ. In fact, they remain captive, in prison, until they have received their full chastisement, and then they shall come forth.

The Lord ever speaks and acts as the obedient man, moved and guided by the Holy Ghost; but we see, in the most striking manner, in this Gospel, who it is that acts thus. And it is this which gives its true moral character to the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist might announce it as a change of dispensation, but his ministry was earthly; Christ might equally announce this same truth; and that change was all-important; but in Him there was more than this. He was from heaven, the Lord who came from heaven. In speaking of the kingdom of heaven, He spoke out of the deep and divine abundance of His heart. No man had been in heaven, excepting He who had come down from thence, the Son of man who was in heaven. Therefore, when speaking of heaven, He spoke of that which He knew, and testified of that which He had seen. This was the case in two ways, as shown forth in Matthew's Gospel. It was no longer an earthly government according to the law; Jehovah, the Savior, Emmanuel, was present. Could He be otherwise than heavenly in His character, in the tone, the essence of His whole life? Moreover, when He began His public ministry, and was sealed by the Holy Ghost, heaven was opened to Him, He was identified with heaven as a man sealed with the Holy Ghost on earth. He was thus the continual expression of the Spirit, of the reality, of heaven. There was not yet the exercise of the judicial power which would uphold this character, in the face of all that opposed it. It was its manifestation in patience, notwithstanding the opposition of all around Him, and the inability of His disciples to understand Him. Thus, in the Sermon on the Mount, we find the description of that which was suitable to the kingdom of heaven, and even the assurance of reward in heaven for those who should suffer on earth for His sake. This description, as we have seen, is, essentially, the character of Christ Himself. It is thus that a heavenly spirit expresses itself on earth. If the Lord taught these things, it is because He loved them, because He was them, and delighted in them. Being the God of heaven, filled, as man, with the Spirit without measure, His heart was perfectly in unison with a heaven that He perfectly knew. Consequently, therefore, He concludes the character which his disciples were to assume, by these words,-" Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." All their conduct was to be in reference to their Father in heaven. The more we understand the divine glory of Jesus, the more we understand the way in which He was, as man, in connection with heaven, the better shall we apprehend what the kingdom of heaven was to Him, with regard to that which was suitable to it. When it shall be established hereafter in power, the world will be governed according to these principles, although they are not, properly speaking, its own.

The remnant in the last days, I doubt not, finding all around them contrary to faithfulness, and seeing all Jewish hope fail before their eyes, will be forced to look upward, and will more and more

acquire this character, which, if not heavenly, is at least very much conformed to Christ.

5:1.-There are two things connected with the presence of the multitude. First, the time required that the Lord should give a true idea of the character of His kingdom, since already He drew the multitude after Him. His power making itself felt, it was important to make His character known. On the other hand, this multitude who were following Jesus, were a snare to His disciples; and He makes them understand what an entire contrast there was between the effect which this multitude might have upon them, and the right spirit which ought to govern them. Thus full himself of what was really good, He immediately brings forward that which filled His own heart. This was the true character of the remnant, who, in the main, resembled Christ in it. It is often thus in the Psalms.

The salt of the earth is a different thing from the light of the world. The earth, it appears to me, expresses that which already professed to have received light from God -that which was in relation with Him by virtue of the light-having assumed a definite shape before Him. The disciples of Christ were the preservative principle in the earth. They were the light of the world, which did not possess that light. This was their position, whether they would or no. It was the purpose of God that they should be the light of the world. A candle is not lighted in order to be hidden.

All this supposes the case of the possibility of the kingdom being established in the world; but the opposition of the greater part of men to its establishment. It is not a question of the sinner's redemption, but of the realization of one character of reconciliation with God; that which the sinner ought to seek while he is in the way with his adversary, lest he should be delivered to the judge-which, indeed, has happened to the Jews.

At the same time, the disciples are brought into relation with the Father, individually, and a yet more excellent thing is set before them than their position of testimony for the kingdom. They were to act in grace, even as their Father acted, and their prayer should be for an order of things in which all would correspond morally to the character and the will of their Father. "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come," is, that all should answer to the character of the Father, that all should be the effect of His power. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," is, perfect obedience. Universal subjection to God in heaven and earth, will be, to a certain point, accomplished by the intervention of Christ in the Millennium, and absolutely so, when God shall be all in all. Meanwhile, the prayer expresses daily dependence, the need of pardon, the need of being kept from the power of the enemy, the desire of not being sifted by him, as a dispensation of God, like Job or Peter, and of being preserved from evil.

This prayer, also, is adapted to the position of the remnant; it passes over the dispensation of the Spirit, and even that which is proper to the Millennium, in order to speak of the condition and the dangers of the remnant, until the Father's kingdom should come. Many of these principles are always true, for we are in the kingdom, and, in spirit, we ought to manifest its features; but the special and literal application is that which I have given. They are brought into relation with the Father with respect to His character, which was to be displayed in them by virtue of this relation, causing them to desire the establishment of His kingdom, to overcome the difficulties of an opposing world, to keep themselves from the snares of the enemy, and to do the Father's will. It was Jesus who could impart this to them. He 'thus passes from the law, recognized as coming from God, to its fulfillment, when it shall be, as it were, absorbed in the will of Him who gave it, or accomplished in its purposes by Him who alone could do so in any sense whatever.

Then, in the eighth chapter, the Lord begins in the midst of Israel His patient life of testimony, which closed with His rejection by the people whom God had so long preserved for Him.

He had proclaimed the kingdom, displayed His power throughout the land, and declared His character, as well as the spirit of those who should enter the kingdom.

But His miracles, as well as the whole gospel, are always characterized by His position among the Jews. Jehovah, yet the man obedient to the law, foreshowing the entrance of the Gentiles into the kingdom of the Father, and while detecting, as the effect of His presence, the perversity of the people, yet bearing on His heart, with perfect patience, the burden of Israel.

First of all, we find the healing of a leper. Jehovah alone, in His sovereign goodness, could heal the leper. Here, Jesus does so. "If thou wilt," says the leper, "thou canst." "I will," replies the Lord. But, at the same time, He spews forth in His own person, that which repels all possibility of defilement, that which is above the sin; and the most perfect condescension towards the defiled one. He touches the leper, saying, "I will, be thou clean." We see the grace, the power, the undefileable holiness of Jehovah, come down, in the person of Jesus, to the closest proximity to the sinner. It was indeed "The Lord that healeth thee." At the same time, He conceals Himself, and commands the man who had been healed to go to the priest, according to the ordinances of the law, and offer his gift. It is the Jew in subjection to the law.

But, in the next case, we see a Gentile who, by faith, has the full enjoyment of the effect of that power which his faith ascribed to Jesus, giving the Lord occasion to bring out the solemn truth, that many of these poor Gentiles should come and sit down in the kingdom of heaven with the fathers who were honored by the Jewish nation as the first parents of the heirs of promise, while the children of the kingdom should be in outer darkness.

In fact, the faith of this centurion acknowledged a divine power in Jesus, which, by the glory of Him that possessed it, would (not forsake Israel, but) open the door to the Gentiles, and graft into the olive-tree of promise, branches of the wild olive-tree, in the place of those which should be cut off. The manner in which this should take place in the church, was not now the question. He does not yet forsake Israel. He goes into Peter's house, and heals his wife's mother. He does the same to all the sick, who crowd, at even, around the house. They are healed, the devils are cast out, so that -the prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Jesus put Himself, in heart, under the weight of all the sorrows that oppressed Israel, in order to relieve and heal them. It is still Emmanuel, who feels for their misery, and is afflicted in all their affliction, but who has come in with the power that shows Him capable of delivering them.

These three cases show this character of His Ministry in a clear and striking manner. He hides Himself; for, until the moment when He would show judgment to the Gentiles, He does not lift up His voice in the streets. It is the dove that rests upon Him. These manifestations of power attract men to Him; but this does not deceive Him; He never departs in spirit from the place He has -taken. He is the despised and the rejected of men, He `has nowhere to lay His head; the earth had more room for the foxes and the birds than for Him, whom we have seen appear, a moment before, as the Lord; acknowledged at least by the necessities which he never refused to relieve. Therefore, if any man would follow Him, he must forsake all, to be the companion of the Lord, who would not have come down to the earth if everything had not been in question; nor without His

presence thoroughly testing everything; nor without an absolute right, although it was, at the same time, in a love which could only be occupied by its mission and by the necessity that brought Him there. The Lord on earth was everything or nothing. This, it is true, was to be felt, morally, in its effects, in the grace, which, acting by faith, united the believer to Him by an ineffable bond. Without this, the heart would not have been, morally, put to the test. But this did not make it the less true. Accordingly, the proofs of this were present; the winds and waves, to which, in the eye of man, He seemed to be exposed, obeyed His voice at once; a striking reproof to the unbelief that woke Him from His sleep, and had supposed it possible for the waves to engulf Him, and with Him the counsels and the power of Him who had created the winds and waves. It is evident that this storm was permitted, in order to try their faith, and manifest the dignity of His person. If the enemy was the instrument who produced it, he only succeeded in making the Lord display His glory. Such indeed is always the case.

Now, the reality of this power and the manner of its operation are forcibly proved by that which follows.

The Lord disembarks in the country of the Gergesenes. There, the power of the enemy shows itself in all its horrors. If man, to whom the Lord was come in grace, did not know Him, the devils knew their Judge in the person of the Son of God. The man was possessed by them. The fear they had of torment at the judgment of the last day, is applied in the man's mind to the immediate presence of the Lord: "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Wicked spirits act on men by the dread of their power; they have none unless they are feared. But faith only can take this fear from man. I am not speaking of the lusts on which they act; I speak of the power of the enemy. Here, the devils wished to manifest the reality of this power. The Lord permits it, in order to make it plain, that in this world it is not merely man that is in question, whether good or bad, but that also which is stronger than man. The devils enter into the swine, which perish in the waters. Sorrowful reality, plainly demonstrated, that it was no question of mere disease or of sinful lusts, but of wicked spirits. However, thanks be to God! it was a question also of One who, although a man on earth, was more powerful than they. They are compelled to acknowledge this power, and they appeal to it. There is no idea of resistance. He completely delivers the man whom they had oppressed with their evil power. The power of the devils was nothing before Him. He could have delivered the world from all the power of the enemy, and from all the ills of humanity, the strong man was bound, and the Lord spoiled his goods. But the presence of God, of Jehovah, troubles the world even more than the power of the enemy degrades and domineers over mind and body. The control of the enemy over the heart-too peaceful, and, alas! too little perceived-is more mighty than his strength. This succumbs before the word of Jesus, but the will of man accepts the world as it is, governed by the influence of Satan. The whole city who had witnessed the deliverance of the demoniac, and the power of Jesus present among them, entreat Him to depart. Sad history of the world! The Lord came down with power to deliver the world, man, from all the power of the enemy, but they would not. Their distance from God was moral, and not merely bondage to the enemy's power. They submitted to his yoke, they had become used to it, and they would not have the presence of God.

I doubt not that that which happened to the swine, is a figure of that which happened to the impious and profane "Jews, who rejected the Lord Jesus.

Afterward, the Lord acts in the character and according to the power of Jehovah (as we read in Psa. 103), " Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." He thus presents Himself to Israel as their true Redeemer and Deliverer; and to prove His title (which unbelief already opposed) to be this blessing to Israel, and to pardon all their iniquities that raised a barrier between them and their God, He accomplishes the second part of the verse, and heals the disease. Beautiful and precious testimony of kindness to Israel; and, at the same time, the demonstration of His glory who stood in the midst of His people.

But now we enter on another portion of the instruction in this gospel: the development of the opposition of unbelievers, of the learned men and the religionists in particular; and that of the rejection of the work and person of the Lord.

The idea, the picture of that which took place, has been already set before us in the case of the Gergesene demoniac. The power of God present, for the entire deliverance of His people, of the world, if they received Him, power which the devils confessed to be that which should hereafter judge and cast them out which displayed itself in blessing to all the people of the place, but which was rejected, because they did not desire such power to dwell among them; they would not have the presence of God.

The narration of the details and the character of this rejection, now commences. Observe that chap. 8:1-27, gives the manifestation of the Lord's power-this, power being truly that of Jehovah on the earth. From the twenty-eighth verse, the reception this power met with in the world, and the influence which governed the world, are set forth; whether as power, or morally in. the hearts of men.

We come here to the historical development of the rejection of this intervention of God upon the earth.

The multitude glorify God who had given such power to a man. Jesus accepts this place. He was man, the multitude saw Him to be man, and acknowledged the power of God, but did not know how to combine the two ideas in His person.

The grace which contemns the pretensions of man to righteousness, is now set forth.

Matthew, the publican, is called; for God looks at the heart, and grace calls the elect vessels.

The Lord declares the mind of God on this subject, and His own mission. He came to call sinners. He would have mercy. It was God in grace, and not man with his pretended righteousness counting on his merits.

He assigns two reasons which make it impossible to, reconcile His course with the demands of the Pharisees. How should they fast when the Bridegroom was there? When the Messiah was gone, they might well do so. Moreover, it is impossible to introduce the new principles and the new power of His mission, into the old Pharisaic forms.

Afterward, being entreated to raise up a young girl from her bed of death, He obeys the call. As He goes, a poor woman, who had already employed every means of cure without success, is instantaneously healed by touching, in faith, the hem of His garment.

This history supplies us with the two great divisions of the grace that was manifested in Jesus. Christ came to awaken dead Israel. He will do this hereafter in the full sense of the word. Meanwhile whosoever laid hold of Him by faith, in the midst of the multitude that accompanied Him, was healed, let the case be ever so, hopeless. This, which took place in Israel when Jesus was there, is true, in principle, of us also. Grace in Jesus, is a power which raises from the dead, and which heals. Thus, He opened the eyes of those in Israel who owned him to be the Son of David, and who believed in His power to meet their need. He cast out devils also, and gave speech to the dumb. But having performed these acts of power in Israel, the Pharisees, the most religious part of the nation, ascribe this power to prince of the devils. Such is the effect of the Lord's presence on the leaders of the people, jealous of his glory thus manifested among those over whom they exercised their influence. But this in no way interrupts Jesus in His career of beneficence. He can still bear testimony among the people. In spite of the Pharisees, His patient kindness still finds place. He continues to preach and to heal. He has compassion on the people, who were like sheep without a shepherd, given up, morally, to their own guidance. He still sees that the harvest is plenteous and the laborers few. That is to say, He still sees every door open to address the people, and He passes over the wickedness of the Pharisees. So long as God gives Him access to the people, He continues His labor of love. Nevertheless, He was conscious of the iniquity that governed the people, although He did not seek His own glory. Having exhorted His disciples to pray that laborers might be sent into the harvest, He begins to act in accordance with that desire. He calls His twelve disciples, He gives them power to cast out devils and to heal the sick, and He sends them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. We see, in this mission, how much the ways of God with Israel, form the subject of this gospel. They were to announce to that people, and to them exclusively, the nearness of the kingdom; exercising at the same time the power they had received. A striking testimony to Him who was come, and who could not only work miracles Himself, but confer power on others to do so likewise. He gave them authority over evil spirits for this purpose. It is this which characterizes the kingdom-man healed of all sickness, and the devil cast out. Accordingly, in Heb. 6, miracles are called " The powers of the world to come."

They were also, with respect to their need, to depend entirely on Him who sent them. If miracles were a proof to the world of their Master's power, the fact that they lacked nothing, should be so to their own hearts. This ordinance was abrogated during that period of their ministry, which followed the departure of Jesus from this world (Luke 22:35-37). That which He here (Matt. 10) commands His disciples, appertains to His presence as the Messiah, as Jehovah Himself, on the earth. Therefore the reception of His messengers, or their rejection, decided the fate of those to whom they were sent. In rejecting them, they rejected the Lord, Emmanuel, God with His people. But, in fact, He sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. They would need the wisdom of serpents, and were to exhibit the harmlessness of doves: rare union of virtues, found only in those who, by the Spirit of the Lord, are wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil.

If they did not beware of men, (sad testimony to these), they could but suffer; but when scourged and brought before councils and governors and kings, all this should become a testimony unto them: a divine means of presenting the gospel of the kingdom to kings and princes without altering its character, or accommodating it to the world, or mixing up the Lord's people with its usages and its false greatness. Moreover, circumstances like these, made their testimony much more conspicuous than association with the great ones of the earth would have done.

And to accomplish this, they should receive such power and guidance from the Spirit of their Father, as would cause the words they spoke to be not their own words, but His who inspired them. Here, again, their relation with their Father, which so distinctly characterizes the sermon on the mount, is made the basis of their capacity for the service they had to perform. We must remember that this testimony was addressed to Israel only; only that Israel being under the yoke of the Gentiles, since the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the testimony would reach their rulers.

But this testimony would excite an opposition that should break all family ties, and awaken a hatred that would not spare the life of those who had been the most beloved. He who in spite of all this should endure to the end, should be saved. Nevertheless, the case was urgent. They were not to resist, but if the opposition took the form of persecution, they were to go and preach the gospel elsewhere, for before they had gone over the cities of Israel, the Son of man should come. They were to proclaim the kingdom. The Lord, Emmanuel, was there, in the midst of His people, and the heads of the people had called the master of the house Beelzebub. This had not stopped His testimony, but it very strongly characterized the circumstances in which this testimony was to be rendered. He sent them forth, warning them of this state of things, to maintain this final testimony among His beloved people as long as possible. This took place at that time, and it is possible, if circumstances permit, to carry it on until the Son of man comes to execute judgment. Then the master of the house will have risen up to shut the door. The "to-day" of Psa. 95 will be over. Israel, in possession of their cities, being the object of this testimony, it is necessarily suspended when they are no longer in their land. The testimony to the future kingdom, given in Israel by the Apostles after the Lord's death, is an accomplishment of this mission, so far as this testimony was rendered in the land of Israel: for the kingdom might be proclaimed as to be established, while Emmanuel was on the earth; or it might be by Christ returning from heaven, as announced by Peter in the third of Acts. And this, even until Christ should return. Thus, the testimony may be resumed in Israel, whenever they are again in their land, and the requisite spiritual power is given by God.

Meanwhile, the disciples were to share in Christ's own position. If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, much more they of His household. But they were not to fear. It was the necessary portion of those who were for God in the midst of the people. But there was nothing hid that should not be revealed. They themselves were to hold nothing back, but were to proclaim on the house-tops all that they had been taught; for everything should be brought into the light; their faithfulness to God in this respect as well as all other things. Therefore were they to fear nothing while performing this work, unless it were God Himself, the righteous Judge at the last day. Moreover, the hairs of their head were numbered. They were precious to their Father, who took notice of even a sparrow's death.

Finally, they were to be thoroughly imbued with the conviction that the Lord was not come to send peace on the earth; no, it should be division, even in the bosom of families. But Christ was to be more precious than father or mother, and even than a man's own life. He who would save his life at the expense of his testimony to Christ, should lose it. He who would lose it for the sake of Christ, should gain it. He also who should receive this testimony, in the person of the disciples, received Christ, and, in Christ, Him that sent Him. God, therefore, being thus acknowledged in the person of His witnesses on earth, would bestow on whoever received the latter, a reward according to the testimony rendered. In thus acknowledging the testimony of the rejected Lord, were it only by a

cup of cold water, he who gave it should not lose his reward. In an opposing world, he who believes the testimony of God, and receives (in spite of the world) the man who bears this testimony, really confesses God, as well as His servant. It is all that we can do. The rejection of Christ made Him a test, a touchstone. From that hour, we find the definitive judgment of the nation.

This judgment is unfolded, not by the cessation of Christ's ministry, which wrought, notwithstanding the opposition of the nation, in gathering out the remnant, and in the still more important effect of the manifestation of Emmanuel. It is unfolded in the character of His discourses; in the positive declarations which describe the condition of the people; and in the Lord's conduct, amid circumstances which gave rise to the expression of the relations in which He stood toward them.

In chap 11, having sent His disciples away to preach, He continues the exercise of His own ministry.

The report of the works of Christ reaches John in prison. He, in whose heart, notwithstanding his prophetic gift, there still remained something of Jewish thoughts and hopes, sends by his disciples to ask Jesus if He is the One who should come, or if they were still to look for another. God allowed this question, in order to put everything in its place. Christ, being the Word of God, ought to be His own witness; He ought to bear testimony to Himself as well as to John, and not to receive testimony from the latter; and this He did in the presence of John's disciples. He healed all the diseases of men, and preached the gospel to the poor; and John's messengers were to set before him this true testimony of what Jesus was. John was to receive it. It was by these things men were tested; blessed was he who should not be offended at the lowly exterior of the King of Israel. God, manifest in the flesh, did not come to seek the pomp of royalty, although it was His due, but the deliverance of suffering men. His work revealed a character much more profoundly divine, which had a spring of action far more glorious than that which depended on the possession of the throne of David; than a deliverance which would have set John at liberty, and put an end to the tyranny that had imprisoned him. To undertake this ministry, to go down into the scenes of its exercise, to bear the sorrows and the burdens of His people, might be an occasion of stumbling to a carnal heart that was looking for the appearance of a glorious kingdom, which would satisfy the pride of Israel. But was it not more truly divine, more necessary to the condition of the people, as seen of God? The heart of each one, therefore, would be thus tested, to show whether he belonged to that remnant who discerned the ways of God, or to the proud multitude who only sought their own glory, possessing neither a conscience exercised before God, nor the sense of their need and misery.

Having set John under the responsibility of receiving this testimony, which put all Israel to the test, and distinguished the remnant from the nation in general; the Lord then bears witness to John himself, addressing the multitude and reminding them how they had followed the preaching of John. He shows the exact point to which Israel had come in the ways of God. The introduction of the kingdom made the difference between that which preceded and that which followed. Among all that are born of woman there had been none greater than John the Baptist, none who had been so near the Lord, none who had rendered Him a more exact and complete testimony, who had been so separate from all evil by the power of the Spirit of God, a separation proper to the fulfillment of such a mission among the people of God. Still, he had not been in the kingdom; it was not yet

established; and, to be in the presence of Christ, in His kingdom, enjoying the result of the establishment of His glory, was a greater thing than all testimony to the coming of the kingdom.

Nevertheless, from the time of John the Baptist, there was a notable change. From that time the kingdom was announced. It was not established, but it was preached. This was a very different thing from the prophecies that spoke of the kingdom for a yet distant period, while recalling the people to the law as given by Moses. The Baptist went before the King, announcing the nearness of the kingdom, and commanding the Jews to repent, that they might enter into it. Thus the law and the prophets spoke, on God's part, until John. The law was the rule, the prophets, maintaining the rule, strengthened the hopes and the faith of the remnant.

Now, the energy of the Spirit impelled men to force their way through every difficulty and all the opposition of the leaders of the nation and of a blinded people, that they might, at all costs, attain the kingdom of a King rejected by the blind unbelief of those who should have received Him. It needed, seeing that the King had come in humiliation, and that He had been rejected, it needed this violence to enter the kingdom.

If faith could really penetrate the mind of God therein, John was the Elias who should come. He that had ears to hear, let him hear. It was in fact for those only.

Had the kingdom appeared in the glory and in the power of its Head, violence would not have been necessary; it would have been possessed as the certain effect of that power; but it was the will of God that they should morally be tested. It was thus also that they ought to have received Elias in spirit.

The result is given in the Lord's words which follow; i.e. the true character of this generation, and the ways of God in relation to the person of Jesus, manifested by His rejection itself. As a generation, the threatenings of justice and the attractions of grace, were equally lost upon them. The children of wisdom, those whose consciences were taught of God, acknowledged the truth of John's testimony, and the grace, so necessary to the guilty, of the ways of Jesus. John, separate from the iniquity of the nation, had in their eyes a devil. Jesus, kind to the most wretched, they accused of falling in with evil ways.

Yet the evidence was powerful enough to have subdued the heart of a Tiro or a Sodom; and the righteous rebuke of the Lord warns the perverse and unbelieving nation of a more terrible judgment than that which awaited the pride of Tiro or the corruption of Sodom.

But this was a test for the most favored of mankind. It might have been said, Why was the message not sent to Tiro, ready to hearken? why not to Sodom, that that city might have escaped the fire that consumed it? It is that man must be tested in every way, that the perfect counsels of God may be developed. If Tiro and Sodom had abused the advantages which a God of creation and of Providence had heaped upon them, the Jews were to manifest what was in the heart of man when possessing all the promises, and made the depositaries of all the oracles of God.

They boasted of the gift, and departed from the Giver. Their blinded heart acknowledged not, and even rejected their God.

The Lord felt the contempt of His people whom He loved; but, as the obedient man on earth, He submitted to the will of His Father, who, acting in sovereignty, the Lord of heaven and earth,

manifested, in the exercise of this sovereignty, His divine wisdom and the perfection of His character. Jesus accepts the will of His Father in its effects, and thus subject, sees it to be perfection.

It was befitting, that God should, reveal to the lowly all the gifts of His grace in Jesus, this Emmanuel on earth; and that he should hide them from the pride that sought to scrutinize and to judge them.

The truth was, that His person was too glorious to be fathomed or understood by man; although His words and His works left the nation without excuse, in their refusal to come unto Him that they might know the Father.

Jesus, subject to His Father's will, although thoroughly sensible of all that was painful to His heart in its effects, sees the whole extent of the glory that should follow His rejection.

All things were delivered unto Him of His Father. It is the Son who is unfolded to our faith, the veil that covered His glory being taken away, now that He is rejected as Messiah. No one knoweth Him but the Father. Who among the proud could fathom what he was? He who from all eternity was one with the Father, become man, surpassed, in the deep mystery of His being, all knowledge save that of the Father Himself. The impossibility of knowing Him who had emptied Himself to become man, maintained the certainty, the reality, of His divinity, which this self-renunciation might have hidden from the eyes of unbelief. The incomprehensibility of a being in a finite form, revealed the infinite which was therein. His divinity was guaranteed to faith, against the effect of His humanity on the mind of man. But if no one knew the Son, except the Father only, the Son who is truly God, was able to reveal the Father. No man has ever seen God. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has revealed Him. No one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. Wretched ignorance, that in its pride rejects Him! It was thus according to the good pleasure of the Son that this revelation was made. Distinctive attribute of divine perfection. He came for this purpose; He did it according to His own wisdom. Such was the truth of man's relations with Him, although He submitted to the painful humiliation of being rejected by his own people.

Observe also here, that this principle, this truth, with regard to Christ, opens the door to the Gentiles, to all who should be called. He reveals the Father to whomsoever He will. He always seeks the glory of His Father. He alone can reveal Him. He, to whom the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, has delivered all things. The Gentiles are included in the rights conferred by this title; even every family in heaven and earth. Christ exercises these rights in grace, calling whom He will to the knowledge of the Father.

Thus we find here-the perverse and faithless generation; a remnant of the nation, justifying the wisdom of God as manifested in John and in Jesus; the sentence of judgment on the unbelievers; the rejection of Jesus in the character in which He had presented Himself to the nation; and His perfect submission, as man, to the will of His Father in this rejection, giving occasion for the manifestation to His soul of the glory proper to Him as Son of God-a glory which no man could know even as He alone could reveal that of the Father. So that the world was in total ignorance, save at the good pleasure of Him who delights in revealing the Father.

We should also remark here, that the mission of the disciples to Israel, who rejected Christ, continues (if Israel be in the land), until He comes as the Son of Man;-His title of judgment and of glory as heir of all things; that is to say, until the judgment by which He takes possession of the land of Canaan, in a power that leaves no room for His enemies. This, His title of judgment and of glory as heir of all things, is mentioned in John 5, Dan. 7, Psa. 8 and 80. Observe too, that in chap. 11 the perverseness of the generation that had rejected John's testimony, and that of the Son of Man, come in grace, and associating Himself in grace, with the Jews, opens the door to the testimony of the glory of the Son of God, and to the revelation of the Father by Him in sovereign grace-a grace that could make Him known as efficaciously to a poor Gentile as to a Jew. It was no longer a question of responsibility to receive, but of sovereign grace that imparted to whomsoever it would. Jesus knew man, the world, the generation which had enjoyed the greatest advantages of all that were in the world. There was no place for the foot to rest on in the miry slough of that which had departed from God. In the midst of a world of evil, Jesus remained the sole revealer of the Father, the source of all good. Whom does He call? What does He bestow on those who come? Only source of blessing, and revealer of the Father, He calls all those who are weary and heavy laden. Perhaps they did not know the spring of all misery, namely, separation from God, sin. He knew, and He alone could heal them. If it was the sense of sin which burdened them, so much the better. Every way the world no longer satisfied their heart; they were miserable, and therefore the objects of the heart of Jesus. Moreover, He would give them rest. He does not here explain by what means. He simply announces the fact. The love of God which, in grace, in the person of the Son, sought out the wretched, would bestow rest, not merely alleviation, or sympathy, but rest, to every one that came to Jesus. It was the perfect revelation of the Father's name to the heart of those that needed it; and that by the Son. Peace, peace with God. They had but to come to Christ; He undertook all the rest. But there is a second element in rest. There is more than peace through the knowledge of the Father in Jesus; and more than that is needed, for even when the soul is perfectly at peace with God, this world presents many causes of trouble to the heart. In these cases, it is a question of submission or of self-will. Christ, in the consciousness of His rejection, in the deep sorrow caused by the unbelief of the cities in which He had wrought so many miracles, had just manifested the most entire submission to His Father, and had found therein perfect rest to His soul. To this He calls all that heard Him, all that felt the need of rest to their own souls. Take my yoke upon you, learn of me, that is to say, the yoke of entire submission to His Father's will, learning of Him how to meet the troubles of life; for He was meek and lowly in heart, content to be in the lowest place at the will of His God. In fact, nothing can overthrow one who is there. It is the place of perfect rest to the heart.

Chapter 12 The rejection of the nation, in consequence of their contempt of the Lord, is plainly shown here in detail, as well as the cessation of all His relations with them as a nation, in order to bring out, on God's part, an entirely different system, that is to say, the kingdom in a particular form.

The first circumstance that brought forward the question of His person, and of His right to close the dispensation, was the disciples plucking the ears of corn and crushing them in their hands, to satisfy their hunger. For this, the Pharisees rebuke them, because it was on a Sabbath day. Jesus sets before them that the king, rejected by the malice of Saul, had partaken of that which was only given to the priests. The Son of David, in a similar case, might well enjoy a similar privilege.

Besides, God was acting in grace. The priests also profaned the Sabbath in the service of the temple; and One greater than the temple was there. Moreover, if they had really known the mind of God, if they had been imbued with the Spirit which His word declared to be acceptable to Him, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," they would not have condemned the guiltless. In addition to this, the Son of man was Lord even of the Sabbath. Here, He no longer takes the title of Messiah, but that of Son of man: a name which bore witness to a new order of things, and to a more extended power. Now, that which He said had great significance; for the Sabbath was the token of the covenant between Jehovah and the nation (Ezek. 20:12-20); and the Son of man was declaring His power over it. If that was touched, it was all over with the covenant.

The same question arises in the synagogue, and the Lord persists in acting in grace, and in doing good; showing them that they would do the same for one of their sheep. This only excites their hatred, great as was the proof of His beneficent power. They were children of the murderer. Jesus withdraws from them, and great multitudes follow Him. He heals them,

charging them not to make Him known. In all this, however, His doings were but the fulfillment of a prophecy, which clearly traces out the Lord's position at this time. The hour would come when He should bring forth judgment unto victory. Meanwhile, He retained the position of entire lowliness, in which grace and truth could commend themselves to those who appreciated and needed them. But in the exercise of this grace, and in His testimony to the truth, He would do nothing to falsify this character, or so attract the attention of men as to prevent His true work, or which could make it even suspected that He sought His own honor. Nevertheless, the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, as His beloved, in whom His soul delighted; and He should declare judgment to the Gentiles, and they should put their trust in His name. The application of this prophecy to Jesus, at that moment, is very evident. We see how guarded He was with the Jews, abstaining from the gratification of their carnal desires respecting Himself, and content to be in the background, if God, His Father, was glorified; and glorifying Him perfectly Himself on the earth, by doing good. He was soon to be declared to the Gentiles; whether by the execution of the judgment of God, or by presenting Himself to them as the One in whom they should trust.

This passage is manifestly placed here by the Holy Ghost, in order to give the exact representation of His position, before laying open the new scenes which His rejection prepares for us.

He then casts out a devil from a man who was deaf and dumb. A sad condition, truly depicting that of the people with respect to God. The multitude, full of admiration, exclaim, "Is not this the Son of David?" But the religionists, hearing that-jealous of the Lord and hostile to the testimony of God-declare that Jesus wrought this miracle by the power of Beelzebub; thus sealing their own condition, and putting themselves under the definitive judgment of God. Jesus demonstrates the absurdity of what they had said. Satan would not destroy his own kingdom. Their own children, who had the pretention to do the same, should judge their iniquity. But, if not the power of Satan (and the Pharisees admitted that the devils were really cast out), it was the finger of God, and the kingdom of God was among them.

He who had come into the strong man's house to spoil his goods, had first to bind him.

The truth is, that the presence of Jesus put everything to the test; everything on God's part was centered in Him. It is Emmanuel Himself who was there. He who was not with Him, was against

Him. He who did not gather with Him, scattered. Everything now depended on Him alone. He would bear with all unbelief as to His own person. Grace could remove that. He could pardon all sin; but to speak against and blaspheme the Holy Ghost, i.e., to acknowledge the exercise of a power, which is that of God, and to attribute it to Satan, could not be pardoned; for the Pharisees admitted that the devil was cast out, and it was only with malice, with open-eyed deliberate hatred to God, that they attributed it to Satan. And what pardon could there be for this? There was none, either in the age of the law, or in that of the Messiah. The fate of those who thus acted was decided. This the Lord would have them understand. The fruit proved the nature of the tree. It was essentially bad. They were a generation of vipers. John had told them the same. Their words condemned them. Upon this, the Scribes and Pharisees asked for a sign. This was nothing but wickedness. They had had signs enough. It was only stirring up the unbelief of the rest.

This request gives the Lord occasion to pronounce the judgment of this generation.

There should be only the sign of Jonah, for this evil generation. As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. But lo! Christ was already rejected. But the Ninevites, by their conduct, should condemn this generation in the day of judgment, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and a greater than Jonah was here.

The queen of the South likewise testified against the wickedness of this perverse generation. Her heart, attracted by the report of Solomon's wisdom, had led her to him from the uttermost parts of the earth; and a greater than Solomon was here. Poor ignorant Gentiles understood the wisdom of God in His word, whether by the prophet or the king, better than His beloved people, even when the Great King and Prophet was among them.

This was then His judgment: the unclean spirit (of idolatry) which had gone out of the people, finding no rest away from Israel (alas! its true house, whereas they ought to have been the house of God), should return with seven spirits worse than itself. They would find the house empty, swept and garnished; and the last state should be worse than the first. What a solemn judgment of the people was this—that those among whom Jehovah had walked, should become the habitation of an unclean spirit, of a superabundance of unclean spirits; not merely of seven, the complete number, but together with these, who would incite them to all madness against God and those who honored God, thus leading them to their own destruction, that other unclean spirit also, who would draw them back into the wretched idolatry from which they had escaped.

In conclusion, Jesus publicly breaks the bonds that naturally existed between Himself and the people, acknowledging those only which were formed by the word of God, and manifested by doing the will of His Father which was in heaven. Those persons only would He acknowledge as His relations, who were formed after the pattern of the Sermon on the Mount. His actions and His words after this, bear witness to the new work which He was really doing on the earth. He leaves the house and sits beside the lake. He takes a new position, outside, to proclaim to the multitude that which was His true work. A sower went forth to sow.

The Lord was no longer seeking fruit in His vine. It had been requisite, according to God's relations with Israel, that He should seek this fruit, but His true service, He well knew, was to bring that which could produce fruit, and not to find any in men.

It is important to remark here, that the Lord speaks of the visible and outward effect of His work as a Sower. The only occasion here on which He expresses His judgment as to the inward cause, is when He says, " They had no root"; and even here it is a matter of fact. The doctrines respecting the divine operation needed for the production of fruit, are not here spoken of. It is the Sower who is displayed, and the result of his sowing, not that which causes the seed to germinate in the earth. In each case, except the first, a certain effect is produced.

The Lord is then here presented as commencing a work which is independent of all former relation between God and men, bearing with Him the seed of the word, which He sows in the heart by His ministry. Where it abides, where it is understood, where it is neither choked nor dried up, it produces fruit, to His glory, and to the happiness and the profit of the man who bears it.

Ver. 11. The Lord shows the reason why He speaks enigmatically to the multitude. A distinction is made between the remnant and the nation: the latter was under the judgment of blindness, pronounced by the prophet Esaias. Blessed were the eyes of the disciples which saw the Emmanuel, the Messiah, the object of the hopes and desires of so many prophets and righteous men.

I would add a few remarks on the character of the persons whom the Lord speaks of in the parable.

When the word is sown in a heart that does not understand it, when it produces no relation of intelligence, of feeling, or of conscience between the heart and God, the enemy takes it away, it does not remain in the heart. He who heard it is not the less guilty; that which was sown in his heart was adapted to every need, to the nature and to the condition of man.

The immediate reception of the word with joy, in the next case, tends rather to prove that the heart will not retain it; for it is scarcely probable, in such case, that the conscience was reached. A conscience touched by the word, makes the man serious; he sees himself in the presence of God, which is always a serious thing, whatever may be the attraction of His grace, or the hope inspired by His goodness. If the conscience has not been reached, there is no root. The word was received for the joy it imparted; when it brings tribulation it is given up.

Every day's history is, alas! the sad and best explanation of the third class. There is no ill will, there is barrenness.

That the word was understood, is only affirmed of those who bear fruit. The true understanding of the word brings a soul into connection with God, because the word reveals God, expresses what He is. If I understand it, I know Him; and the true knowledge of God, that is, of the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ, is eternal life. Now, whatever may be the degree of light, it is always God, thus revealed, who is made known by the word that Jesus sows. Thus, being begotten of the word we shall produce, in diverse 'measures, the fruits of the life of God in this world. For the subject here is the effect, in this world, of the reception of the truth brought by Jesus; not heaven, nor that which God does in the heart to make the seed bear fruit.

This parable does not speak of the kingdom, but of the great elementary principle of the service of Christ in the universality of its application, and as it was realized in his own person and service while on earth.

In the six following parables we find similitudes of the kingdom. We must remember that it is the kingdom established during the rejection of the king, and which, consequently, has a peculiar character, that is to say, it is characterized by an absent king; adding to this, in the explanation of the first parable, the effect of his return.

The three first of these six parables, present the kingdom in its outward forms in the world. They are addressed to the multitude. The three last, present the kingdom according to the estimate of the Holy Ghost, according to the reality of its character as seen by God. They are addressed, consequently, to the disciples alone. The public establishment of the kingdom in the righteousness and power of God, is also announced to the latter, in the explanation of the parable of the tares.

Let us consider, first, the exterior of the kingdom publicly announced to the multitude the outward form which the kingdom would assume.

We must remember that the King, that is, the Lord Jesus, was rejected on earth; that the Jews, in rejecting Him, had condemned themselves, and that the word being used to accomplish the work of Him whom the Father had sent, the Lord thus made it known that He established the kingdom, not by His power exercised in righteousness and in judgment, but by hearing testimony to the hearts of men that the kingdom now assumed a character connected with man's responsibility, and with the result of the Word of Light being sown in the earth, addressed to the hearts of men, and left as a system of truth to the faithfulness and the care of men; God, however, still holding good His sovereign right for the preservation of His children and of the truth itself. This latter part is not the subject of these parables. I have introduced it here because it might, otherwise, have been supposed that everything depended absolutely on man. Had it been so, alas! all would have been lost.

The parable of the tares is the first. It gives us a general idea of the effect of these sowings, as to the kingdom; or, rather, the result of having, for the moment, committed the kingdom here below to the hands of men.

The result was that the kingdom here below no longer presented, as a whole, the appearance of the Lord's own work. He sows not tares. Through the carelessness and the infirmity of men the enemy found means to sow these tares. Observe, that it is no question here of the heathen, or of the Jews, but of the evil done among Christians by Satan, through bad doctrines, bad teachers and their adherents. The Lord Jesus sowed. Satan-while men slept-sowed also. There were Judaisers, philosophizers, heretics, who held with both the former on the one hand, or, on the other, opposed the truth of the Old Testament.

Nevertheless, Christ had only sowed good seed. Must the tares then be rooted out? Clearly, the condition of the kingdom during the absence of Christ, depends on the answer to this question, and it throws light also upon that condition. But there was still less power to bring in a remedy than there had been to prevent the evil. All must remain unremedied until the King's interposition at the time of harvest. The kingdom of heaven on earth, such as it is in the hands of men, must remain a mingled system. Heretics, false brethren will be there, as well as the fruit of the Lord's work, testifying man's inability to maintain that which is good and pure.

At the time of harvest-a phrase that designates a certain space of time during which the events connected with the harvest will take place. At the time of harvest, the Lord will deal first, in His

providence, with the tares. I say, "in His providence," because He employs the angels. The tares shall be bound in bundles, ready to be burnt.

We must observe, that outward things in the world are the subject here, acts which root out corruption-corruption that has grown up in the midst of Christianity.

The servants are not capable of doing this. The intermingling (caused by their weakness and carelessness) is such, that in gathering out the tares they would root up the wheat also. Not only discernment, but the practical power of separation would be wanting to carry out their purpose. When once the tares are there the servants have nothing to do with them as to their presence in this world, in Christendom. The work of purging Christendom from them was not in their province. It is a work of judgment on that which is not of God, belonging to Him who can execute it according to the perfection of a knowledge that embraces everything, and a power that nothing escapes, which, if two men are in one bed, knows how to take the one and leave the other. The execution of judgment on the wicked, in this world, does not belong to the servants of Christ. He will accomplish it by the angels of His power, to whom He commits the execution of this work.

After the binding of the tares, He gathers the wheat into His garner. There is no binding the wheat in bundles, He takes it all to Himself. Such is the end of that which concerns the outward appearance of the kingdom here below. This is not all that the parable can teach us, but it ends the subject of which this part of the chapter speaks. During the absence of Jesus the result of His sowing will be marred, as a whole, by the work of the enemy. At the close He will bind all the enemy's work in bundles, i.e., He will prepare them in this world for judgment. He will then take away the church. It is evident that this terminates the scene below which goes on during His absence. The judgment is not yet executed. Before speaking of it, the Lord gives other pictures of the forms which the kingdom will assume during His absence.

That which had been sown as a grain of mustard-seed becomes a great tree; a symbol that represents a great power in the earth. The Assyrian, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, are set before us, in the word, as great trees. Such would be the form of the kingdom, which began in littleness through the word sown by the Lord, and afterward by His disciples. That which this seed produced would gradually assume the form of a great power, making itself prominent on the earth, so that others would shelter themselves under it, as birds under the branches of a tree. This has, indeed, been the case.

We next find, that it would not only be a great tree in the earth, but that the kingdom would be characterized as a system of doctrine, which would diffuse itself, a profession, which would enclose all it reached within its sphere of influence. The whole of the three measures would be leavened. I need not dwell here on the fact that the word leaven is always used in a bad sense by the sacred writers, but the Holy Ghost gives us to understand that it is not the regenerative power of the word in the heart of an individual, bringing him back to God, neither is it simply a power acting by outward strength, such as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, and the other great trees of Scripture, but it is a system of doctrine that should characterize the mass, pervading it throughout. It is not faith, properly so called, nor is it life; it is a religion; it is Christendom. A profession of doctrine, in hearts which will neither bear the truth nor God, connects itself always with corruption in the doctrine itself.

This parable of the leaven concludes His instructions to the multitude. All was now addressed to them in parables, for they did not receive Him, their King, and He spoke of things that supposed His rejection, and an aspect of the kingdom unknown to the revelations of the Old Testament, which have in view either the kingdom in power, or a little remnant, receiving, amid sufferings, the word of the Prophet-King who had been rejected.

After this parable Jesus no longer remains by the seaside with the multitude—a place suited to the position in which He stood towards the people after the testimony borne at the end of chap. 12, and whither He had repaired on quitting the house. He now re-enters the house with his disciples, and there, in secluded intimacy with them, He reveals the true character, the object, of the kingdom of heaven, the result of that which was done in it, and the means which should be taken to cleanse everything on earth, when the outward history of the kingdom, during His absence, should have terminated. That is to say, we find here that which characterizes the kingdom to the spiritual man, that which he understands as the true mind of God with regard to this kingdom, and the judgment which should purge out from it all that was contrary to Him, the exercise of power which should render it outwardly in accordance with the heart of God.

We have seen its outward history ending with this, the wheat hidden in the garner, and the tares left in bundles on the earth, ready to be burnt. The explanation of this parable resumes the history of the kingdom at that period, only it gives us to understand and distinguish the different parts of the intermixture, ascribing each part to its true author. The field is the world; there the word was sown, for the establishment, in this manner, of the kingdom. The good seed were the children of the kingdom; they belonged to it really; according to God, they are its heirs. The Jews were no longer so, and it was no longer the privilege of natural birth. The children of the kingdom were born of the word. But among these, in order to spoil the Lord's work, the enemy introduced all sorts of people, the fruit of the doctrines which he had sown among those who were born of the truth. This is the work of Satan, in the place where the doctrine of Christ had been planted. The harvest is the end of the age. The reapers are the angels. It will be remarked here, that the Lord does not explain, historically, that which took place, but the terms used to bring in the issue, when the harvest is come. The fulfillment of that which is historical in the parable, is supposed; and He passes on to give the great result, outside that which was the kingdom during His absence on high. The wheat, that is, the Church, is in the barn, and the tares in bundles on the earth. But He takes all that constitutes these bundles, all that offends God in the kingdom, and casts it into the furnace of fire, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. After this judgment, the righteous shall shine forth like Himself, the true Sun of that day of glory, of the age to come, in the kingdom of their Father. Christ will have received the kingdom from the Father, whose children they were, and they shall shine forth in it with Him according to that character.

Thus we find, for the multitude, the results, on earth, of the divine sowing, and the machinations of the enemy—the kingdom presented under this form; afterward the confederacies of the wicked among themselves, apart from their natural order, as growing in the field—; and the taking away of the church. For His own disciples, the Lord explains all that was necessary to make them fully understand the language of the parable. We then find the judgment executed by the Son of Man upon the wicked, who are cast into the fire; and the manifestation of the righteous in glory. These last events taking place after the Lord had risen up and put an end to the outward form of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, the wicked being gathered in companies, and the saints taken up

to heaven.

And now, having explained the public history, and its results in judgment and in glory, for the full instruction of His disciples, the Lord communicates to them the thoughts of God, with respect to what was going on upon earth, while the outward and earthly events of the kingdom were being developed: that which the spiritual man should discern in them. To him, to one who understood the purpose of God, the kingdom of heaven was like a treasure, hidden in a field. A man finds the treasure, and buys the field in order to possess it. The field was not his object, but the treasure was in it. Thus Christ has purchased the world, He possesses it by right, His object is the treasure hidden in it, His own people, all the glory of the redemption connected with it, in a word, the church; looked at, not in its moral and, in a certain sense, divine, beauty, but as the special object of the desires and of the sacrifice of the Lord; that which His heart had found in this world, according to the counsels and the mind of God.

In this parable, it is the powerful attraction of this "new thing," which induces the one who has found it, to purchase the whole place, that he may obtain possession of it.

The Jews were nothing new; the world had no attraction; but this new treasure induced the one who had discovered it to sell all he had that he might gain it. [ In fact, Christ forsook everything. He not only emptied Himself to redeem us, but He renounced all that belonged to Him as man, as the Messiah on earth, the promises, His royal rights, His life, to take possession of the world which contained in it this treasure, the people whom He loved.

In the parable of the pearl of great price, we have again the same idea, but it is modified by others. A man was seeking goodly pearls. He knew what He was about. He had taste, discernment, knowledge, as to that which He sought. It was the well-known beauty of the thing that caused his research. He knows, when He has found one corresponding to His ideas, that it is worth while to sell all, that He may acquire it. It is worth this in the eyes of one who can estimate its value. And He buys nothing else with it. Thus Christ has found in the church by itself, a beauty and (because of this beauty) a value, which made Him give up all to obtain it. It is just so with regard to the kingdom. Considering the state of man, of the Jews even, the glory of God required that all should be given up in order to have this new thing; for there was nothing in man that He could take to Himself. He was not only content to give up all for the possession of this new thing, but that which His heart seeks for, that which He finds nowhere else, He finds in that which God has given Him in the kingdom. He bought no other pearls. Until He found this pearl, He had no inducement to sell all that He had. As soon as He sees it, His mind is made up; He forsakes all for it. Its value decides Him, for He knows how to judge, and He seeks with discernment.

I do not say that the children of the kingdom are not actuated by the same principle. When we have learned what it is to be a child of the kingdom, we forsake all that we may enjoy it, that we may be of the pearl of great price. But we do not buy that which is not the treasure, in order to obtain it; and we are very far from seeking goodly pearls before we have found the one of great price. In their full force, these parables only apply to Christ. The intention in these parables is to bring out that which was then doing, in contrast with all that had taken place before, with the Lord's relations to the Jews.

There remains yet one of the seven—that of the net cast into the sea. In this parable, there is no change in the persons employed. That is to say, in the parable itself. The same persons who cast the net draw it to shore, and make the separation by gathering the good fish into vessels, taking no farther notice of the bad. Securing the good fish, is the work of those who drew the net to shore. It is only when landed that this is done. The sorting is their work, doubtless; but they have only to do with the good fish. They know them, this is their business, the object of their fishing. Others, indeed, come, and are found in the net together with the good; but these are not good. No other judgment is needed. The fishermen know the good. These are not such. They leave them. This forms a part of the history of the kingdom of heaven. The judgment of the wicked is not found here. The bad are left on the shore, when the fishermen gather the good into vessels. The final destiny of either good or bad is not given here. That does not take place on the shore with respect to the good; nor, as to the bad, by simply leaving them there. It is subsequent to the action of the parable; and, with respect to the bad, it does not take place merely by their separation from the good with whom they had been intermingled, but by their destruction.

Thus the gospel net has been cast into the sea of the nations, and has enclosed of all kinds. After this general gathering, which has filled the net, the agents of the Lord, having to do with the good, gather them together, separating them from the bad. Remark here, that this is not the primitive gathering together of the church, but a similitude of the kingdom. It is the character which the kingdom assumes, when the gospel has assembled together a mass of good and bad. At the end, when the net has been drawn, so that all kinds are enclosed in it, the good are set apart, because they are precious,—the others are left. The good are gathered into divers vessels. The saints are gathered, not by the angels but by the work of those who have labored in the name of the Lord.

The execution of the judgment is another matter. The laborers have nothing to do with that. At the end of the age, the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Here, nothing is said about the just. Gathering them into vessels was not the angels' work, but that of the fishermen. The public result had been given, whether during the period of the kingdom of heaven, or afterward, in the parable of the tares. It is not repeated here. The work to be done with regard to the righteous when the net is full is added here. The destiny of the wicked is repeated, to distinguish the work done with respect to them, from that wrought by means of the fishermen who gather the good into divers vessels. Still, it is presented under another aspect.

In the explanation of the second parable, it is absolute judgment in the case of the tares, destroying and consuming that which remains on the field, already collected together and separated, providentially, from the wheat. The angels are then sent, at the end, not to separate them but to cast them into the fire, thus cleansing the kingdom. In the parable of the fish, when the angelic work itself is accomplished, the sorting itself takes place. There will be just ones on the earth, and the wicked will be separated from among them. The practical instruction of this parable, is the separation of the good from the wicked, and the gathering together in companies of many of the former; this is done more than once, many others of the same being gathered elsewhere into one also. The servants of the Lord are the instruments employed.

These parables contain things new and old. The doctrine of the kingdom, for instance, was a well-known doctrine. That the kingdom should take the forms described by the Lord, that it should

embrace the whole world without distinction, the people of God drawing their existence not from Abraham but from the word; all this was quite new. All was of God. The Scribe had knowledge of the kingdom, but was entirely ignorant of the character it would assume, as the kingdom of heaven planted in this world by means of the word; on the which all here depends.

The Lord resumes His work among the Jews. To them, He was only "the carpenter's son." They knew His family after the flesh. The kingdom of heaven was nothing in their eyes. The revelation of this kingdom was carried on elsewhere, and there the knowledge of divine things was communicated. The former saw nothing beyond those things which the natural heart could perceive. The blessing of the Lord was arrested by their unbelief.-He was rejected as prophet as well as king by Israel.

Chapter 14 Our gospel resumes the historical course of these revelations; but in such a manner as to exhibit the spirit by which the people were animated. Herod, loving His earthly power and His own glory, more than submission to the testimony of God, and more bound by a false human idea than by his conscience-although in many things he appears to have owned the power of the truth-had cut off the head of the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist; whom he had already imprisoned, in order to remove out of the sight of his wife the faithful reprovener of the sin in which she lived.

Jesus is sensible of the import of this action, which is reported to Him. Accomplishing, together with John, the testimony of God in the congregation, He felt Himself united in heart and in His work to him; for faithfulness in the midst of evil binds hearts very closely together; and Jesus had condescended to take a place in which faithfulness was concerned (see Psa. 40:9,10). On hearing, therefore, of John's death, He retires into a desert place. But while departing from the multitude who thus began to act openly in the rejection of the testimony of God, He does not cease to be the supplier of all their wants, and to testify thus that He who could divinely minister to all their need, was amongst them.

For the multitude, who felt these wants, and who, if they had not faith, yet admired the power of Jesus, follow Him into the desert place; and Jesus, moved with compassion, heals all their sick. In the evening, His disciples beg Him to send the multitude away, that they may procure food. He refuses, and bears a remarkable testimony to the presence of Him who was to satisfy the poor of His people with bread (Psa. 132) Jehovah, the Lord, who established the throne of David, was there in the person of Him who should inherit that throne. I doubt not the twelve baskets of fragments refer to the number which, in scripture, always designates the perfection of administrative power.

Remark also here, that the Lord expects to find His twelve disciples capable of being the instruments of His acts of blessing and power, administering according to His own power the blessings of the kingdom. "Give ye them," said He, "to eat." This applies to the blessing of the Lord's kingdom, and to the disciples of Jesus, to the twelve, as being its ministers; but it is likewise an all-important principle with regard to the effect of faith, in every intervention of God in grace. Faith should be able to use the power that acts in such intervention, to produce the works which are proper to that power, according to the order of the dispensation and the intelligency she has respecting it. We shall find this principle again elsewhere more fully developed.

The disciples wished to send the multitude away, not knowing how to use the power of Christ. They should have been able to avail themselves of it in Israel's behalf, according to the glory of Him who was among them.

If now the Lord demonstrated, with perfect patience, by His actions, that He who could thus bless Israel was in the midst of His people, He does not the less bear testimony to His separation from that people, in consequence of their unbelief. He makes His disciples get into a ship to cross the sea alone; and, dismissing the multitude Himself, He goes up into a mountain apart to pray; while the ship that contained the disciples was tossing on the waves of the sea, with a contrary wind. A living picture of that which has taken place. God has, indeed, sent forth His people to cross the stormy sea of the world alone, meeting with an opposition against which it is hard to strive. Meanwhile, Jesus prays alone on high. He has sent away the Jewish people, who had surrounded Him during the period of His presence here below. The departure of the disciples, besides its general character, sets before us peculiarly the Jewish remnant. Peter, individually, in coming out of the ship, goes beyond (in figure) the position of this remnant. He represents that faith which, forsaking the earthly accommodation of the ship, goes out to meet Jesus who has revealed Himself to it, and walks upon the sea. A bold undertaking, but based on the Word of Jesus "Come." Yet, remark here that this walk has no other foundation than, "If it be Thou," that is to say, Jesus Himself. There is no support, no possibility of walking, if Christ is lost sight of. All depends on Him. There is a known means in the ship—there is nothing but faith, which looks to Jesus, for walking on the water. Man, as mere man, sinks, by the very fact of being there. Nothing can sustain itself except that faith which draws from Jesus the strength that is in Him, and which therefore imitates Him. But it is sweet to imitate Him; and one is then nearer to Him, more like Him. This is the true position of the Church, in contrast with the remnant in their ordinary character. Jesus walks on the water as on the solid ground. He who created the elements as they are, could well dispose of their qualities at His pleasure. He permits storms to arise for the trial of our faith. He walks on the stormy wave as well as on the calm. Moreover, the storm makes no difference. He who sinks in the waters, does so in the calm as well as in the storm, and he who can walk upon them, will do so in the storm as well as in the calm; that is to say, unless faith fail, and so the Lord is forgotten; for often circumstances make us forget Him, where faith ought to enable us to overcome circumstances through our walking by faith in Him who is above them all. Nevertheless, blessed be God! He who walks in His own power upon the water, is there to sustain the faith and the wavering steps of the poor disciple; and, at any rate, that faith had brought Peter so near to Jesus that His outstretched hand could sustain him. Peter's fault was that he looked at the waves, at the storm, which, after all had nothing to do with it, instead of looking at Jesus, who was unchanged, and who was walking on those very waves, as his faith should have observed. Still, the cry of his distress brought the power of Jesus into action, as his faith ought to have done; only, it was now to his shame, instead of being in the enjoyment of communion and walking like the Lord.

Jesus having entered the ship, the wind ceases. Even so it will be when Jesus returns to the remnant of His people in this world. Then also will He be worshipped as the Son of God by all that are in the ship, with the remnant of Israel. In Gennesaret, Jesus again exercises the power which shall hereafter drive out from the earth all the evil that Satan has brought in. It is a fine picture of the result of Christ's rejection, which this gospel has already made known to us as taking place in

the midst of the Jewish nation.

Chapter 15 displays the moral contrast between the doctrine of Christ and that of the Jews. The Jewish system is rejected morally by God. When I speak of the system, I speak of their moral condition, systematized by the hypocrisy that sought to conceal iniquity, while increasing it in the sight of God, before whom they presented themselves. They made use of His name in order to sink lower, under the pretense of piety, than the laws of natural conscience. It is then that a religious system becomes the great instrument of the power of the enemy, and more especially when that of which it still bears the name was instituted by God. The judgment which the Lord pronounces on this system of hypocrisy, while manifesting the consequent rejection of Israel, gives rise to instruction that goes much farther; and that, searching the heart of man, and judging man according to that which proceeds from it, proves the heart to be a spring of all iniquity, and thus makes it evident that all true morality has its basis in the conviction and confession of sin. For, without this, the heart is always false, and flatters itself in vain. Thus also Jesus goes to the root of everything, and comes out of the special and temporary relations of the Jewish nation, to enter on the true morality which belongs to all ages. The disciples did not observe the traditions of the elders; about them the Lord does not concern Himself. He avails Himself of the accusation to lay it upon the conscience of their accusers that the judgment occasioned by the rejection of the Son of God, was authorized also on the ground of those relations that already existed between God and Israel.

They made the commandment of God of none effect through their traditions; and that, in a most important point, and one even on which all earthly blessings depended for the children of Israel. By their own ordinances also, Jesus exposes the consummate hypocrisy, the selfishness and avarice, of those who pretended to guide the people, and to form their heart to morality and to the worship of Jehovah. Isaiah had already pronounced their judgment.

Afterward he shows the multitude that it was a question of what man was, of what proceeded from his heart, from within Him; and points out the sad streams that flow from that corrupt spring. But it was the simple truth with respect to the heart of man, as known by God, which scandalized the self-righteous men of the world, which was unintelligible even to the disciples. Nothing so simple as the truth when it is known; nothing so difficult, so obscure, when a judgment is to be formed respecting it by the heart of man, who does not possess the truth; for he judges after his own thoughts, and the truth is not in them. In short, Israel and true morality are set in contrast; man is placed in his proper responsibility and in his real colors before God.

Jesus searches the heart; but, acting in grace, He acts according to the heart of God, and manifests it by coming out, both for the one and for the other of the conventional terms of God's relations with Israel.

He leaves the borders of Israel, and His disputes with the learned men of Jerusalem, to visit those places which were farthest off from Jewish privileges. He departs into the coasts of Tiro and Sidon, the cities which He had Himself used as examples of that which was farthest from repentance. See chap. 11, where He classes them with Sodom and Gomorrah. A woman comes out of these countries. She was one of the accursed race, according to the principles that distinguished Israel. She was a Canaanite. She comes to beg the interposition of Jesus on behalf of her daughter, who was possessed by a devil.

In begging this favor, she addresses Jesus by the title which faith knew to be His in connection with the Jews "Son of David." This gives rise to a full development of the Lord's position, and, at the same time, of the conditions under which man might hope to share the effect of His goodness.

As the Son of David, He has nothing to do with a Canaanite. He makes her no answer. The disciples desired to get rid of her by granting her request, in order to have done with her importunity. The Lord answers them that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This was indeed the truth whatever may have been the counsels of God manifested on occasion of His rejection (see Isa. 49) He was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to fulfill His promises made to the Fathers.

The woman, in more simple and direct language, the more natural expression of Her feelings, begs for the merciful interposition of Him in whose power she trusted. The Lord answers her, that it is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to dogs. We see here His true position, as come to Israel; the promises were for the children of the kingdom. The Son of David was the minister of these promises. Could He as such blot out the distinction of the people of God?

But that faith which derives strength from necessity, and which finds no resource but in the Lord Himself, accepts the humiliation of its position, and deems that with Him there is bread for the hunger of those who have no right to it.

What had the Lord done by His apparent harshness? He had brought the poor woman to the expression, to the sense of her real place before God, that is to say, to the truth as to herself. Was this to say that God was less good than she believed, less rich in mercy towards the destitute, whose only hope and trust was in that mercy? This would have been to deny the character and the nature of God, of which He was the expression, the truth, and the witness, on earth. It would have been to deny Himself, and the object of His mission. He could not say, "My God has not a crumb for such." He answers, in fullness of heart: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." God comes out of the narrow limits of His covenant with the Jews, to act in His sovereign goodness according to His own nature. He comes out to be God in goodness, and not merely Jehovah in Israel.

But this goodness is exercised towards one who is brought, in the presence of that goodness, to know that she has no right to it. To this point the seeming harshness of the Lord was leading her. She received all from grace, while in herself unworthy of all. It is thus, and thus only, that every soul obtains blessing. It is not merely the sense of need-the woman had that from the beginning, it was that which brought her there. It is not merely to own that the Lord Jesus can meet that need-the woman came with that acknowledgment. We must be in the presence of the only source of blessing, and be brought to feel that although we are there, we have no right to avail ourselves of it. And this is a terrible position. When it comes to this, all is grace; God can then act according to His own goodness, and He answers every desire the heart can form for its happiness.

Thus we see Christ here as minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to fulfill the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles also might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written. At the same time, this last truth makes manifest the real condition of man, and the full and perfect grace of God. On this He acts, while still faithful to His promises; and the wisdom of God is displayed in a manner that calls forth our admiration.

We see how much the introduction in this place of the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman develops and illustrates this part of our gospel. The beginning of the chapter shows forth the moral condition of the Jews; the dealings of Jesus with this woman, display the faith-fulness of God to His promises; and the blessing finally granted, exhibits the full grace of God, in connection with the manifestation of the real condition of man, acknowledged by conscience. Grace rising above the curse which lay upon the object of this grace-rising above everything to make itself a way unto the need which faith presented to it.

The Lord now departs from thence and goes into Galilee, the place where He was in connection with the despised remnant of the Jews. It was neither Zion, nor the Temple, nor Jerusalem, but the poor of the flock, where the people were sitting in gross darkness (Isa. 8:9). Thither His compassions follow this poor remnant, and are again exercised in their behalf. He renews the evidences; not only of His tender mercies, but of His presence who satisfied the poor of His people with bread. Here, however, it is not in the administrative power which He could bestow on His disciples, but according to His own perfection and acting from Himself. He provides for the remnant of His people. Accordingly, it is the fullness of seven baskets of fragments that is gathered up. He departs also without anything else taking place.

Chapter 16 goes farther than the revelation of the simple grace of God. Jesus reveals the counsels of that grace, showing the rejection of the proud among His people, that He abhors them as they abhor Him (Zech. 11) Shutting their eyes (through perversity of will) to the marvelous and beneficent signs of His power, which He constantly bestowed on the poor who sought Him, the Pharisees and Sadducees-struck with these manifestations, yet unbelieving in heart and will-demand a sign from heaven. He rebukes them for this unbelief, showing them that they knew how to discern the signs of the weather. Yet, the signs of the times were far more striking. They were the adulterous and wicked generation, and He leaves them.

And He warns His forgetful disciples against the devices of these subtle adversaries to the truth, and to Him whom God had sent to reveal it. Israel is abandoned, as a nation, in the persons of their leaders.

Afterward, He questions His disciples as to what men said of Him. It was all matter of opinion, i.e. the uncertainty that belongs to moral indifference, to the absence of that conscious need of soul which can rest only in the truth, in the Savior one has found. He then inquires what they themselves said of Him. Peter, unto whom the Father had deigned to reveal Him, declares His faith, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." No uncertainty, no mere opinion here, but the powerful effect of the revelation, made by the Father Himself, of the person of Christ, to the disciple whom He had elected for this privilege.

Here, the condition of the people displays itself in a remarkable manner, not, as in the preceding chapter, with respect to the law, but with respect to Christ, who had been presented to them. We see it in contrast with the revelation of His glory to those that followed Him.

In Chapter 15, grace towards one who had no hope but in it, is put in contrast with the disobedience and the hypocritical perversion of the law, by which the Scribes and pharisees sought to cover their disobedience with the pretense of piety.

Chapter 16, judging the unbelief of the Pharisees respecting the person of Christ, and setting aside these perverse men, brings in the revelation of His person, as the foundation of the church, which was to take place of the Jews as the witness for God in the earth; and announces the counsels of God with respect to its establishment. It shows us, in adjunction to this, the administration of the kingdom, as it was now being established on the earth.

Let us consider first the revelation of His person.

Peter confesses Him to be the Christ; the fulfillment of the promises made by God, and of the prophecies that announced their realization. He was the One who should come, the Messiah whom God had promised.

Moreover, He was the Son of God. The second Psalm had declared, that in spite of the schemings of the leaders of the people, and the haughty animosity of the kings of the earth, His King should be anointed on the hill of Zion. He was the Son, begotten of God. The kings and judges of the earth are called to submit themselves to Him, lest they should be smitten with the rod of His power, when He takes the heathen for His inheritance. Thus the true believer waited for the Son of God, born in due time upon this earth. Peter confessed Jesus to be the Son of God. So had Nathaniel also, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." And still later, Martha did the same.

Peter, however, especially taught of the Father, adds to his confession a word, simple, yet full of power: "Thou art the Son of the living God." Not only He who fulfills the promises, and answers to the prophecies; it is of the living God that He is the Son.

He inherits that power of life in God, which nothing can overcome or destroy. Who can vanquish the power of Him-of this Son-who came forth from "Him that liveth?" Satan has the power of death, it is he who holds man under the dominion of this dreadful consequence of sin; and that, by the just judgment of God, which constitutes its power. The expression "the gates of Hades," of the invisible world, refer to this kingdom of Satan. It is then on this power, which leaves the stronghold of the enemy without strength, that the church is built. The life of God shall not be destroyed. The Son of the living God shall not be overcome. The kingdom then which God founds upon this rock of the unchangeable power of life in His Son, shall not be overthrown by the kingdom of death. If man has been overcome and has fallen under the power of this kingdom, God, the living God, will not be overcome by it. It is on this that God builds His church. It is the work of Christ, not of the first Adam; His work accomplished according to the power which this truth reveals. The person of Jesus, the Son of the living God, is its strength. It is the resurrection that proved it. Accordingly, it is not during His life, but when raised from the dead, that He begins this work. Life was in Himself, but when He has burst the gates of Hades and is risen, He begins, by the Holy Ghost, to build that which the power of death-already overcome-can never destroy. It is His person that is here contemplated, and it is on His person that all is founded. The resurrection is the proof that He is the Son of the living God, and that the gates of Hades can do nothing against Him; their power is destroyed by it.

The work of the cross was needed; but it is not the question here of that which the righteous judgment of God required, but of that which nullified the power of the enemy. It was the person of Him whom Peter was given to acknowledge, who lived according to the power of the life of God. It

was a peculiar and direct revelation from heaven by the Father. Doubtless, Christ had given proofs enough of who He was, but here, the Father had directly revealed the truth of Christ's own person: a revelation which went beyond all question of relation with the Jews. On this foundation, Christ would build His church. Peter, thus named by the Lord, receives a confirmation of that title on this occasion. The Father had revealed to Simon, the Son of Jonas, the mystery of the person of Jesus, and Jesus also betokens by the name He gives him, the steadfastness, the firmness, the durability, the practical strength, of His servant favored by grace. The right of bestowing a name belongs to a superior, who can assign to the one who bears it, his place and his name in the family or the situation he is in. This right supposes discernment, intelligency, in that which is going on. Adam names the animals. Nebuchadnezzar gives new names to the captive Jews. The king of Egypt to Eliakim, whom He had placed on the throne. Jesus, therefore, takes this place when He says, the Father hath revealed this unto thee, and I also give you a place and a name connected with this grace. It is on that which the Father hath revealed unto thee that I am going to build my church, against which (founded on the life that comes from God) the gates of the kingdom of death shall never prevail; and I who build, and build on this immovable foundation, I give you the place of a stone (Peter) in this living temple. Through the gift of God thou belongest already, by nature, to the building—a living stone, having the knowledge of that truth which is the foundation, and which makes of every stone a part of the edifice. Peter was preeminently such, by this confession. He was so, in anticipation by the election of God. This revelation was made by the Father in sovereignty. The Lord assigns him his place, as possessing the right of administration and authority as Son in the house of God.

Thus far with respect to the church, now mentioned for the first time; the Jews having been rejected because of their unbelief.

Another subject presents itself in connection with this; of the church the Lord was going to build, namely, the kingdom which Christ was going to establish. It was to have the form of the kingdom of heaven; it was so in the counsels of God, but it was now to be set up in a peculiar manner, the King having been rejected on earth.

But, rejected as He was, the keys of the kingdom were in the Lord's hand, its authority belonged to Him. He would bestow them on Peter, who, when Christ was gone, should open its doors to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles. He should also exercise authority from the Lord, within; so that whatsoever he bound on earth in the name of Christ (the true King, although gone up to heaven), should be bound in heaven, and if he loosed anything on earth, his deed should be ratified in heaven. In a word, he had the power of command in the kingdom of God on earth, that kingdom having now the character of kingdom of heaven, because its king was in heaven.

These four things then are declared by the Lord in this passage. 1st. The revelation made by the Father to Simon. 2nd. The name given to this Simon by Jesus, who was going to build His church on the foundation revealed in that which the Father had made known to Simon. 3rd. The church, built on the foundation of the person of Jesus acknowledged as Son of the living God. 4th. The keys of the kingdom, that should be given to Peter. That is' to say, authority in the kingdom as administering it on the part of Christ, ordering in it that which was His will, and which should be ratified in heaven. All this is connected with Simon personally, in virtue of the Father's election, who, in His wisdom, had chosen him to receive this revelation, and of Christ's authority who had

bestowed on Him the name that distinguished him as personally enjoying this privilege.

The Lord having thus made known the purposes of God with regard to the future, purposes to be accomplished in the church and in the kingdom, there was no longer room for His presentation to the Jews as Messiah. Not that He gave up this testimony full of grace and patience, towards the people, which He had borne throughout His ministry. No, that indeed continued, but His disciples were to understand that it was no longer their work to proclaim Him to the people as the Christ. From this time also, He began to teach His disciples that He must suffer and be killed and be raised again.

But, blessed and honored as Peter was, by the revelation which the Father had made to him, his heart still clung in a carnal manner to the human glory of his Master (in truth, to his own), and was still far from rising to the height of the thoughts of God. Alas! he is not the only instance of this. To be convinced of the most exalted truths and even to enjoy them sincerely as truths is a different thing from having the heart formed to the sentiments and to the walk here below, which are in accordance with those truths. It is not sincerity in the enjoyment of the truth, that is wanting. It is to have the flesh, the self, mortified, it is to be dead to the world. Peter, so lately honored by the revelation of the glory of Jesus, and made in a very special manner the depository of administration in the kingdom given to the Son, having a distinguished place in that which was to follow the Lord's rejection by the Jews, is now doing the adversary's work with respect to the perfect submission of Jesus to the suffering and ignominy that were to introduce this glory and characterize the kingdom. Alas! the case was plain, He savored the things of men and not the things of God. But the Lord, in faithfulness, rejects Peter in this matter, and teaches His disciples that the only path, the appointed and necessary path, is the cross. If any one would follow Him, that is the path He took. Moreover, what would it profit a man to save his life, and lose all-to gain the world, and lose his soul; for this was the question, and not now the outward glory of the kingdom.

Having examined this chapter as the expression of the transition from the Messianic system, to the establishment of the church founded on the revelation of the person of Christ, I desire also to call attention to the characters of unbelief which are developed in it, both among the Jews and in the hearts of the disciples. It will be profitable to observe the forms of this unbelief.

First of all, it takes the grosser form of asking a sign from heaven. The Pharisees and Sadducees unite to show their insensibility to all that the Lord had done. They require proof to their natural senses, that is, to their unbelief. They will not believe God, either in hearkening to His words or in beholding His works. God must satisfy their willfulness-which would neither be faith, nor the work of God. They had understanding for human things that were much less clearly manifested, but none for the things of God. A Savior lost to them, as Jews on earth, should be the only sign granted them. They would have to submit, willing or not, to the judgment of the unbelief they displayed. The kingdom should be taken from them; the Lord leaves them. The sign of Jonah is connected with the subject of the whole chapter.

We next see this same inattention to the power manifested in the works of Jesus; but it is no longer the opposition of the unbelieving will; occupation of heart with present things withdraws such from the influence of the signs already given. This is weakness, not ill-will. Nevertheless, they are guilty; but Jesus calls them "Men of little faith," not "hypocrites, and wicked and adulterous

generation."

We then see unbelief manifesting itself in the form of indolent opinion, which proves that the heart and conscience are not, interested in a subject that ought to command them; a subject such that if the heart would really face its true importance, it would have no rest until it had arrived at certainty with respect to it. The soul here has no sense of need; consequently, there is no discernment. When the soul feels this need, there is but one thing that can meet it; there can be no rest till it is found. The revelation of God that created this need, does not leave the soul in peace until it is assured of possessing that which awakened it. Those who are not sensible of this need, can rest in probabilities, each according to his natural character, his education, his circumstances. There is enough to awaken curiosity-the mind is occupied about it, and judges it. Faith has its own wants, and-in principle-intelligency as to its object, which meets those wants; the soul is exercised until it finds that which it needs. The fact is that God is there.

This is Peter's case. The Father reveals His Son to him. We see the condition of his soul when he says, " Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Happy the man to whom God reveals such truths as these; in whom He awakens these wants! There may be conflict, much to learn, much to mortify; but the counsel of God is there, and the life connected with it. We have seen its effect in the case of Peter. Every Christian has his own place in the temple, of which Simon was so eminent a stone. Does it then follow, that the heart is, practically, at the height of the revelation made to it? No; there may be, after all, the flesh not yet mortified, on that side where the revelation touches our earthly position. In fact, the revelation made to Peter implied the rejection of Christ on earth-necessarily led to His humiliation and death. That was the point. To substitute the revelation of the Son of God, the Church and the heavenly kingdom, for the manifestation of the Messiah on earth-what could it mean, except that Jesus was to be delivered up to the Gentiles, to be crucified, and after that to rise again? But, morally, Peter had not attained to this. On the contrary, his carnal heart availed itself of the revelation made to him, and of that which Jesus had said to him, for self-exaltation. Therefore he saw the personal glory, without apprehending the moral consequences. He begins to rebuke the Lord Himself, and seeks to turn Him aside from the path of obedience and submission. The Lord, ever faithful, treats him as an adversary. Alas! how often have we enjoyed some truth, and that sincerely, and yet have failed in the practical consequences that it led to on earth! A heavenly, glorified Savior, who builds the Church, implies the cross on earth. The flesh does not understand this. It will raise its Messiah to heaven, if you will; but to take its share of the humiliation that necessarily follows, is not its idea of a glorified Messiah. The flesh must be mortified, to take this place. We must have the strength of Christ by the Holy Ghost. A Christian who is not dead to the world, is but a stumbling-stone to every one who seeks to follow Christ. These are the forms of unbelief that precede a true confession of Christ, and that are found, alas! in those who have sincerely confessed and known Him. The flesh not being so mortified that the soul can walk in the height of that which it has learned of God, and the spiritual understanding being obscured by thinking of consequences which the flesh rejects.

But if the Cross was the entrance into the kingdom, the revelation of the glory would not be delayed. The Messiah being rejected by the Jews, a title more glorious and of far deeper import is unfolded. The Son of man should come in the glory of the Father (for He was the Son of God), and reward every man according to his works. There were even some standing there who should not

taste of death (for of that they were speaking) till they had seen the manifestation of the glory of the kingdom that belonged to the Son of man.

We may remark here the title of " Son of God," established as the foundation; that of Messiah given up, so far as concerned the testimony rendered in that day, and replaced by that of " Son of man," which He takes at the same time as that of Son of God, and which had a glory that belonged to Him in His own right. He was to come in the glory of His Father as Son of God, and in His own kingdom as Son of man.

It is interesting to remember here the instruction given us in the beginning of the book of Psalms. The righteous man, distinguished from the congregation of the wicked, had been presented in the first Psalm. Then, in the second, we have the rebellion of the kings of the earth, and the rulers, against the Lord and against His Anointed, i.e. His Christ. Now, upon this, the decree of Jehovah is declared. Adonai, the Lord, shall mock at them from heaven. The Lord's s King shall be established on Mount Zion. This is the decree: " The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." The kings of the earth and the judges are commanded to kiss the Son.

Now, in the Psalms that follow, all this glory is darkened. The distress of the remnant, in which Christ has a part, is related. Then, in the eighth, He is addressed as Son of man, Heir of all the rights conferred in sovereignty upon man, by the counsels of God. The name of Jehovah becomes excellent in all the earth. These Psalms do not go beyond the earthly part of these truths, excepting where it is written: " He that sitteth in heaven shall laugh at them." While in Matt. 16 the connection of the Son with God, His coming with His angels (to say nothing of the Church), are set before us. That is to say, we see that the Son of man will come in the glory of heaven. Not that His dwelling there is the truth declared; but that He is invested with the highest glory of heaven, when He comes to set up His kingdom on earth. He comes in His kingdom. The kingdom comes to the earth; but it comes with the glory of heaven. This is displayed in the following chapter, according to the promise here in ver. 23.

In each Gospel that speaks of it, the transfiguration immediately follows the promise of not tasting death before seeing the kingdom of the Son of man. And not only so, 'but Peter in his second Epistle, 1:16, when speaking of this scene, declares that it was a manifestation of the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He says, that the word of prophecy was confirmed to them by the view of His majesty; so that they knew that whereof they spoke, in making known to them the power and the coming of Christ, having beheld His majesty. In fact, it is precisely in this sense that the Lord speaks of it here, as we have seen. It was a sample of the glory in which He would hereafter come, given to confirm the faith of His disciples, in the prospect of His death which He had just announced to them.

In chap. 17 Jesus leads them up into a high mountain, and there is transfigured before them: " His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Moses and Elias appeared also, talking with Him. I leave the subject of their discourse, which is deeply interesting, till we come to the Gospel of Luke, who adds a few other circumstances, which in some respects give another aspect to this scene.

Here the Lord appears in glory, and Moses and Elias with Him. The one, the legislator of the Jews; the other (almost equally distinguished), the prophet who sought to bring back the ten apostate

tribes to the worship of Jehovah; and who, despairing of the people, went back to Horeb, from whence the law was given, and afterward was taken up to heaven without passing through death.

These two persons, pre-eminently illustrious in the dealings of God with Israel, as the founder and the restorer of the people in connection with the law, appear in company with Jesus. Peter, struck with this apparition-rejoicing to see his Master associated with these pillars of the Jewish system, with such eminent servants of God, ignorant of the glory of the Son of man, and forgetting the revelation of the glory of His person as the Son of God-desires to make three tabernacles, and to place the three on the same level as oracles. But the glory of God manifests itself; that is to say, the sign known in Israel as the abode (Shechinah) of that glory; and the voice of the Father is heard. Grace may put Moses and Elias in the same glory as that of the Son of God, and associate them with Him; but if the folly of man, in his ignorance, would place them together as having equal authority over the heart of the believer, the Father must at once vindicate the rights of His Son. Not a moment elapses, before the Father's voice proclaims the glory of the Person of His Son, His relation to Himself, that He is the object of His entire affection, in whom is all His delight. It is He whom the disciples are to hear. Moses and Elias have disappeared. Christ is there alone, as the One to be glorified, the One to teach those who hear the Father's voice. The Father Himself distinguishes Him, presents Him to the notice of the disciples, not as being worthy of their love, but as the object of His own delight. In Jesus He was Himself well-pleased. Thus the Father's affections are presented as ruling ours-setting before us one common object. What a position for poor creatures like us! What grace!

At the same time, the law, and all idea of the restoration of the law under the old covenant, were passed away, and Jesus, glorified as Son of man, and Son of the living God, remains the sole dispenser of the knowledge and the mind of God. The disciples fall on their faces, sore afraid, on hearing the voice of God. Jesus, to whom this glory and this voice were natural, encourages them, as He always did when on earth, saying, "Be not afraid." Being with Him who was the object of the Father's love, why should they fear? Their best Friend was the manifestation of God on the earth; the glory belonged to Him. Moses and Elias had disappeared, and the glory also, which the disciples were not yet able to bear; Jesus-who had been thus manifested to them in the glory given Him, and in the rights of His glorious Person, in His relations with the Father-Jesus remains the same to them as they had ever known Him. But this glory was not to be the subject of their testimony until He, the Son of man, was risen from the dead-the suffering Son of man-the great proof should then be given, that He was the Son of God with power; testimony thereunto should be rendered, and He would ascend personally into that glory which had just shone forth before their eyes.

But a difficulty arises in the minds of the disciples, caused by the doctrine of the Scribes with regard to Elias. These had said, that Elias must come before the manifestation of the Messiah. And, in fact, the prophecy of Malachi authorized this expectation. "Why, then," ask they, "say the Scribes, that Elias must first come?" (that is to say, before the manifestation of the Messiah); "whereas we have now seen that Thou art He, without the coming of Elias." Jesus confirms the words of the prophecy, adding, that Elias should restore all things. "But," continues the Lord, "I say unto you, that he is come already, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed; likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them." Then understood they that He spoke of John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elias, as the Holy Ghost had declared by Zacharias his father.

Let us say a few words on this passage. First of all, when the Lord says, "Elias truly cometh first, and shall restore all things," He does but confirm that which the Scribes had spoken, according to Malachi's prophecy. As though He had said, "They are in the right." He then declares the effect of the coming of Elias: "He shall restore all things." But the Son of man was yet to come. Jesus had said to His disciples, "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." Nevertheless, He had come, and was even now speaking with them. But this coming of the Son of man, of which He spoke, is His coming in glory, when He shall be manifested as the Son of man in judgment, according to Dan. 7 It was thus that all which had been said to the Jews should be accomplished; and in Matthew's Gospel He speaks to them in connection with this expectation. Nevertheless, it was needful that Jesus should be presented to the nation, and should suffer. It was needful that the nation should be tested by the presentation of the Messiah, according to the promise. This was done; and, as God had also foretold by the prophets, "He was rejected of men." Thus, also, John went before Him, according to Isa. 40, as the voice in the wilderness, even in the spirit and power of Elias: he was rejected as the Son of man should also be.

The Lord then, by these words, declares to His disciples, in connection with the scene they had just left, and with all this part of our Gospel, that the Son of man, as now presented to the Jews, was to be rejected. This same Son of man was to be manifested in glory, as they had seen for a moment on the Mount. Elias, indeed, was to come, as the Scribes had said; but that John the Baptist had fulfilled that office in power, for this presentation of the Son of man; which (the Jews being left, as was fitting, to their own responsibility) would only end in His rejection, and in the setting aside of the nation, until the days in which God would begin again to connect Himself with His people, still dear to Him, whatever their condition might be. He would then restore all things; a glorious work, which He would accomplish by bringing again His First-born into the world. The expression, "restore all things," refers here to the Jews, and is used morally. In Acts 3 it refers to the effect of the Son of man's own presence.

The temporary presence of the Son of man was the moment in which a work was accomplished on which eternal glory depends, in which God has been fully glorified, and of which even the outward glory of the Son of man is but the fruit, so far as that depends on His work, and not on His Divine Person, in which, morally, He was perfectly glorified, by perfectly glorifying God. Still, with respect to the promises made to the Jews, it was but the last step in the testing to which they were subjected by grace. God well knew that they would reject His Son; but He would not hold them as definitively guilty until they had really done it. Thus, in His Divine wisdom (while afterward fulfilling His unchangeable promises), He presents Jesus to them, His Son, their Messiah. He gives them every necessary proof. He sends them John the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elias, as His forerunner. The Son of David is born at Bethlehem, with all the signs that should have convinced them; but they were blinded by their pride and self-righteousness, and rejected it all. Nevertheless, it became Jesus, in grace, to adapt Himself, as to His position, to the wretched condition of His people: thus also the Antitype of the David rejected in his day. He shared the affliction of His people: if the Gentiles oppressed them, their King must be associated with their distress; while giving every proof of what He was, and seeking them in love. Rejected, all becomes pure grace. They have no longer a right to anything according to the promises, and are reduced to receive all from that grace, even as a poor Gentile would do. God will not fail in grace. Thus God has put

them on the true footing of sinners, and will nevertheless fulfill His promises. This is the subject of Rom. 11.

Now, the Son of man who shall return, will be this same Jesus who went away. The heavens will receive Him until the times of the restitution of all things, of which the prophets have spoken. But he who was to be His forerunner in this temporary presence here, could not be the same Elias. Accordingly, John was conformed to the manifestation of the Son of man, saving the difference that necessarily flowed from the person of the Son of man who could be but one, while that could not be the case with John the Baptist and Elias. But even as Jesus manifested all the power of the Messiah, all His rights to everything that belonged to that Messiah, without assuming as yet the outward glory, His time not being come (John 7); so John fulfilled morally, and in power, the mission of Elias, to prepare the way of the Lord before Him, (according to the true character of His coming, as then accomplished), and answered literally to Isa. 40, and even to Mal. 3, the only passages applied to Him. This is the reason that John said he was not Elias, and that the Lord said, "If ye can receive it, this is Elias which was for to come." Therefore also John never applied Mal. 4:5,6, to himself; but he announces himself as fulfilling Isa. 40:3-5, and this, in each of the gospels, whatever may be its particular character.

But let us go on with our chapter. While the Lord was on the Mount, a poor father had brought his son,

who was a lunatic and possessed by a devil, to the disciples. Here is developed another character of man's

unbelief, that even of the believer, inability to make use of the power which is, so to say, at his disposal, in the Lord. Christ, Son of God, Messiah, Son of man, had overcome the enemy, had bound the strong man and had a right to cast him out. As man, the obedient one in spite of Satan's temptations, He had overcome him in the wilderness, and had thus a right as man to dispossess him of his dominion over man as to this world; and this He did. In casting out devils and healing the sick, He delivered man from the power of the enemy. "God," said Peter, "anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, and He went about doing good and healing all those that were oppressed by the devil." Now this power should have been used by the disciples, who ought to have known how to avail themselves by

faith of that which Jesus had thus manifested on earth; but they were not able to do it. Yet what availed it to bring this power down here, if the disciples had not faith to use it? The power was there; man might profit by it for complete deliverance from all the oppression of the enemy; He had not faith to do so even believers had not. The presence of Christ on earth was useless, when even His own disciples knew not how to profit by it. There was more faith in the man that brought his child than in them. All therefore come under the Lord's sentence, "Oh faithless and perverse generation." He must leave them; and that which the glory had revealed above, unbelief shall realize below. Observe here that it is not evil in the world which puts an end to a particular intervention of God; on the contrary, it occasions the intervention in grace. It was on account of Satan's dominion over men that Christ came. He departs, because those who had received him are incapable of using the power that he brought with him, or that He bestows for their deliverance; they cannot profit by the very advantages they enjoyed; faith was wanting. Nevertheless, observe also, that as long as such dispensation from God continues, Jesus does not fail to meet individual

faith with blessing, even when His disciples cannot glorify Him by the exercise of faith. After all, to be able to avail ourselves of His power, we must be in communion with Him by the practical energy of faith.

He blesses then the poor father according to His need; and, full of patience, He resumes the course of instruction He was giving His disciples on the subject of His rejection and His resurrection as the Son of man. Loving the Lord, and unable to carry their ideas beyond the circumstances of the moment, they are troubled; and yet this was redemption, salvation, the glory of Christ.

Before, however, going farther and teaching them that which became the disciples of a Master thus rejected, and the position they were to occupy, He sets before them His divine glory in the most touching manner, if they could but have understood it; and at the same time, with perfect condescension and tenderness, He places Himself with them, or rather He places them in the enjoyment of His own rights over the earth.

Those who collected the tribute-money for the service of the temple, come and ask Peter if his Master does not pay it. Ever ready to put himself forward, forgetful of the glory he had seen, and the revelation made to him by the Father, Peter, coming down to the ordinary level of his own thoughts, anxious that his Master should be a good Jew, and without consulting Him, replies that he does. The Lord anticipates Peter and shows him His divine knowledge of that which took place at a distance from Himself. At the same time, he speaks of Peter and Himself as children of the King of the temple. He then commands creation, for He can do all things, as He knows all things, and causes a fish (the last creature with whom one would expect to find money) to bring precisely the sum required; coupling anew the name of Peter with His own. He had said, "Lest we offend them"; and now, "Give unto them for Me and thee." Marvelous and divine condescension He who is the Searcher of hearts, and who disposes at will of the whole creation, the Son of the sovereign Lord of the temple, puts His poor disciples into this same relationship with His heavenly Father, with the God who was worshipped in that temple. He submits to the demands that would have been rightly made on strangers, but he places His disciple in all His own privileges as Son. We see very plainly the connection between this touching expression of divine grace and the subject of these chapters. It demonstrates all the significance of the change that had taken place.

It is interesting to remark that the first epistle of Peter is founded on Matt. chap. 16, and the second on chap. 17, which we have just been considering. In chap. 16, Peter, taught of the Father, confessed the Lord to be the Son of the living God; and the Lord said that on this rock He would build His Church, and that he who had the power of death should not prevail against it. Thus also Peter in his first epistle declares that they were born again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now it is by this resurrection, that the power of the life of the living God was manifested. Afterward, he calls Christ the living stone, in coming unto whom we, as living stones, are built up, a holy temple to the Lord.

In his second epistle, he recalls in a peculiar manner, the glory of the Transfiguration, as a proof of the coming and the kingdom of the Son Of man. Accordingly he speaks in that epistle of the judgment of the Lord.

In chap. 18, the great principles proper to the new order of things, are made known to the disciples. Let us search a little into these sweet and precious instructions of the Lord.

They may be looked at in two ways. They reveal the ways of God with regard to that which was to take the place of the Lord upon earth, as a testimony to grace and truth. Besides this, they depict the character which is in itself the true testimony to be rendered.

This chapter supposes Christ rejected and absent; the glory of chap. 17 not yet come. It passes over chap. 17 to connect itself with chap. 16 except so far as the last verses of 17 give a practical testimony to His abdication of His true rights until God should vindicate them. The Lord speaks of the two subjects contained in chap. 16, the Kingdom and the Church.

That which would be proper for the kingdom was the meekness of a little child, who is unable to assert its own rights in the face of a world that passes it by; the spirit of dependance and humility. They must become as little children. In the absence of their rejected Lord, this was the spirit that became His followers. He who received a little child in the name of Jesus, received Himself. On the other hand, he who put a stumbling block in the way of one of those little ones who believed in Jesus\* should be visited with the most terrible judgment. Alas! the world would do this; but, we unto the world on that account. As to the disciples, if that which they most valued became a snare to them, they must pluck it out and cut it off. They were not to despise these little ones, for if unable to force their own way in this world, they were the object of the Father's special favor, as those who had the peculiar privilege of seeing the King's face. Not that there was no sin in them, but that the Father did not despise those that were far from Him. The Son of man was come to save the lost. And it was not the Father's will that one of these little ones should perish. He spoke, I doubt not, of little children like those whom He took in His arms, but he inculcates on His disciples, the spirit of humility and dependence on the one hand, and on the other, the spirit of the Father, which they were to imitate in order to be truly the children of the kingdom; and not to walk in the spirit of man, who seeks to maintain his place and his own importance, but to humble themselves and submit to contumely; and at the same time (and this is true glory) to imitate the Father who considers the lowly and admits them into His presence. The Son of man was come on behalf of the worthless. This is the spirit of grace spoken of at the end of chap. 5. It is the spirit of the kingdom.

But the Church more especially was to occupy the place of Christ on earth. With respect to offenses against oneself, this same spirit of meekness became His disciple, he was to gain his brother. If the latter would hearken, the thing was to be buried in the heart of the one whom he had offended; but if the appointed means are unavailing, it must be made known to the assembly, and if this did not produce submission, he who had done the wrong should be to him as a stranger, as a heathen and a publican were to Israel.

The Church took the place of Israel on earth. The without and within henceforth applied to her. Heaven would ratify that which the assembly bound on earth, and the Father would grant the prayer of two or three who should agree together in making their request; for Christ was in the midst wherever two or three should be gathered together in His name. Thus, for decisions, for prayers, they were as Christ on the earth, for Christ Himself was there with them. Solemn truth! immense favor, bestowed on two or three when really gathered together in His name; but which forms a subject of the deepest grief when this unity is pretended to while the reality is not there.

Another element of the character proper to the kingdom, which had been manifested in God and in Christ, is pardoning grace. In this also, the children of the kingdom are to be imitators of God, and always to forgive. This refers only to wrongs done to oneself, and not to public discipline. We must pardon to the end, or rather, there must be no end; even as God has forgiven us all things. At the same time, I believe that the dispensations of God to the Jews are here described. They had not only broken the law, but they had slain the Son of God. Christ interceded for them, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," In answer to this prayer, a provisional pardon was preached by the Holy Ghost, through the mouth of Peter. But this grace was rejected. When it was a question of showing grace to the Gentiles, who, no doubt, owed them the hundred pence, they would not hear of it, and they are given up to punishment, until the Lord can say, "They have received double for all their sins."

In a word, the spirit of the kingdom is not outward power, but lowliness; but in this condition there is nearness to the Father, and then it is easy to be meek and humble in this world. One who has tasted the favor of God, will not seek greatness on earth; he is imbued with the spirit of grace, he cherishes the lowly, he pardons those who have wronged him; he is near God, and resembles Him in His ways. The same spirit of grace reigns, whether in the church or in her members. She alone represents Christ on the earth; and to her relate those regulations which are founded on the acceptance of a people as belonging unto God. Two or three really gathered together in the name of Jesus, act with His authority, and enjoy His privileges with the Father, for Jesus Himself is there in their midst.

Chapter 19 carries on the subject of the spirit that is suited to the kingdom of heaven. A question asked by the Pharisees-for the Lord had drawn nigh to Judea-gives rise to the exposition of His doctrine on marriage; and turning away from the law, given on account of the hardness of their hearts, He goes back to God's institution, according to which one man and one woman were to unite together, and to be one in the sight of God. He establishes, or rather, re-establishes, the true character of the indissoluble bond of marriage. I call it indissoluble, for the exception of the case of unfaithfulness, is not one; the guilty person had already broken the bond.

It was no longer man and woman one flesh. At the same time, if God gave spiritual power for it, it was still better to remain unmarried.

He then renews His instruction with respect to children, while testifying His affection for them. Here, it appears to me, rather in connection with the absence of all that binds to the world, to its distractions and its lusts, whereas, in chap. 18, it was the intrinsic character of the kingdom. After this, He shows (with reference to the introduction of the kingdom in His person) the nature of entire devotedness and sacrifice of all things, in order to follow Him, if truly they only sought to please God. The spirit of the world was opposed at all points. Carnal passions, riches,-no doubt the law of Moses restrained these; but it supposes them, and, in some respects, bears with them. According to the glory of the world, a child had no value. What power can it have there? It is of value in the Lord's eyes.

The law promised eternal life to the man that kept it. The Lord makes it simple and practical in its requirements, or, rather, recalls them in their true simplicity. Riches were not forbidden; that is to say, although moral obligation between man and man was maintained by the law, that which bound the heart to the world was not judged by it. Rather was prosperity, according to the

government of God, connected with obedience to it. Christ judges everything that has a bad effect on the heart, and acts upon its selfishness, thus separating it from God. "Sell that thou hast," saith He, "and follow me." Alas! the young man could not renounce his possessions, his ease, himself. "Hardly," saith Jesus, "shall a rich man enter into the kingdom." This was manifest: it was the kingdom of God, of Heaven, -self and the world had no place in it. The disciples, who did not understand that there is no good in man, were astonished that one so favored should be still far from salvation. Who then could succeed? The whole truth then comes out. It is impossible to men. They cannot overcome the desires of the flesh. Morally, and as to his will and his affections, these desires are the man. One cannot make a negro white, or take his spots from the leopard; that which they exhibit is in their nature. But to God, blessed be His name! all things are possible.

These instructions with regard to riches give rise to Peter's question, What shall be the portion of those who have renounced everything? This brings us back to the glory in chap. 17. There would be a regeneration; the state of things should be entirely renewed, under the dominion of the Son of man. At that time they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They should have the first place in the administration of the earthly kingdom. Each one, however, should have his own place; whatever any one renounced for Jesus' sake, he should receive an hundred-fold and everlasting life. Nevertheless, these things would not be decided by appearances here; some that were first should be last, and the last first. In fact, it was to be feared that the carnal heart of man would take this encouragement given in the shape of reward for all his labor and all his sacrifices in a mercenary spirit, and seek to make God his debtor; and, therefore, in the parable by which the Lord continues His discourse, He establishes the principle of grace and of God's sovereignty in that which He gives, and towards those whom He calls, in a very distinct manner, and makes His gifts to those whom He brings into His vineyard, depend on His grace and His call.

We may remark, that when the Lord answers Peter, it was the consequence of having left all for Christ upon His call. The motive was Christ Himself, therefore He says, "Ye which have followed me." He speaks also of those who had done it for His name's sake. That was the motive. The reward is an encouragement when, for His sake, we are already in the way. This is always the case when reward is spoken of in the New Testament. He who was called at the eleventh hour was dependent on this call for his entrance into the work; and if, in his kindness, the master chose to give him as much as the others, they should have rejoiced at it. They adhered to justice; they received that which was agreed upon; the last enjoyed the grace of his master. But who understood it? A Paul might come in late, God having then called him, and be a stronger testimony to grace than the laborers who had wrought from the dawning of the gospel day.

The Lord afterward pursues the subject with His disciples. He goes up to Jerusalem, where the Messiah ought to have been received and crowned, to be rejected and put to death, but after that to rise again; and when the sons of Zebedee come and ask Him for the two first places in the kingdom, He answers that He can lead them indeed to suffering, but as to the first places in His kingdom, He could not bestow them except (according to the Father's counsels) on those for whom the Father had prepared them. Wondrous self-renunciation! 'It is for the Father, for us, that He works. He disposes of nothing. He can bestow on those who will follow Him, a share in His sufferings; everything else shall be given according to the counsels of the Father. But what real glory for Christ and perfection in Him, and what a privilege for us to have this motive only, and to partake in the Lord's sufferings; and what a purification of our carnal hearts is here proposed to us,

in making us act only for a suffering Christ, sharing His cross, and committing ourselves to God for recompense.

The Lord then takes occasion to explain the sentiments that become His followers, the perfection of which they had seen in Himself. In the world, authority was sought for; but the Spirit of Christ was a spirit of service, leading to the choice of the lowest place, and to entire devotedness to others. Beautiful and perfect principles, the full bright perfection of which was displayed in Christ. The renunciation of all things, in order to depend confidently on the grace of Him whom we serve, the consequent readiness to take the lowest place, and thus to be the servant of all, -this should be the spirit of those who have part in the kingdom as now established by the rejected Lord. It is this that becomes His followers.

With the end of ver. 28 this portion of the gospel terminates. At ver. 29 begins His last manifestation to Israel as the Son of David, the Lord, the true King of Israel, the Messiah. He begins His career in this respect at Jericho, the place where Joshua entered the land-the place on which the curse had so long rested. He opens the blind eyes of His people who believe in Him and receive Him as the Messiah, for such He truly was, although rejected. They salute Him as Son of David, and He answers their faith by opening their eyes. They follow Him-a figure of the true remnant of His people, who will wait for Him.

Afterward (chap. 21) disposing of all that belonged to His willing people, He makes His entry into Jerusalem as King and Lord, according to the testimony of Zechariah. But although entering as King-the last testimony to the beloved city, which (to their ruin) was going to reject Him-He comes as a meek and lowly King. The power of God influences the heart of the multitudes, and they salute Him as King, as Son of David, making use of the language supplied by Psa. 118, which celebrates the Millennial sabbath brought in by the Messiah, then to be acknowledged by the people. The multitude spread their garments, to prepare the way for their meek though glorious King, they cut down branches from the trees to bear Him testimony, and He is conducted in triumph to Jerusalem, while the people cry "Hosanna [save now] to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the Highest!" Happy for them if their hearts had been changed to retain this testimony in the spirit. But God sovereignly disposed their hearts to bear this testimony; He could not allow His Son to be rejected without receiving it.

And now the King is going to review everything, still maintaining His position of humility and of testimony. Apparently, the different classes come to judge Him, or to perplex Him; but, in fact, they all present themselves before Him, to receive at His hands, one after another, the judgment of God respecting them. It is a striking scene that opens before us-the true Judge, the everlasting King, presenting Himself for the last time to His rebellious people, with the fullest testimony to His rights and to His power; and they, coming to harass and condemn Him, led by their very malice to pass before Him one after another, laying open their real condition, to receive their judgment from His lips, without His forsaking for a moment (unless in cleansing the temple, before this scene commenced) the position of faithful and true Witness, in all meekness on the earth.

The difference between the two parts of this history is distinguishable. The first presents the Lord in His character of Messiah and Jehovah. As Lord, He commands the ass to be brought. He enters the city, according to the prophecy, as King. He cleanses the temple with authority. In answer to the priests' objections He quotes Psa. 8, which speaks of the manner in which Jehovah caused

Himself to be glorified, and perfected the praises due to Him, out of the mouth of babes. In the temple also He heals Israel. He then leaves them, no longer lodging in the city, which He could no longer own, but with the remnant outside. The next day, in a remarkable figure, He exhibits the curse about to fall upon the nation. Israel was the Lord's fig-tree; but it cumbered the ground. It was covered with leaves, but there was no fruit. The fig-tree, condemned by the Lord, presently withers away. It is a figure of this unhappy nation, which bore no fruit for the husbandman.

Israel, in fact, possessed all the outward forms of religion, and was zealous for the law and the ordinances, but they bore no fruit unto God. So far as placed under responsibility to bring forth fruit-that is to say, under the old covenant-they will never do so. Their rejection of Jesus put an end to all hope. God will act in grace under the new covenant; but that is not the question here. The fig-tree is Israel as they were. All was over. That which He said to the disciples, while it is a great general principle, refers also, I doubt not, to that which should take place in Israel, by means of their ministry. Looked at corporately on the earth, as a nation, Israel should disappear, and be lost among the Gentiles. The disciples were those whom God accepted according to their faith.

We see the Lord entering Jerusalem as a king-Jehovah, the King of Israel-and judgment pronounced on the nation. Then follow the details of judgment on the different classes of which it was composed. First come the chief priests and elders, who should have guided the people; they draw near to the Lord and question His authority. Thus addressing Him, they took the place of heads of the nation, and assumed to be judges, capable of pronouncing on the validity of any claims that might be made; if not, why concern themselves with Jesus.

The Lord, in His infinite wisdom, puts a question to them which tests their capability. To tell them the foundation of His authority was useless. It was too late now.. They would have stoned Him, if He had alleged its true source. He replies, "Decide on John the Baptist's mission." If they could not do this, why inquire respecting His? They cannot do it. If they acknowledged John to have been sent of God, it would be acknowledging Christ. To deny it, would be to lose their influence with the people. Of conscience there was no question with them. They confess their inability. Jesus then declines their competency as leaders and guardians of the faith of the people. They had judged themselves; and the Lord proceeds to set their conduct, and the Lord's dealings with them, plainly before their eyes, from ver. 28, to chap. 22:14.

First, while professing to do the will of God, they did it not; while the openly wicked had repented and done His will. They, seeing this, were still hardened. Again, not only had natural conscience remained un- touched, whether by the testimony of John, or by the sight of repentance in others, but, although God had used every means to make them bring forth fruit worthy of His culture, He had found nothing in them but perversity and rebellion. The prophets had been rejected, and His Son would be so likewise. They desired to have His inheritance for themselves. They could not but acknowledge that in such case the consequence must necessarily be the destruction of those wicked men, and the bestowal of the vineyard on others. Jesus applies the parable to themselves, by quoting Psa. 118, which announces that the stone rejected by the builders, should become the head-stone of the corner. Moreover, that whosoever should fall on this stone-as the nation were at that moment doing-should be broken; but that on whomsoever it should fall-and this would be the lot of the rebellious nation in the last days-it should grind them to powder. The chief priests and the Pharisees understood that He spoke of them, but they dared not lay hands on Him, because the

multitude took Him for a prophet. This is the history of Israel, as under responsibility, even till the last days.

In chap. 22, their conduct with respect to the invitations of grace, is, in its turn, presented. The parable is, therefore, a similitude of the kingdom of heaven. The purpose of God is to honor his Son by celebrating His marriage. First of all, the Jews, already invited, are bidden to the marriage feast. They would not come. This was done during Christ's life-time. Afterward, all things being ready, He again sends forth messengers to induce them to come. This is the mission of the apostles to the nation, when the work of redemption had been accomplished. They either despise the message or slay the messengers. The result is the destruction of those wicked men and of their city. This is the destruction that fell upon Jerusalem. On their rejection of the invitation, the destitute, the Gentiles, those who were outside, are brought in to the feast, and the wedding is furnished with guests. Another thing is now presented. It is true that we have seen the judgment of Jerusalem in this parable, but it is a similitude of the kingdom; we have, therefore, also the judgment of that which is within.

There must be fitness for the occasion. For a wedding-feast there must be a wedding-garment. If Christ is to be glorified everything must be according to His glory. There may be an outward entrance into the kingdom, a profession of Christianity; but he who is not clothed with that which appertains to the feast will be cast out. We must be clothed with Christ himself. On the other hand, all is prepared, nothing is required. It was not the guest's part to bring anything. The King provided all. But we must be imbued with the spirit of that which is done. If there is any thought of what was suitable to a wedding-feast, the need of a wedding-garment to appear in would surely be felt. If not, the honor of the King's Son has been forgotten. The heart was a stranger to it- the man himself shall become so by the judgment of the King when he takes cognizance of the guests who have come in.

Thus also has grace been shown to Israel, and they are judged for refusing the invitation of the great King to the marriage of His Son. And then, the abuse of this grace by those who appear to accept it, is also judged. The bringing in of the Gentiles is declared. Here the history of the judgment of Israel in general, and of the character which the kingdom would assume, concludes.

After this, the different classes of the Jews come forward, each in turn. First, the Pharisees, and the Herodians, i.e., those who favored the authority of the Romans, and those who were opposed to it, seek to entangle Jesus in His talk. The blessed Lord answers them with that perfect wisdom that ever displayed itself in all He said and all He did. On their part, it was pure wickedness, manifesting a total want of conscience. It was their own sin that had brought them under the Roman yoke; a position contrary indeed to that which should have belonged to the people of God on earth. Apparently, therefore, Christ must either become an object of suspicion to the authorities, or renounce His claim to be the Messiah, and, consequently, the Deliverer. Who had occasioned this dilemma? It was the fruit of their own sins. The Lord shows them that they had themselves accepted the yoke. The money bore the mark of this; let them render it then to those unto whom it belonged, and let them also-which they were not doing-render unto God the things that were God's. He leaves them under the yoke which they were obliged to confess they had accepted. He reminds them of the rights of God which they had forgotten. Such might, moreover, have been Israel's state according to the establishment of power in Nebuchadnezzar, as a

"spreading vine of low stature."

The Sadducees come next before Him, and question Him with respect to the resurrection, thinking to prove its absurdity. Thus, as the condition of the nation had been exhibited in His discourse with the Pharisees, their unbelief is here displayed. They thought only of the things of this world, seeking to deny the existence of another. But whatever might be the state of degradation and subjection into which the people had fallen, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob changed not. The promises made to the remained sure, and the fathers were living, to enjoy these promises hereafter. It was the word and the power of God which were in question. The Lord maintains them with power and evidency. The Sadducees were silenced.

The lawyers, struck with His reply, ask a question which gives the Lord occasion to extract from the whole law, that which, in the sight of God, is its essence, presenting thus its perfection, and that which-by whatever means it may be reached-forms the happiness of those that walk in it. Grace alone rises higher.

Here their questionings cease. All is judged, all is brought to light with respect to the position of the people and the sects of Israel; and the Lord has laid before them the perfect thoughts of God respecting them, whether on the subject of their condition, of His promises, or of the substance of the law.

It was now the Lord's turn to propose His question in order to bring out His own position. He asks the Pharisees to reconcile the title of Son of David with that of Lord, which David himself gave Him, and that, in connection with the ascension of this same Christ, to sit at the right hand of God until God had made all His enemies His footstool, and established His throne in Zion. Now, this was the whole of Christ's position at that moment. They were unable to answer Him, and no man thurst ask Him any more questions. In fact, to understand that Psalm would have been to understand all the ways of God with respect to His Son, at the time they were going to reject Him. This necessarily closed these discourses, by showing the true position of Christ, who, although the Son of David, must ascend on high to receive the kingdom, and, while waiting for it, sit at the right hand of God, according to the rights of His glorious person. David's Lord, as well as David's Son.

There is another point of interest to be remarked here. In these interviews, and these discourses with the different classes of the Jews, the Lord brings out the condition of the Jews on all sides, with respect to their relations with God, and then, the position which He took Himself. He first shows their national position towards God, as under responsibility to Him, according to natural conscience and the privileges belonging to them. The result would be, their cutting off, and the bringing in of others into the Lord's vineyard. This is chap. 21:28-46. He then exhibits their condition with regard to the grace of the kingdom, and the introduction of Gentile sinners. Here also, the result is the cutting off and the destruction of the city. Afterward, the Herodians and the Pharisees, the friends of the Romans, and their enemies, the pretended friends of God, bring out the true position of the Jews with respect to the imperial power of the Gentiles and to God. In His interview with the Sadducees, He shows the certainty of the promises made to the fathers, and the relations of God with them in respect of life and resurrection. After this, He puts the real meaning of the law before the Scribes; and then, the position which He took, Himself the Son of David, according to Psa. 110 which was linked with His rejection by the leaders of the nation, who stood around Him.

Chapter 23 clearly shows how far the disciples are viewed in connection with the nation, inasmuch as they were Jews; although the Lord judges the leaders, who beguiled the people and dishonored God by their hypocrisy. He speaks to the multitude and to His disciples, saying, "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." Being thus expositors of the law, they were to be obeyed in all that they said according to that law, although their own conduct was but hypocrisy. That which is important here is the position of the disciples. It is, in fact, the same as that of Jesus; they are in connection with all that is of God in the nation, that is to say, with the nation as the recognized people of God; consequently, with the law, as possessing authority from God. At the same time, the Lord judges, and the disciples also were practically to judge the walk of the nation, as publicly represented by their leaders. While still forming part of the nation they were carefully to avoid the walk of the Scribes and Pharisees. After having reproached these pastors of the nation with their hypocrisy, the Lord points out the way in which they themselves condemned the deeds of their fathers, by building the sepulchers of the prophets whom they had slain. They were then the children of those who slew them, and God would put them to the test, by sending them also prophets and wise men, and scribes, and they would fill up the measure of their iniquity by putting these to death and persecuting them; condemned thus out of their own mouths, in order that all the righteous blood which had been shed, from Abel's to that of the prophet Zechariah, should come upon this generation. Frightful amount of guilt, accumulated from the beginning of the enmity which sinful man, when placed under responsibility, has ever shown to the testimony of God; and which increased daily, because the conscience became more hardened each time that it resisted this testimony. The truth was so much the more manifest from its witnesses having suffered. It was a rock, exposed to view, to be avoided in the people's path. But they persisted in their evil course, and every step in advance, every similar act, was the proof of a still increasing obduracy. All would be heaped up on the head of this reprobate generation.

Remark here, the character given to the apostles and Christian prophets. They are scribes, wise men, prophets, sent to the Jews--to the ever rebellious nation. This very clearly brings out the aspect in which this chapter regards them. Even the apostles are "wise men," "scribes," sent to the Jews as such.

But the nation-Jerusalem, God's beloved city-is guilty and is judged. Christ, as we have seen, since the cure of the blind man near Jericho, presents Himself as Jehovah. How often would He have gathered the children of Jerusalem, but they would not; and now their house should be desolate until (their hearts being converted) they should use the language of Psa. 118, and, in desire, hail His arrival who came in the name of the Lord, looking for deliverance at His hands, and praying to Him for it: in a word, until they should cry Hosannah to Him that should come. They would see Jesus no more until, humbled in heart, they should pronounce Him blessed whom they were expecting, and whom they now rejected: in short, until they were prepared in heart. Peace should follow, desire precede, His appearing.

The three last verses exhibit clearly enough the position of the Jews, or, of Jerusalem, as the center of the system before God. Long since, and many times would Jesus, Jehovah the Savior, have gathered the children of Jerusalem together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not. Their house should remain forsaken and desolate, but not forever. After having killed the prophets and stoned the messengers sent unto them, they had crucified their Messiah, and rejected and slain those whom He had sent to proclaim grace unto them, even after

His rejection. Therefore should they see Him no more until they had repented, and the desire to see Him was produced in their hearts, so that they should be prepared to bless Him, and would bless Him in their hearts, and confess their readiness to do so. The Messiah, who was about to leave them, should be seen of them no more until repentance had turned their hearts unto Him whom they were now rejecting. Then they should see Him. The Messiah, coming in the name of the Lord, shall be manifested to His people Israel. It is the Lord their Savior who should appear, and the Israel who had rejected Him should see Him as such. The people should thus return into their relations with God.

Such is the moral and prophetic picture of Israel. The disciples, as Jews, were viewed as part of the nation.

We have already seen that the rejection of the testimony to the kingdom in grace, is the cause of the judgment that falls upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants. Now, in chap. 24 we have the position of this testimony in the midst of the people, the condition of the Gentiles, and the relation between them and the testimony rendered by the disciples. After this, the condition of Jerusalem consequent upon her rejection of the Messiah and her contempt for the testimony; and then, the universal overthrow at the end of those days: a state of things which should be ended by the appearance of the Son of man, and the gathering together of the elect of Israel from the four winds.

We must examine this remarkable passage, at once a prophecy, and instruction to the disciples, for their direction in the path they must follow amid the coming events.

Jesus departs from the temple, and that, forever. A solemn act, which we may say executed the judgment He had just pronounced. The house was now desolate. The heart of the disciples was still bound to it by their former prepossessions. They draw His attention to the magnificent buildings that composed it. Jesus announces to them its entire destruction. Seated apart with Him on the Mount of Olives, the disciples inquire when these things were to happen, and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age. They class together the destruction of the temple, the coming of Christ, and the end of the age. We must observe that here the end of the age is the end of the period during which Israel was subject to the law under the old covenant: a period which was to cease, giving place to the Messiah and to the new covenant. Observe also, that God's government of the earth is the subject, and the judgments that should take place at Christ's coming, which would put an end to the existing age. The disciples confounded that which the Lord had said of the destruction of the temple with this period. The Lord

treats the subject from His own point of view; that is to say, with regard to the testimony which the disciples were to render in connection with the Jews, during His absence, and to the end of the age. He adds nothing as to the destruction of Jerusalem, which He had already announced. The time of His coming was purposely hidden. Moreover, the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus put an end, in fact, to the position which the Lord's instructions had in view. There was no longer any cognizable testimony among the Jews. When this position shall be resumed, the applicability of the passage will also recommence. After the destruction of Jerusalem, until that time, the church only is in question.

The Lord's discourse is divided into three parts:-

1. The general condition of the disciples and of the world during the time of the testimony.
2. The period marked out by the fact that the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place.
3. The Lord's coming and the gathering together of the elect in Israel.

The time of the disciples' testimony is characterized by false Christs and false prophets among the Jews; persecution of those who render testimony, betraying them to the Gentiles. But there is yet something more definite with regard to those days. There would be false Christs in Israel. There would be wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes. They were not to be troubled-the end would not be yet. These things were only a beginning of sorrows. They were principally outward things. There were other events which would bring them into greater trial, and test them more thoroughly - things more from within. The disciples should be delivered up, put to death, hated of all nations. The consequence of this among those who made profession, would be that many would be offended, they would betray one another, false prophets would arise and deceive many, and, because iniquity abounded, the love of many should wax cold. A sorrowful picture; but these things would give occasion for the exercise of a faith that had been put to the proof. He who endured to the end should be saved. This concerns the sphere of testimony in particular. That which the Lord says, is not absolutely limited to the testimony in Canaan, but as it is from thence the testimony goes forth, it is all connected with that land as a moral center. In addition to this, the gospel should be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then should the end come: the end of this age. Now, although heaven is the source of authority when the kingdom shall be established, Canaan and Jerusalem are its earthly center. So that the idea of the kingdom, while extending throughout the world, turns our thoughts to the land of Israel. It is "this gospel of the kingdom"; it is not here the proclamation of the union of the church with Christ, nor redemption in its fullness, as preached and taught by the apostles after the ascension, but the kingdom which was to be established on the earth, as John the Baptist, and as the Lord Himself, had proclaimed. The establishment of the universal authority of the ascended Christ, should be preached in all the world, to test their obedience, and to furnish those who had ears to hear, with the object of faith. This is the general history of that which would take place until the end of the age, without entering on the subject of the proclamation of the church properly so called. The destruction of Jerusalem, and the refusal of the Jews to receive the gospel, caused God to raise up a special testimony by the hands of Paul, without annulling the truth of the coming kingdom. That which follows, proves that such a going forth of testimony of the kingdom will take place at the end, and that the testimony will reach all nations before the coming of that judgment which will put an end to the age.

But there will be a moment when, within a certain sphere, all testimony shall cease. That is to say, in Jerusalem and its vicinity; unless it be the testimony of suffering. It is from the moment that the abomination that maketh desolate shall be set up in the holy place. The Lord refers us to Daniel, that we may understand whereof He speaks. Now, Daniel brings us definitely to the last days- the time when Michael shall stand up for Daniel's people, i.e., the Jews, who are under the dominion of the Gentiles-the days in which there shall be a time of trouble, such as never had been nor ever again should be, and in which the remnant should be delivered. In the latter part of the previous chapter of that prophet, this time is called "the time of the end," and the destruction of the king of the North is prophetically declared. Now, the prophet announces that 1335 days before the full

blessing(blessed is he that has part therein!), the daily sacrifice should be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up; that from this moment, there should be 1290 days, that is one month more than the 1260 days spoken of in the Revelation, during which the woman who flees from the serpent is nourished in the wilderness, and also more than the three years and a half of Dan. 7 At the end, as we find here, the judgment comes and the kingdom is given to the saints. Thus it is proved that this passage refers to the last days, and to the position of the Jews at that time. The events of the time past confirm this thought. Neither in 1260 days, nor in 1260 years, after the days of Titus, nor in 30 days or years after, did any event take place which could be the accomplishment of these days in Daniel. The periods are gone by, many years ago. Israel has not been delivered, neither has Daniel stood in his lot at the end of those days. It is equally plain that Jerusalem is in question, and its vicinity, for they that are in Judea are commanded to flee into the mountains. The disciples who shall be there at that time are to pray that their flight may not be on a Sabbath day: an additional testimony that it is Jews who are in question; but a testimony also of the tender care which the Lord takes of those who are His, thinking, even in the midst of these unparalleled events, of whether it would be wintry weather at the time of their flight. Besides this, other circumstances prove, if farther proof were needed, that it is the Jewish remnant who are in question, and not the church. We know that all believers are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. They will afterward return with Him. But here, there will be false Christs on the earth, and people will say, "He is here in the wilderness," " He is there in the secret chambers." But the saints who shall be caught up and return with the Lord, have nothing at all to do with false Christs on earth, since they will go up to heaven to be with Him there, before He returns to the earth: while it is easy to understand that the Jews, who are expecting earthly deliverance, should be liable to similar temptations, and that they should be deceived by them, unless kept by God Himself. This part then of the prophecy applies to the last days, to the last three years and a half before the judgment, which will be suddenly poured out at the coming of the Son of man. The Lord will come suddenly, as a flash of lightning, as an eagle to its prey, unto the spot where the object of His judgment is found. Immediately after the tribulation of that last three years and a half, the whole hierarchical system of government shall be shaken and utterly overthrown. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. This ver. 30 contains the answer to the second part of the disciples' inquiry in ver. 3. The Lord gives His disciples the warnings necessary for their guidance; but the world would see no signs, however plain they might be to those that understand. But this sign should be at the moment of the Lord's appearing. The brightness of His glory whom they had despised, would show them who it was that came: and it would be unexpected. What a terrible moment, when, instead of a Messiah who should answer to their worldly pride, the Christ whom they had despised shall appear in the heavens.

Afterward, the Son of Man thus come and thus manifested, would send for all the elect in Israel from the four corners of the earth. It is this which ends the history of the Jews, and even that of Israel, in answer to the disciples' question; and unfolds the dealings of God with respect to the testimony, among the people who had rejected it, and announces the time of their deep distress, and the judgment that shall be poured out in the midst of this scene when Jesus comes, the subversion of all powers, great and small, being complete.

The Lord gives the history of the testimony in Israel, and that of the people themselves, from the moment of His departure until His return; but the length of time during which there should be neither people, nor temple, nor city, is not specified. It is this which gives importance to the capture of Jerusalem. It is not here spoken of in direct terms-the Lord does not describe it; but it put an end to that order of things to which His discourse applies, and this application is not resumed until Jerusalem and the Jews are again brought forward. The Lord announced it at the beginning. The disciples thought that His coming would take place at the same time. He answers them in such a manner, that His discourse should be of use to them until the capture of Jerusalem. But when once the abomination of desolation is mentioned, we find ourselves carried on into the last days.

The disciples were to understand the signs He gave them. I have already said that the destruction of Jerusalem, by the fact itself, interrupted the application of His discourse. The Jewish nation was set aside; but ver. 34 has a much wider sense, and one more really proper to it. Unbelieving Jews should exist, as such, until all was accomplished. Compare Deut. xxxii. 5, 20, where this judgment on Israel is specially in view. God hides His face from them until He shall see what their end will be, for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. This has taken place. They are a distinct race of people unto this day. That generation exists in the same condition-a monument of the perpetuity of God's dealings, and of the Lord's

words.

To conclude, the government of God, exercised with regard to this people, has been traced to its end. The Lord comes, and He gathers together the dispersed elect of Israel. The prophetic history then continues, chap. 25:31, which is connected with chap. 24:30. And as chap. 24:31 relates the gathering together of Israel, after the appearance of the Son of man, chap. 25:31 announces His dealings in judgment with the Gentiles. He will appear, doubtless, as the lightning, with regard to the apostasy, who will be as a dead body in His sight. But when He shall come solemnly to take His earthly place in glory, that will not pass away like lightning. He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and all nations shall be gathered before Him on His throne of judgment, and they shall be judged according to their treatment of the messengers of the kingdom, who had gone out to preach it unto them. These messengers are the brethren (ver. 40), those who had received them are the sheep; those who had neglected their message are the goats. It is the nations then who are judged on earth, according to their treatment of these messengers. It is the judgment of the living, so far at least as regards the nations; a judgment as final as that of the dead. It is not Christ's judgment in battle, as in Rev. 19. It is a session of His supreme tribunal, in His right of government over the earth, as in Rev. 20:4. I speak of the principle, or rather of the character of the judgment. I do not doubt that these brethren are Jews, such as the disciples were, that is to say, those who will be in a 'similar position as to their testimony. The Gentiles who had received this message should be accepted, as though they had treated Christ in the same manner. His Father had prepared for them the enjoyment of the kingdom, and they should enter into it, being still on earth, for Christ was come down in the power of eternal life.

I have, for the moment, passed over all between chap. 24:31 and chap. 25:31, because the end of this last chapter completes all that concerns the government and the judgment of the earth. But there is a class of per-; sons, whose history is given us in its great moral features; a history that comes in its place between the two verses I have just mentioned.

They are the disciples of Christ (outside the testimony in the midst of Israel), to whom He has committed His service, and a position in connection with Himself, during His absence. This position and this service are in connection with Christ Himself, and not in connection with Israel, wherever it may be that this service is accomplished.

There are, however, some verses of which I have not yet spoken, which apply more particularly to the state of things in Israel, and to the disciples who are there. I speak of them here, because all this part of the discourse, namely, from -chap. 24:31 to chap. 25:31, is an exhortation, an address from the Lord, on the subject of their duties during His absence. Chapter 24:36-44 The continual expectation, which their ignorance of the moment when the Son of Man would come imposed on the disciples, while from ver. 45, the Lord addresses Himself more directly, and at the same time in a more general manner, to their conduct during His absence; not in connection with Israel, but with His own, His household. He had committed to them the task of supplying them with suitable food in due season. This is the responsibility of ministry in the church. It would be on his return that judgment should be pronounced on their faithfulness during the interval. Faithfulness should be approved in that day. On the other hand, practical forgetfulness of His coming would lead to license and tyranny. It is not an intellectual system that is meant here, " the evil servant says in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming"; his will was concerned in it. The result was that the fleshly will manifested itself. It was no longer devoted service to His household, with a heart set upon the Master's approval at His return; but worldliness in conduct and the assumption of arbitrary authority, to which the service appointed him gave occasion. He eats and drinks with the drunken; he unites himself to the world and partakes in its ways; he smites his fellow-servants at his will. Such is the effect, during His absence, of forgetfulness of the Lord's return. Instead of faithful service, worldly-mindedness and tyranny. Is it not too true a picture? What is it that has happened to those who had the place of service in the house of God? The consequences on both hands are these: the faithful servant, who from love and devotion to his master, applied himself to the welfare of His household, should be made ruler, on his Master's return, over all His goods: those who have been faithful in the service of the house, shall be set over all things by the Lord, when He. takes His place of power, and acts as King. All things are given into the hands of Jesus by the Father. Those who, in humility, have been faithful to His service during. His absence, shall be made rulers over all that is committed to Him, i.e., over all things:-they are but the "goods" of Jesus. On the other hand, he who during the Lord's absence, had set himself up as master, and followed after the spirit of the flesh and of the world, to which he had united himself, should not merely have the world's portion. His Master should come quite unexpectedly, and he should receive the same punishment as the hypocrites. What a lesson for those who take to themselves a place of service in the church! Observe here, that it is not said he is drunken himself, but that he eats and drinks with those that are so. He allies himself with the world, and follows its customs. This, moreover, is the general aspect which the kingdom will assume in that day, although the heart of the evil servant was wicked. The bridegroom will indeed tarry; and the consequences that might be expected from the heart of man, will not fail to be realized. But the effect will be to make manifest the fundamental difference between the two classes.

Chapter 25 Professors, during the Lord's absence, are here presented as virgins, who went out to meet the bridegroom, and light him to the house. In this passage, He is not the Bridegroom of the church. No others go to meet Him for His marriage with the church in heaven.

The bride does not appear in this parable. Had she been introduced, it would have been Jerusalem on earth. The church is not seen in these chapters as the church. It is individual responsibility during the absence of Christ. That which characterized the faithful at this period was that they came out from the world, from Judaism, from everything, to go and meet the coming Lord. The Jewish remnant, on the contrary, wait for Him in the place where they are. If this expectation was real, the characteristic of one governed by it, would be the thought of that which was necessary for the coming One: the light, the oil. Otherwise, to be the companions of professors meanwhile, and to carry lamps with them would satisfy the heart. Nevertheless, they all take a position, they go out, they leave the house to go out and meet the Bridegroom. He tarries. This also has taken place. They all fall asleep. The whole professing church has lost the thought of the Lord's return; even the faithful who have the Spirit. They must also have gone in again somewhere to sleep at ease. But, at midnight, unexpectedly, the cry is raised- "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." Alas! they needed the same call as at first. They must again go out to meet Him. The virgins rise, and trim their lamps. There is time enough between the cry and the Bridegroom's arrival, to prove the condition of each. There were some who had no oil in their vessels. Their lamps went out. The wise had oil. It was impossible for them to share it with the others. Those only who possessed it went in with the Bridegroom to take part in the marriage. He refused to acknowledge the others. What business had they there? The virgins were to give light with their lamps. They had not done it. Why should they share the feast? They had failed in that which gave this place. What title had they to be at the Feast? The virgins of the feast were virgins who accompanied the Bridegroom. These had not done so. They were not admitted.

Even the faithful ones had forgotten the coming of Christ. They fell asleep. But at least they possessed the essential thing that corresponded to it. The grace of the Bridegroom causes the cry to be raised which proclaims His arrival. It awakens them, they have oil in their vessels, and the delay which occasions the lamps of the unfaithful to go out, gives the faithful time to be ready and at their place; and, forgetful as they may have been, they go in with the Bridegroom to the wedding-feast.

For, in truth (ver. 14), it is as a man who had gone away from his home-for the Lord dwelt in Israel--and who committed his goods to his own servants and then departs. Here we have the principles that characterize faithful servants. It is not now the personal individual expectation, and the possession of the oil, requisite for a place in the Lord's glorious train; neither is it the public and general position of those who were in the Master's service, characterized as position, and therefore represented by a single servant; it is individual faithfulness in the service, as before in the expectation of the Bridegroom. The Master, on His return, will reckon with each one. Now, what was their position? What was the principle that would produce faithfulness? Observe, first of all, that it is not providential gifts, earthly possessions, that are meant. These are not the "goods" that Jesus committed to His people when He went away. They were gifts which fitted them to labor in His service while He was absent. The Master was sovereign and wise. He gave differently to each, and to each according to his capacity. Each was fitted for the service in which he was employed, and the gifts needed for its fulfillment were bestowed on him. Faithfulness to perform it, was the only thing in question. That which distinguished The faithful from the unfaithful, was confidence in their Master. They had sufficient confidence in His well-known character, in His

goodness, His love, to labor without being authorized in any other manner than by their knowledge of His personal character, and by the intelligency which that confidence and that knowledge produced. Of what use to give them sums of money, except to trade with them? Had He failed in wisdom when He bestowed these gifts? The devotedness that flowed from knowledge of their Master, counted upon the love of Him whom they knew. They labored, and they were rewarded. This is the true character, and the spring, of service in the church. It is this that the third servant lacked. He did not know his Master-he did not trust in him. He could not even do that which was consistent with his own thoughts. Those who knew their Master's character entered into His joy. There is this difference between the parable here and that in Luke 19, that in the latter each man receives one pound; his responsibility is the only question. And consequently he who gained ten pounds is set over ten cities. Here the sovereignty and the wisdom of God are concerned, and he who labors is guided by the knowledge he has of his Master; and the counsels of God in grace are accomplished. He who has the most, receives yet more. At the same time, the reward is more general. He who has gained two talents, and he who has gained five, enter alike into the joy of the Lord whom they have served. They have known Him in His true character-they enter into His full joy. The Lord grant it unto us!

There is more than this in the second parable. It refers more directly and more exclusively to the heavenly character of Christians. It is not the Church-properly so called-as a body; but the faithful have come out to meet the Bridegroom, who was returning to the marriage. At the time of His return to execute judgment, the kingdom of heaven will assume the character of persons come out from the world, and still more from Judaism-from all that, in point of religion, belongs to the flesh-from all established worldly form-to have to do with the coming Lord alone, and to go out to meet Him. This was the character of the faithful from the beginning, as having part in the kingdom of heaven, if they had understood the position in which they were placed by the Lord's rejection. The virgins, it is true, had gone in again; but this falsified their character and the midnight cry brought them back into their true place. Therefore they go in with the Bridegroom, and there is no question of judging and rewarding, but of being with Him. In the first and third parables, the subject is His return to earth, and individual recompence; the results, in the kingdom, of their conduct during the King's absence. This is not the subject in the Parable of the Virgins. Those who have no oil, do not go in at all. This is enough. The others have blessing in common; they go in with the Bridegroom to the marriage. There is no question of particular reward, nor of difference in conduct between them. Whatever the place of service might have been, the reward was sure. This parable applies, and is limited to the heavenly portion of the kingdom, as such. It is a similitude of the kingdom of heaven.

We may also remark here, that the delay of the Master is noticed in the third parable likewise: "After a long time" (ver. 19). Their faithfulness and their constancy were thus put to the test. May the Lord give unto us to be found faithful and devoted, now in the end of the ages, that He may say unto us, " Good and faithful servants!"

Weeping and gnashing of teeth are his portion who has not known his Master, who has outraged Him by the thoughts he entertained of His character.

In ver. 31, the prophetic history is resumed from the 31st ver. of chap. 24. There we saw the Son of man appear like a flash of lightning, and afterward gather together the remnant of Israel from

the four corners of the earth. But this is not all. If He thus appears in a manner as sudden as unexpected, He also establishes His throne of judgment and glory on the earth. If He destroys His enemies whom He finds in rebellion against Himself, He also sits upon His throne to judge all nations. This is the judgment on earth of the living. Four different parties are here found together. The Lord, the Son of man Himself-the brethren-the sheep -and the goats. I believe the brethren here to be Jews, His disciples as Jews, whom He had employed as His messengers, to preach the kingdom during His absence. The Gospel of the kingdom was to be preached, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end of the age should come. At the time here spoken of, this had been done. The result should be manifested before the throne of the Son of man.

He calls these messengers, therefore, His brethren. He had told them, they should be ill-treated; they had been so. Still there were some who had received their testimony.

Now, such was His affection for His faithful servants, so highly did He value them, that He judged those to whom the testimony was sent, according to the manner in which they had received these messengers, whether well or ill, as though it had been done to Himself, What an encouragement for His witnesses during that time of trouble, tried as their faith should be in service! At the same time, it was justice, morally, to those who were judged; for they had rejected the testimony, by whomsoever it was rendered. We have also the result of their conduct, both the one and the other. It is the King-for that is the character Christ has now taken on earth-who pronounces judgment; and He calls the sheep, those who had received the messengers, and had sympathized with them in their afflictions and persecutions, to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world: for such had been the purpose of God with respect to this earth; He had always the kingdom in view. They were the blessed of His, the King's, Father. It was not children, who understood their own relation with their Father; but they were the receivers of blessing from the Father of the King of this world. Moreover, they were to enter into everlasting life; for such was the power, through grace, of the word which they had received into their heart. Possessed of everlasting life, they should be blest in a world that was blest also.

They who had despised the testimony and those that bore it, had despised the King who sent them; they should go away into everlasting punishment.

Thus, the whole effect of Christ's coming, with regard to the kingdom, and to His messengers during His absence, is unfolded-with respect to the Jews, as far as ver. 31 of chap. 24; with respect to His servants during His absence, to the end of ver. 30 of chap. 25, including the kingdom of heaven in its present condition, and the heavenly rewards that shall be given; and then, from ver. 31 to the end of chap. 25, with respect to the nations who shall be blessed on the earth at His return.

The Lord had finished his discourses. He prepares, to suffer, and to make His last and touching adieus to His disciples, at the table of His last passover on earth, at which He instituted the simple and precious memorial which recalls His sufferings and His love with such profound interest. This part of our Gospel requires little explanation-not, assuredly, that it is of less interest; but because it needs to be felt, rather than explained. With what simplicity the Lord announces that which was to happen! (ver. 2).

He had already arrived at Bethany, six days before the passover (John 12:1): there He abode, with the exception of the last supper, until He was taken in the Garden of Gethsemane, although He visited Jerusalem, and there partook of His last meal.

We have already examined the discourses uttered during those six days, as well as His actions, such as the cleansing of the temple. That which precedes this chapter (26) is either the manifestation of His rights as Emanuel, King of Israel, or that of the judgment of the great King with respect to the people—a judgment expressed in discourses to which the people could make no answer; or, finally, the condition of His disciples during His absence. We have now His submission to the sufferings appointed Him, to the judgment about to be executed upon Him; but which was, in truth, only the fulfillment of the counsels of God His Father, and of the work of His own love.

The picture of man's dreadful sin in the crucifixion of Jesus, unfolds before our eyes. But the Lord Himself announces it before-hand, with all the calmness of one who had come for this purpose. Before the consultations of the chief priests had taken place, Jesus speaks of it as a settled thing: << Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to be crucified."

Afterward, the priests, the scribes, and the elders assemble to concert their plans for obtaining possession of His person, and ridding themselves of Him.

In a word, first, the marvelous counsels of God, and the submission of Jesus, according to His knowledge of those counsels, and of the circumstances which should accomplish them; and, afterward, the iniquitous counsels of man, which do but fulfill those of God.

Judas was but the instrument of their malice, in the hand of Satan; who, after all, did but arrange these things according to Divine intention. They wished to avoid taking Him at the time of the feast, on account of the multitude, who might favor Jesus, if He appealed to them. They had already done so at His entrance into Jerusalem; and wickedness always reckons on finding its own principles in others. This is the reason why it so frequently fails in circumventing the upright, because they are artless. Here it was the will of God. But He had prepared a gracious relief to the heart of Jesus—a balm to His heart more than to His body—in a circumstance which is used by the enemy to drive Judas to extremity, and put him in connection with the chief priests.

Bethany-linked in memory with the last moments of peace and tranquility in the Savior's life, the place where dwelt Martha and Mary, and Lazarus, the risen dead—Bethany receives Jesus for the last time. The blessed, but momentary retreat of a heart which, ever ready to pour itself out in love, was ever straitened in a world of sin, that did not and could not respond to it; yet a heart which has given us, in these sojourns at the house of this beloved family, the example of an affection, perfect yet human, which found sweetness in being responded to and appreciated. The nearness of the cross, when He would have to set His face as a flint, did not deprive His heart of the joy or the sweetness of this communion, while rendering it solemn and affecting. In doing the work of God, He did not cease to be man. In everything He condescended to be ours. This sanctuary sheltered Him for a moment from the rude hand of man. Here He could display what He ever was as man. It is with reason that the act of one who appreciated this privilege—an act that expressed his affection—should be told in all the world. This is a scene, a testimony, that brings the Lord sensibly near to us; that awakens a feeling in our hearts, which sanctifies by binding them to His beloved person.

His daily life was one continual tension of soul, in proportion to the strength of His love—a life of devotedness in the midst of sin and misery. For a moment, He could give free course to sentiments proper, in their origin, to innocence; but enhanced by the fact, that it was the operation of grace, in the midst of sin, which gave them liberty.

The reader will do well carefully to study this scene of touching condescension and outpouring of heart. Jesus, Emanuel, King and Supreme Judge, had just been causing all things to pass in judgment before Him (from chap. 21 to the end of 25). He had finished that which He had to say. His task here, in this respect, was accomplished. He now takes the place of Victim: He has only to suffer, and can allow Himself freely to enjoy the touching expressions of affection that flow from a heart devoted to Him. It was thus also with His mother. It was but for a moment, when His task was ended. Like Jonathan, in other circumstances, while pursuing His work, He tastes the honey at the end of His rod, and passes on.

Again, observe the effect of deep affection for the Lord. This affection/necessarily breathes the atmosphere in which at that moment the Spirit of the Lord is found. The woman who anointed Him, was not informed of the circumstances about to happen. But the approach of that hour of darkness was felt by one whose heart was fixed on Jesus. The different forms of evil developed themselves before Him, and displayed themselves in their true colors; and, under the influence of one master, grouped themselves around the only object against whom it was worth while to array this concentration of malice, and who brought their true character out into open daylight.

Jesus, for this very reason, was still more the object 'that occupied a heart which, doubtless led of God, instinctively apprehended what was going on. The time of testimony, and even that of the explanation of His relations to all around Him, was over. His heart was free to enjoy the good and true and spiritual affections of which He was the object; and which, whatever might be their human form, showed so plainly their Divine origin, in that they were attached to that object on which, at this solemn moment, all the attention of heaven was centered.

Jesus Himself was conscious of His position. His thoughts were on His departure. During the exercise of His power, He hides, He forgets Himself. But now, oppressed, rejected, and like a lamb led to the slaughter, He feels that He is the just object of the affections and thoughts of those who belong to Him, of all who have hearts to appreciate that which God appreciates. His heart is full of the coming events. See ver. 2, 10-13, 18, 21. But yet a few words more on the woman who anointed Him.

The effect of having the heart fixed in affection on Jesus, is shown in her in a striking manner. Occupied with Him, she is sensible of His situation. She feels what affects Him; and this causes her affection to act in accordance with the special devotedness that that situation inspires. Consequently, with the tact of devotedness, she does precisely that which was suited to His situation. The poor woman was not, intelligently, aware of this; yet she did the thing that was meet. Her value for the person of Jesus, so infinitely precious to her, made her quick-sighted with respect to that which was passing in His mind. In her eyes, Christ was invested with all the interest of His circumstances; and she lavishes upon Him that which expressed her affection. Fruit of this sentiment, her action met the circumstances; and although it was but the instinct of her heart, Jesus gives it all the value which His perfect intelligency could attribute to it, embracing at once the sentiments of her heart and the coming events.

But this testimony of affection and devotedness to Christ, brings out the selfishness, the want of heart, of the others. They blame the poor woman. Sad proof (to say nothing of Judas) how little the knowledge of that which concerns Jesus, necessarily awakens suitable affections in our hearts! After this, Judas goes out, and agrees with the unhappy priests to betray Jesus unto them for the price of a slave.

The Lord pursues His career of love; and as He had accepted the poor woman's testimony of affection, so He now bestows one on His disciples, of infinite value to our souls. The 16th Verse concludes the subject of which we have been speaking: Christ's knowledge, according to God, of that which awaited Him; the conspiracy of the priests; the affection of the poor woman, accepted by the Lord; the selfish cold-heartedness of the disciples; the treachery of Judas.

The Lord now institutes the memorial of the true passover. He sends the disciples to make arrangements for the celebration of the feast at Jerusalem. He points out Judas as the one who would deliver Him up to the Jews. It will be noticed, that it was not merely His knowledge of the one who should betray Him, that the Lord here expresses; He knew that when He called him; but He says, "One of you shall betray me." It was that which touched His heart: He wished it to touch theirs likewise.

He then points out that it is a Savior slain, who is to be remembered. It is no longer a question of the living Messiah: all that was over. It was no longer the remembrance of Israel's deliverance from the slavery of Egypt. Christ, and Christ slain, began an entirely new order of things. Of Him they were now to think-of Him slain on earth. He then draws their attention to the blood of the new covenant; adding that which extends it to others beside the Jews, without naming them: "It is shed for many." Moreover, this blood is not, as at Sinai, only to confirm the covenant, to which they were responsible to be faithful. It was shed for the remission of sins. So that the Lord's Supper presents the remembrance of Jesus slain, who, by dying, has broken with the past, has laid the foundation of the new covenant, obtained the remission of sin, and opened the door to the Gentiles. It is only in His death, that the supper presents Him to us. His blood is apart from His body. He is dead. It is neither Christ living on the earth, nor Christ glorified in heaven. He is separate from His people, as to their joys on earth; but they are to expect Him as the companion of their happiness-for He condescends to be so -in better days. "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." But, these links broken, who, save Jesus, could sustain the conflict? All would forsake Him. The testimonies of the word should be accomplished. It was written, "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad."

Nevertheless, He would go, to renew His relations as a risen Savior with these poor of the flock, to the same place where He had already identified Himself with them during His life. He would go before them into Galilee. This promise is very remarkable; because the Lord resumes, under a new form, His Jewish relations with them and with the kingdom. We may here remark, that as He had judged all classes (to the end of chap. 26), He now exhibits the character of His relations with all those among whom He maintained any. Whether it is the woman, or Judas, or the disciples, each one takes his place in connection with the Lord. This is all we find here. If Peter had natural energy enough to go a little farther, it would only be for a deeper fall, in the place where the Lord alone could stand.

And now He isolates Himself, to present, in supplication to His Father, the sufferings that awaited Him.

But while isolating Himself for prayer, He takes three of His disciples with Him, that in this solemn moment they may watch with Him. They were the same three who were with Him during the transfiguration. They were to see His glory in the kingdom, and His sufferings. He goes a little way beyond them. As for them, they fall asleep, as they did on the mount of transfiguration. The scene here is described in Heb. 5:7. Jesus was not yet drinking the cup; but it was before His eyes. On the cross He bore the wrath of God, His soul feeling itself forsaken of Him. Here, it is the power of Satan, using death as a terror with which to overwhelm Him. But the consideration of this subject will be more in place when we come to Luke's Gospel.

We here see His soul under the load of death-by anticipation-as He alone could know it. We know who has the power of death. But He watches and He prays. As man, subjected by His love to this assault, in the presence of the most powerful temptation to which He could be exposed, on the one hand He watches, on the other He presents His anguish to His Father. His communion was not here interrupted, however great His distress. This distress only cast Him the more, in all submission and in all reliance, upon His Father. But if we were to be saved, if God was to be glorified in Him who had undertaken our cause, the cup must not pass away from Him. His submission is complete.

He tenderly reminds Peter of his false confidence, making him sensible of his weakness; but Peter was too full of himself to profit by it; he awakes from his sleep, but his self-confidence is not shaken. A sadder experience was needed for its cure.

The Lord therefore takes the cup; but He takes it from His Father's hand. It was His will that He should drink it. Committing Himself thus entirely to His Father, it is neither from the hand of His enemies, nor from that of Satan, that He takes it. According to the perfection with which He had subjected Himself to the will of God in this matter, committing all to Him, it is from His hand alone He receives it. It is the Father's will. It is thus that we escape from second causes, and from the temptations of the enemy, by seeking only the will of God, who directs all things. It is from Him we receive affliction and trial, if they come.

The disciples need no longer watch: the hour is come. He was to be betrayed into the hands of men. That was saying enough. Judas designates Him by a kiss. Jesus goes to meet the multitude; rebukes Peter for seeking to resist with carnal weapons. Had Christ wished to escape, He could have commanded the angels; but all things must be fulfilled. It was the hour of His submission to the effect of the malice of man, and the power of darkness. He is the Lamb for the slaughter. Then all the disciples forsake Him. He surrenders Himself, setting before them what they were doing. If no one can prove Him guilty, He will not deny the truth. He confesses the glory of His person as Son of God, and declares that hereafter they should see the Son of man, no longer after the meekness of one who would not break the bruised reed, but coming in the clouds of heaven, and sitting on the right hand of power. Having borne this testimony, He is condemned on account of that which He said of Himself- for the confession of the truth. The false witnesses did not succeed. The priests and the heads of Israel were guilty of His death, by virtue of their own rejection of the testimony He rendered to the truth. He was the truth; they were under the power of the father of lies. They rejected the Messiah, the Savior of His people. He would come to them no more, except

as Judge.

They insult and outrage Him. Each one, alas! takes, as we have seen, his own place: Jesus, that of victim; the others, the place of betrayal, rejection, abandonment, denial of the Lord. What a picture! What a solemn moment! Who could stand in it? Christ alone could steadily pass through it. And He passed through it as a victim. As such, He must be stripped of all, and that in the presence of God. Everything else disappeared, except the sin which led to it; and, according to grace, that also, before the powerful efficacy of this act. Peter, self-confident, hesitating, detected, answering with untruth, swearing, denies his Master; and, painfully convinced of man's powerlessness against the enemy of his soul, and against sin, goes out and weeps bitterly. Tears, which cannot efface his guilt-but which, while proving the existence, through grace, of uprightness of heart-bear witness to that powerlessness, which uprightness of heart cannot remedy.

After this, the unhappy priests and heads of the people deliver up their Messiah to the Gentiles, as He had told His disciples. Judas, in despair, under Satan's power, hangs himself; having cast the reward of his iniquity at the feet of the chief priests and elders. Satan was forced to bear witness, even by a conscience that he had betrayed, to the Lord's innocence. What a scene! Then the priests, who had made no conscience of buying His blood from Judas, scruple to put the money into the treasury of the temple, because it was the price of blood. In the presence of that which was going on, man was obliged to show himself as he is, and the power of Satan over him. Having taken counsel, they buy a burying-ground for strangers. These were profane enough in their eyes for that, provided they themselves were not defiled with such money. Yet it was the time of God's grace to the stranger and judgment to Israel. Moreover, they established thereby a perpetual memorial of their own sin, and of the blood which has been shed.

This prophecy, we know is in the book of Zechariah. The name "Jeremiah" may have crept into the text, when there was nothing more than "by the prophet"; or it might be, because Jeremiah stood first in the order prescribed by the Talmudists for the books of prophecy; for which reason, also, it is very likely they said, "Jeremiah or one of the prophets," as in chap. 16:14. But this is not the place for discussion on the subject.

This scene closes. The Lord stands before Pilate. Here, the question is not whether He is the Son of God, but whether He is the King of the Jews. Although He was this, yet it was only in the character of Son of God that He would allow the Jews to receive Him.

Had they received Him as the Son of God, He would have been their King. But that might not be. He must accomplish the work of atonement. Having rejected Him as Son of God, the Jews now deny Him as their King. But the Gentiles also become guilty, in the person of their head in Palestine, the government of which had been committed to them. The Gentile head should have reigned in righteousness. His representative in Judea acknowledges the malice of Christ's enemies; his conscience, alarmed by his wife's dream, seeks to evade the guilt of condemning Jesus; but the true prince of this world, as regards present exercise of dominion, was Satan. Pilate, washing his hands (futile attempt to exonerate himself), delivers up the guiltless to the will of His enemies; saying, at the same time, that he finds no fault in Him. And he releases to the Jews a man guilty of sedition and murder, instead of the Prince of Life.

Barabbas, the expression of the spirit of Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, and of rebellion against the authority which Pilate was there to maintain -Barabbas was loved by the Jews; and with him, the wrongful carelessness of the governor, who was powerless against evil, endeavored to satisfy the will of the people, whom he ought to have governed. " All the people" make themselves guilty of the blood of Jesus. Sad and frightful ignorance, which self-will has brought upon a people who rejected the Light! Alas! how each one, I again say, takes his own place in the presence of this touchstone-a rejected Savior The company of the Gentiles, the soldiers, do that in derision, with the brutality habitual to them as heathen and as executioners, which the Gentiles shall do with joyful worship, when He whom they now mocked shall be truly the King of the Jews in glory. Jesus endures it all. It was the hour of His entire submission: patience must have its perfect work, in order that His obedience may be complete on every side. He bore it all without relief, rather than fail in obedience to His Father. What a difference between this and the conduct of the first Adam, surrounded with blessings!

Every one must be the servant of sin, or of the tyranny of wickedness, at this solemn hour, in which all is put to the proof. They compel one Simon (known afterward, it appears, among the disciples) to bear the cross of Jesus; and the Lord is led away to the place of His crucifixion. There He refuses that which might have stupefied Him. He will not shun the cup He had to drink, nor deprive Himself of His faculties in order to be insensible to that which it was the will of God He should suffer. The prophecies of the Psalms are fulfilled in His person, by means of those who little thought what they were doing. At the same time, the Jews succeeded in becoming to the last degree contemptible. Their King was hung. They must bear the shame in spite of themselves. Whose fault was it? But, hardened and senseless, they share with a malefactor the miserable satisfaction of insulting the Son of God, their King, the Messiah, to their own ruin. Jesus felt it; but the anguish of His trial, the abyss of His sufferings, contained something far more terrible. The floods, doubtless, lifted up their voices. One after another, the waves of wickedness dashed against Him; but the depths beneath that awaited Him, who could fathom? His heart, His soul-the vessel of a Divine love-could alone go deeper than the bottom of that abyss which sin had opened for man, to bring up those who lay there, after He had endured its pains in His own soul.

The fathers, full of faith, had in their distress experienced the faithfulness of God, who answered the expectation of their hearts. But Jesus (as to the condition of His soul at that moment) cried in vain. " A worm, and no man," before the eyes of men He had to bear the forsaking of the God in whom He trusted.

Their thoughts far from His, they that surround Him did not even understand His words, but they accomplish the prophecies by their ignorance. Jesus, bearing testimony by the loudness of His voice that it was not the weight of death that oppressed Him, commends His soul into the hands of His Father, and expires.

The efficacy of His death is presented to us in this gospel in a double aspect. 1st. The veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. God, who had been always hidden behind a veil, discovered Himself completely by means of the death of Jesus. The entrance into the holy place is made manifest-a new and living way which God has consecrated for us through the veil. The entire Jewish system, the relations of man with God under its sway, its priesthood, all fell with the rending of the veil. Every one found himself in the presence of God, without a veil between.

The priests were to be always in His presence. But, by this same act, the sin which would have made it impossible for us to stand there, was for the believer-entirely put away from before God. The holy God, and the believer cleansed from his sins, are brought together by the death of Christ. What love was that which accomplished this!

2nd. Besides this, such was the efficacy of His death, that when His resurrection had burst the bonds that held them, many of the dead appeared in the city,-witnesses of His power who having suffered death had risen above it, and had overcome it.

The presence, therefore, of God without a veil, and of sinners without sin, prove the efficacy of Christ's sufferings.

The resurrection of the dead, over whom the king of terrors had no more right, displayed the efficacy of the death of Christ for sinners, and the power of His resurrection. Judaism is over, for those that have faith, and the power of death also. The veil is rent. The grave gives up its prey.

There is yet another especial testimony to the mighty power of His death, to the import of that word, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me." The centurion who was on guard at the crucifixion of the Lord, seeing the earthquake and those things that were done, trembling, confesses the glory of His person; and, stranger as he is to Israel, renders the first testimony of faith among Gentiles: "Truly this was the Son of God."

But the narrative goes on. Some poor women-to whom devotedness often gives, on God's part, more courage than to men in their more responsible and busy position-were standing near the cross, beholding what was done to Him whom they loved.

But they were not the only ones who filled the place of the terrified disciples. Others-and this often happens-whom the world had held back, when once the depth of their affection is stirred, by the question of His sufferings whom they really loved, when the moment is so painful that others are terrified, then, emboldened by the rejection of Christ, they feel that the time is arrived for decision, and become fearless confessors of the Lord. Hitherto associated with those that have crucified Him, they must now either accept that act or declare themselves. Through grace they do the latter.

God had prepared all beforehand. His Son was to have His tomb with the rich. Joseph comes boldly to Pilate and asks for the body of Jesus. He wraps the body, which Pilate grants him, in a clean linen cloth, and lays it in his own sepulcher, which had never yet served to hide the corruption of man. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary-for they were known-sat near the sepulcher, bound by all that remained to their faith, of Him whom they had loved and followed with adoration during His life.

But unbelief has no faith in itself, and fearing lest that which it denies be true, it mistrusts everything. The chief priests request Pilate to guard the sepulcher, in order to frustrate any attempt the disciples might make, to found the doctrine of the resurrection, on the absence of the body of Jesus from the tomb in which it had been laid. Pilate bids them secure the sepulcher themselves; so that all they did was to make themselves involuntary witnesses to the fact, and assure us of the accomplishment of the thing they dreaded. Thus, Israel was guilty of this effort of futile resistance to the testimony which Jesus had rendered to His own resurrection. They were a testimony against themselves to its truth. The precautions which Pilate would not perhaps have taken, they carried to

the extreme, so that all mistake as to the fact of His resurrection was impossible.

The Lord's resurrection is briefly related in Matthew. The object is again, after the resurrection, to connect the ministry and service of Jesus-now transferred to His disciples-with the poor of the flock, the remnant of Israel. He again assembled them in Galilee, where He had constantly instructed them, and where the despised among the people dwelt, afar from the pride of the Jews. This connected their work with His in that which especially characterized it with reference to the remnant of Israel.

I shall examine the details of the resurrection elsewhere. Here I only consider its bearing in this gospel. The sabbath ended (Saturday evening with us) the two Marys come to see the sepulcher. At this moment, that was all they did. Vers. 1 and 2 are not consecutive. When the earthquake and its attendant circumstances took place, no one was there except the soldiers. At night, all was secure. The disciples knew nothing of it in the morning. When the women arrived at early dawn, the angel who sat at the door of the sepulcher, re-assured them with the tidings of the Lord's resurrection. The angel of the Lord had come down and opened the door of the tomb, which man had closed with every possible precaution. They had in truth only guaranteed by unexceptionable witnesses the truth of the apostles' preaching, by placing the soldiers there. The women by their visit the evening before, and in the morning when the angel spoke to them, received a full assurance to faith, of the fact of His resurrection. All that is presented here, are these facts. The women had been there in the evening. The intervention of the angel certified to the soldiers the true character of His coming forth from the tomb; and the visit of the women in the morning, established the fact of His resurrection as an object of faith to themselves. They go and announce it to the disciples, who-so far from having done that which the Jews imputed to them-did not even believe the assertions of the women. Jesus himself appears to the women who were returning from the sepulcher, having believed the words of the angel. As I have already said, Jesus connects Himself with His former work among the poor of the flock, afar from the seat of Jewish tradition, and from the temple, and from all that linked the people with God according to the old covenant. He appoints His disciples to meet Him there, and there they find Him and recognize Him; and it is there, in this former scene of the labors of Christ, according to Isa. 8; 9, that they receive their commission from Him. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth, and their commission, accordingly, extends to all nations. In them they were to proclaim His rights.

It was not, however, the name of the Lord only, nor in connection with His throne at Jerusalem. Lord of heaven and earth, His disciples were to proclaim Him throughout all nations, founding their doctrine on the confession of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. They were to teach, not the law, but the precepts of Jesus. He would be with them, with the disciples who thus confessed Him, unto the end of the world. It is this which connects all that will be accomplished until Christ sits upon the great white throne, with the testimony that He Himself rendered on the earth in the midst of Israel. It is the testimony of the kingdom, and of its Head, once rejected by a people that knew Him not.

## The Mind of Heaven

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Mark the seven or eight times in which heaven in the New Testament is said to be opened.

1. At the baptism of Jesus, the God of heaven had found, and would own "who" and " what" have rest on earth:- viz., Christ and His service (Matt. 3:16; Luke 3:21).

2. The heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Time will be, when, He upholding blessing upon earth, not only the God of heaven shall set His seal upon Him, but heaven's previous, and then present hosts shall wait upon Him-Blesser of the earth (John 1:51).

3. Heaven opened on Stephen in martyrdom. The Son of man, in heaven, lets His suffering servant know His sympathy, and sustainment, in the period that earth can hold no testimony for God (Acts 7:56).

4. The sheet let down out of heaven.

The church has no connection with earthly dispensations. It is something that comes down out of heaven, and is drawn up again into heaven, and never gets a rest upon earth; you must look into it from above (Acts 10:11).

5. Heaven opened to John-the suffering servant-and the Lord God Almighty upon the throne found to be the spring, whence the Lamb draws for his servants, when the churches are judged, all needed blessing. All upon the throne is secure (Rev. 4:1).

6. The security of Israel's blessing in the day of its affliction shown (Rev. 11:19).

7. The security of the remnant-and the certainty of judgment (Rev. 15:5-8).

8. The mission of God's Champion to introduce and establish God's power upon earth (Rev. 19:11).

If 6 and 7 are separate, then there are eight openings; if they are the same opening, then there are seven.

## Now and Then; or Time and Eternity

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The principles of truth laid down in this chapter are of the most solemn and searching character. Their practical bearing is such as to render them, in a day like the present, of the very last importance. Worldly-mindedness and carnality cannot live in the light of the truth here set forth. They are withered up by the roots. If one were asked to give a brief and comprehensive title to this most precious section of inspiration, it might be entitled "Time in the light of eternity." The Lord evidently designed to set his disciples in the light of that world where everything is the direct opposite of that which obtains here-to bring their hearts under the holy influence of unseen things, and their lives under the power and authority of heavenly principles. Such being the faithful purpose of the Divine Teacher, He lays the solid foundation for His superstructure of doctrine with these searching words, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." There must be no undercurrent in the soul. The deep springs of thought must be laid bare. We must allow the pure beams of heaven's light to penetrate the most profound depths of our moral being. We must not have any discrepancy between the hidden judgment of the soul, and the style of our phraseology; between the bent of the life, and the profession of the lips. In a word, we specially need the grace of "an honest and a good heart," in order to profit by this wondrous compendium of practical truth. We are too apt to give an indifferent hearing, or a cold assent, to home truth. We do not like it. We prefer interesting speculations about the mere letter of Scripture, points of doctrine, or questions of prophecy, because we can indulge these in immediate connection with all sorts of worldly-mindedness, covetous practices, and self-indulgence. But ponderous principles of truth, bearing down upon the conscience in all their magnitude and flesh-cutting power who can bear, save those, who, through grace, are seeking to purge themselves from "the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy!" This leaven is of a most specious character, takes various shapes, and is, therefore, most dangerous. Indeed, wherever it exists, there is a most positive and insurmountable barrier placed before the soul in its progress in experimental knowledge and practical holiness. If I do not expose my whole soul to the action of divine truth-if I am closing up some corner or crevice from the light thereof-if I am cherishing some secret reserve-if I am dishonestly seeking to accommodate the truth to my own standard of practice, or parry its keen edge from my conscience-then, assuredly, I am defiled by the leaven of hypocrisy; and my growth in likeness to Christ is a moral Impossibility. Hence, therefore, it is imperative upon every disciple of Christ to search, and see that nothing of this abominable leaven is allowed in the secret chambers of his heart. Let us, by the grace of God, put and keep it far away, so that we may be able, on all occasions, to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

But, not only is hypocrisy utterly subversive of spiritual progress, it also entirely fails in attaining the object which it proposes to itself; "for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." Every man will find his level; and every thought will be brought to light. What the truth would do now, the judgment seat will do then. Every grade and shade of hypocrisy will be unmasked by the light which shall shine forth from the judgment-seat of Christ. Nothing will be allowed to escape. All will be reality then, though there is so much fallacy now.

Moreover, everything will get its proper name, then, though it be misnamed now. Worldly-mindedness is called prudence; a grasping, covetous spirit is called foresight; and self-indulgence and personal aggrandizement are called judicious management and laudable diligence in business. Thus it is now; but then it will be quite the reverse. All these things will be seen in their true colors, and called by their true names, before the judgment-seat. Wherefore, it is the wisdom of the disciple to act in the light of that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. As to this, he is placed on a vantage ground, for, says the apostle, "we must all (saints and sinners-though not at the same time, nor on the same ground) be manifested (φανερωθηναι) before the judgment-seat of Christ." Should this disturb the disciple's mind? Assuredly not, if his heart be so purged of the leaven of hypocrisy, and his soul so thoroughly grounded, by the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, in the great foundation-truth set forth in this very chapter (2 Cor. 5), namely, that Christ is his life, and Christ his righteousness; that he can say, "we are manifested (πεφανερωμεθα, an inflection of the same word as is used at ver. 10), unto God, and I trust also are manifested in your consciences." But if he be deficient in this peace of conscience, and transparent honesty of heart, there is no doubt but that the thought of the judgment-seat will disturb his spirit. Hence we see that in the Lord's teaching, in Luke 12, He sets the consciences of His disciples directly in the light of the judgment-seat. "And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power' to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." "The fear of man bringeth a snare," and is closely connected with "the leaven of the Pharisees." But "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and causes a man always so to carry himself-so to think, speak, and act-as in the full blaze of the light of Christ's judgment-seat. This would impart immense dignity and elevation to the character, while it would effectually nip, in the earliest bud, the spirit of haughty independence, by keeping the soul under the searching power of divine light, the effect of which is to make everything, and every one, manifest. There is nothing which so tends to rob the disciple of Christ of the proper dignity of his discipleship as walking before the eyes or the thoughts of men. So long as we are doing so, we cannot be unshackled followers of our heavenly Master. Moreover, the evil of walking before men is morally allied with the evil of seeking to hide our ways from God. Both partake of "the leaven of the Pharisees," and both will find their proper place before the judgment-seat. Why should we fear men? Why should we regard their opinions? If their opinions will not bear to be tried in His presence, who has power to cast into hell, they are worth nothing; for it is with Him we have to do. "With me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment." Man may have a judgment seat, now, but he will not have it then. He may set up his tribunal in time, but he will have no tribunal in eternity. Why, therefore, should we shape our way in reference to a tribunal so frail and evanescent? Oh! let us challenge our hearts as to this. God grant us grace to act now, in reference to then-to carry ourselves here with our eye on hereafter-to look at time in the light of eternity.

The poor unbelieving heart may, however, inquire, "If I thus rise above human thoughts and human opinions, how shall I get on in a scene where those very thoughts and opinions prevail?" This is a very natural question; but it meets its full and satisfactory answer from the Master's lips; yea, it would even seem as though He had graciously anticipated this rising element of unbelief, when, having carried his disciples above the hazy mists of time, and set them in the clear, searching, powerful light of eternity, He added, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and

not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows" (vers. 6, 7). Here the heart is taught not only to fear God; but also to confide in Him- it is not only warned, but also tranquillized. "Fear," and "fear not," may seem a paradox to flesh and blood; but to faith it is no paradox. The man who fears God most will fear circumstances least. The man of faith is, at once, the most dependent and independent man in the world-dependent upon God-independent upon circumstances. The latter is the consequence of the former; real dependence produces real independence. And mark the ground of the believer's peace. The One who has power to cast into hell, the only One whom he is to fear, has actually taken the trouble to count the hairs of his head. He surely has not taken this trouble for the purpose of letting him perish either here or hereafter. By no means. The minuteness of our Father's care should silence every doubt that might arise in our hearts. There is nothing too small, and there can be nothing too great for Him. The countless orbs that move through infinite space, and a falling sparrow, are alike to Him. His infinite mind can take in, with equal facility, the course of everlasting ages, and the hairs of our head. This is the stable foundation on which Christ founds His "fear not," and "take no thought." We frequently fail in the practical application of this divine principle. We may admire it as a principle; but it is only in the application of it that its real beauty is seen or felt. If we do not put it in practice, we are but painting sunbeams on canvass, while we famish beneath the chilling influences of our own unbelief.

Now, we find, in this Scripture before us, that bold and uncompromising testimony for Christ is connected with this holy elevation above men's thoughts, and this calm reliance upon our Father's minute and tender care. If my heart is lifted above the influence of the fear of man, and sweetly tranquillized by the assurance that God takes account of the hairs of my head, then I am in a condition of soul to confess Christ before men (see vers. 8-10). Nor need I be careful as to the result of this confession, for so long as God wants me here He will maintain me here. "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." The only proper ground of testimony for Christ is to be fully delivered from human influence, and established in unqualified confidence in God. So far as I am influenced by or a debtor to men, so far am I disqualified for being a servant of Christ; but I can only be effectually delivered from human influence by a lively faith in God. When God fills the heart, there is no room for the creature; and we may be perfectly sure of this, that no man has ever taken the trouble to count the hair's of our head; we have not even taken that trouble ourselves; but God has, and therefore I can trust God more than any one. God is perfectly sufficient for every exigency, great or small, and we only want to trust Him to know that He is. True, He may and does use men as instruments; but if we lean on men instead of God-if we lean on instruments instead of on the Hand that uses them, we bring down a curse upon us, for it is written, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5). The Lord used the ravens to feed Elijah; but Elijah never thought of trusting in the ravens. Thus it should be ever. Faith leans on God, counts on Him, clings to Him, trusts in Him, waits for Him, ever leaves a clear stage for Him to act on, does not obstruct His glorious path by any creature-confidence, allows Him to display Himself in all the glorious reality of what He is, leaves everything to Him; and, moreover, if it gets into deep and rough waters, it will always be seen upon the crest of the loftiest billow, and from thence gazing in perfect repose, upon God and His powerful actings. Such is faith-that precious principle-the only thing in this world that gives God

and man their respective places.

While the Lord Jesus was in the act of pouring forth these unearthly principles, a true child of earth intrudes upon Him with a question about property. " And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." How marvelously little did he know of the true character of that heavenly Man who stood before him! He knew nothing of the profound mystery of His being, nor the object of His heavenly mission. He surely had not come from the bosom of the Father to settle lawsuits about property, nor to arbitrate between two covetous men. The spirit of covetousness was manifestly in the whole affair. Both defendant and plaintiff were governed by covetousness. One wanted to grasp, and the other wanted to keep; what was this but covetousness? "And He said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" It was not a question of which was right, or which was wrong as to the property. According to Christ's pure and heavenly doctrine, they were both wrong. In the light of eternity, a few acres of land were little worth; and, as to Christ Himself, He was not only teaching principles entirely hostile to all questions of earthly possession, but, in His own person and character. He set an example of the very opposite. He did not go to law about the inheritance. He was "Heir of all things." The land of Israel, the throne of David, and all creation belonged to Him; but man would not own Him, nor give Him possession. " The husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir, come let us kill him, and seize on the inheritance." To this the Heir submitted in perfect patience, but-eternal homage to His glorious name!-by submitting unto death He crushed the enemy's power, and brought " many sons to glory." Thus we see, in the doctrine and practice of the Heavenly Man, the true exhibition of the principles of the kingdom of God. He would not arbitrate, but yet He taught truth which would entirely do away with the need of arbitration. If the principles of the kingdom of God were dominant, there would be no need for courts of law: for inasmuch as people would not be wronged of their rights, they could have no wrongs to be righted. This will be admitted by all. But then the Christian, being in the kingdom, is bound to be governed by the principles of the kingdom, and to carry them out at all cost; for, in the exact proportion that he fails to exhibit those principles, he is robbing his own soul of blessing, and marring his testimony. Hence, then, a person going to law is not governed in so doing by the principles of the kingdom of God, but by the principles of the kingdom of Satan, who is the prince of this world. It is not a question as to his being a Christian, but simply a question as to the principle by which he is governed in the act of going to law, under any circumstances. I say nothing of the moral instincts of the divine nature, which would surely lead one to apprehend with accuracy the gross inconsistency of a man who professes to be saved by grace going to law with a fellow man - of one who, while he owns that if he had his right from the hand of God, he would be burning in hell, nevertheless insists upon extracting his rights from his fellow man-of one who has been forgiven ten thousand talents, but yet seizes his fellow by the throat for a paltry hundred pence. Upon these things I shall not dwell. I merely look at the question of going to law in the light of the kingdom, in the light of eternity; and if it be true that in the kingdom of God there is no need for courts of law, then I press it solemnly upon my reader's conscience, in the presence of God, that he, as a subject of that kingdom, is totally wrong in going to law. True, it will lead to loss and suffering; but who is " worthy of the kingdom of God" who is not prepared to "suffer for it"? Let those who are governed by the things of time go to law; but the Christian is, or ought, to be governed by the things of eternity. People go to law now; but it will not be so then; and the Christian is to act now as if it were then. He belongs to the kingdom; and it is just because the kingdom of God is not dominant, but

the King rejected, that the subjects of the kingdom are called to suffer. Righteousness "suffers" now; it will "reign" in the millennium; and it will "dwell" in the new heavens and the new earth. Now in going to law, the Christian anticipates the millennial age. He is going before his Master in the assertion of his rights. He is called to suffer patiently all sorts of wrongs and injuries. To resent them is to deny the truth of that kingdom to which he professes to belong. I press this principle upon my reader's conscience. I earnestly implore his serious attention thereto. Let it have its full weight upon his conscience. Let him not trifle with its truth. There is nothing which tends so to hinder the freshness and power, growth and prosperity of the kingdom of God in the heart, as the refusal to carry out the principles of that kingdom in the conduct.

But some may say, that it is bringing us down from the high ground of the Church, as set forth in Paul's epistles, to press, thus, the principles of the kingdom. By no means. We belong to the Church, but we are in the kingdom; and while we must never confound the two, it is perfectly plain that the ethics-the moral habits and ways-of the Church can never be below those of the kingdom. If it be contrary to the spirit and principles of the kingdom to assert my rights and go to law, it must, if possible, be still more contrary to the spirit and principles of the Church. This cannot be questioned. The higher my position, the higher should be my code of ethics, and tone of character. I fully believe, and desire firmly to hold, experimentally to enter into, and practically to exhibit the truth of the Church as the body and bride of Christ-the possessor' of a heavenly standing, and the expectant of heavenly glory, by virtue of her oneness with Christ; but I cannot see how my being a member of that highly privileged body can make my practice lower than if I were merely a subject or member of the kingdom. What is the difference, as regards present conduct and character, between belonging to the body of a rejected Head, and belonging to the kingdom of a rejected king? Assuredly it cannot be to lower the tone in the former case. the higher and more intimate my relationship to the rejected One, the more intense should be my separation from that which rejects Him, and the more complete should be my assimilation to His character, and the more precise and accurate my walk in His footsteps, in the midst of that scene from which He is rejected. But, the simple fact is, WE WANT CONSCIENCE. Yes, beloved reader, a tender, exercised, honest conscience, which will truly and accurately respond to the appeals Of God's pure and holy Word is, I verily believe, the grand desideratum-the pressing want of the present moment. It is not so much principles we want, as the grace, the energy, the holy decision that will carry them out, cost what it may. We admit the truth of principles, which most plainly cut at the very things which we ourselves are either directly or indirectly doing. We admit the principle of grace, and yet we live by the strict maintenance of righteousness. For example, how often does it happen that persons are preaching, teaching, and professing to enjoy grace, while at that very moment they are insisting upon their rights in reference to their tenants; and, either directly themselves, or indirectly by means of their agents, dispossessing poor people, unroofing their houses, and sending them out, in destitution and misery, upon a cold, heartless world. This is a plain palpable case, of which, alas! there have been too many painful illustrations in the world within the last ten years. And why such cases? Because one finds such melancholy deficiency in sensibility of conscience, at the present day, that unless the thing is brought home plainly to oneself it will not be understood. Like David, our indignation is wrought up to the highest pitch by a picture of moral turpitude, so long as we do not see self in that picture. It needs some Nathan to sound in our ears " Thou art the man," in order to prostrate us in the dust, with a smitten conscience, and in true self-abhorrence. Thus, at the present day, eloquent sermons are preached, eloquent lectures delivered, and elaborate

treatises written about the principles of grace, and yet the courts of law are frequented, attorneys, lawyers, sheriffs, agents, and subagents, are called into requisition, with all their terrible machinery, in order to assert our rights; but we feel it not, because we are not present to witness the distress, and hear the groans and execrations of houseless mothers and children. Need we wonder, therefore, that true, practical Christianity is at a low ebb amongst us? Is it any marvel that leanness, barrenness, drought, and poverty, coldness and deadness, darkness, ignorance and spiritual depression should be found amongst us? What else could be expected when the principles of the kingdom of God are openly violated? But is it unrighteous to seek to get our own, and to make use of the machinery within our reach, in order to do so? Surely not. What is here maintained is, that no matter how well defined and clearly established the right may be, the assertion thereof is diametrically opposed to the kingdom of God. The servant, in Matt. 18, was called "a wicked servant," and "delivered to the tormentors" not because he acted unrighteously in enforcing the payment of a lawful debt, but because he did not act in grace and remit that debt. Let this fact be solemnly weighed. A man who fails to act in grace will lose the sense of grace

-a man who fails to carry out the principles of the kingdom of God will lose the enjoyment of those principles in his own soul. This is the moral of the wicked servant. Well, therefore, might the Lord Jesus sound in His disciples' ears this warning voice, ".Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

But how difficult to define this "covetousness!" How hard to bring it home to the conscience. It is as some one has said of worldliness, "shaded off gradually from white to jet black;" so that it is only as we are imbued with the spirit and mind of heaven, and thoroughly schooled in the principles of eternity; that we shall be able to detect its working. And not only so, but our hearts must, in this also, be purged from the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. The Pharisees were covetous, and could only turn Christ's doctrine into ridicule (see Luke 16:14); and so will it be with all those who are tainted by their leaven. They will not see the just application of truth, either as to covetousness or anything else. They will seek to define it in such a way as will suit themselves. They will interpret, modify, pare down, accommodate, until they have fully succeeded in getting their conscience from under the edge of God's truth; and thus they get into the power and under the influence of the enemy. I must either be governed by the pure truth of the Word, or by the impure principles of the world, which, as we very well know, are forged in Satan's workshop, and brought into the world to be used in doing his work.

In the parable of the rich man, which the Lord here puts forth, in illustration of covetousness, we see a character which the world respects and admires. But in this, as in everything else brought forward in this searching chapter, we see the difference between now and then-between "time and eternity." All depends upon the light in which you look at men and things. If you merely look at them now, it may be all very well to get on in trade, and enlarge one's concerns, and make provision for the future. The man who does this is counted wise, now; but he will be a "fool," then. Title-deeds, debentures, bank receipts, insurance policies, are current coin, now; but they will be rejected then; they are genuine now; they will be spurious then. Thus it is; and, my reader, let us remember, that we must make God's then to be our now; we must look at the things of time in the light of eternity; the things of earth in the light of heaven. This is true wisdom which does not confine the heart to that system of things which obtains "under the sun," but conducts it into the light, and leaves it under the power of "that (unseen) world" where the principles of the kingdom of

God bear sway. What should we think of courts of law, banks, and insurance offices, if we look at them in the light of eternity? These things do very well for men who are only

governed by now; but the disciple of Christ is to be governed by then. This makes all the difference; and truly it is a serious difference. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." What sin is there in being a successful agriculturist, or merchant? If God bless a man's labor, should he not rejoice? Truly so; but mark the moral progress of a covetous heart. "He thought within himself." He did not think in the presence of God; he did not think under the mighty influences of the eternal world. No; "he thought within himself"-within the narrow compass of his selfish heart. Such was his range; and, therefore, we need not marvel at his practical conclusion. "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" What! Was there no way of using his resources with a view to God's future? Alas! no. Man has a future, or thinks he has, on which he counts, and for which he makes provision; but self is the only object which figures in that future,-self, whether in my own person, or that of my wife or child, which is, morally, the same thing. The grand object in God's future is Christ; and true wisdom will lead us to fix our eye on Him and make Him our undivided object for time and eternity, now, and then. But this, in the judgment of a worldly man, is nonsense. Yes, heaven's wisdom is nonsense in the judgment of earth. Harken to the wisdom of earth, and the wisdom of those who are under the influence of earthly maxims and habits. "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater- and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods." "Thus we have what he " thought," what he " said," and what he " did"; and there is a melancholy consistency between his thoughts, his words, and his acts. "There" in my self-built storehouse, "will I bestow all." Miserable treasure-house to contain the "all" of an immortal soul! God was not an item in the catalog. God was neither his treasury nor his treasure. This is plain; and it is always thus with a mere man of the world. "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Thus we see that a worldly man's provision is only "for many years." Make the best of it, it cannot go beyond that narrow limit. It cannot, even in his own thought about it, reach into that boundless eternity, which stretches beyond this contracted span of time. And this provision he offers to his never-dying soul, as the basis of its "ease and merriment." Miserable fatuity! Senseless calculation! How different is the address which a believer may present to his soul 1 He, too, may say to his soul, "Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry; eat of the fatness of God's storehouse, and drink of the river of His pleasures, and of the wine of His kingdom; and be glad in His accomplished salvation; for thou hast much goods, yea, unsearchable riches, untold wealth, laid up, not merely for many years, but for eternity. Christ's finished work is the ground of thine eternal peace, and His coming glory the sure and certain object of thy hope." This is a different character of address, my reader. This shows the difference between now and then. It is a fatal mistake not to make Christ the Crucified, Christ the Risen, Christ the Glorified, the Alpha and the Omega of all our calculations. To paint a future, and not to place Christ in the foreground, is extravagance of the wildest character; for the moment God enters the scene, the picture is hopelessly marred. "But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: THEN whose shall those things be which thou hast provided"? And, then, mark the moral of all this. "So is he," no matter who, saint or sinner, "that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." The man who hoards up is virtually making a God of his hoard. His mind is tranquillized as to the future when he thinks of his hoard, for if he had not that hoard he would be uneasy. It is sufficient to put a natural man entirely out of his reason to give him naught but God to

depend upon. Anything but that for him. Give him old pieces of parchment in the shape of title-deeds, in which some clever lawyer will finally pick a hole, and prove worthless. He will lean on them, yea, die in peace, if he can leave such to his heirs. Give him an insurance policy,-anything, in short, but God, for the natural heart. ALL IS REALITY, SAVE THE ONLY REALITY, in the judgment of nature. This proves what nature's true condition is. It cannot trust God. It talks about Him, but it cannot trust Him. The very basis of man's moral constitution is distrust of God; and one of the fairest fruits of regeneration is the capacity to confide in God for everything. " They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." None else can.

However, my main object in this paper, is to deal with Christian conscience. I ask the Christian reader, therefore, in plain terms, is it in keeping with Christ's doctrine, as set forth in the gospel, for His disciples to lay up for themselves treasure on the earth? It would seem almost an absurdity to put such a question in the face of Luke 12 and parallel scriptures. ",Lay not up for yourselves treasure on the earth, where moth and rust cloth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal." This is plain enough, and only wants an honest conscience to apply it, in order to produce its proper results. It is directly contrary to the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and perfectly incompatible with true discipleship, to lay up "treasure," in any shape or form, " on the earth." In this, as in the matter of going to law, we have only to remember that we are in the kingdom of God, in order to know how we should act. The principles of that kingdom are eternal, and binding upon every disciple of Christ. " And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you; Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment." Observe, "take NO thought." This needs no interpretation or accommodation. Persons may say, it means " anxious thought," but there is nothing about " anxious" in the passage. It is simply said, " no thought"; and that, too, in reference to all that man can really want, namely, food and raiment, in both of which the ravens and the lilies are set before us as an example; for the former are fed, and the latter are clothed, without thought. If the Lord Jesus meant " anxious thought," He would have said so. Nor is this merely true in reference to those who are only in the kingdom; it is also true as to the members of the Church. " Be careful for nothing," says the Spirit by the apostle. Why? Because God is caring for you. There is no use in two thinking about the same thing, when One can do everything, and the other can do nothing. " In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison (φρουρησει) your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." This is the solid foundation of peace of heart, which so few really enjoy. Many have gotten peace of conscience through faith in the sufficiency of Christ's work, who do not enjoy peace of heart through faith in the sufficiency of God's care. And oftentimes we go to pray about our difficulties and trials, and we rise from our knees as troubled as we knelt down. We profess to put our affairs into the hands of God, but we have no notion of leaving them there; and, consequently, we do not enjoy peace of heart. Thus it was with Jacob, in Gen. 32 He asked God to deliver him from the hand of Esau; but, no sooner did he rise from his knees than he set forth the real ground of his soul's dependance, by saying, " I will appease him by a present." It is clear he had much more confidence in the " present" than in God. This is a common error amongst the children of God. We profess to be looking to the Eternal Fountain; but the eye of the soul is askance upon some creature stream. Thus God is practically shut out; our souls are not delivered, and we have not got

peace of heart. The apostle then goes on, in the 8th verse of Phil. 4, to give a catalog of those things about which we ought to think; and we find that self, or its affairs, are not once alluded to. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable (σεμνα), whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. And the God of peace shall be with you." Thus, when I know and believe that God is thinking about me, I have "the peace of God"; and when I am thinking about Him and the things belonging to Him, I have "the God of peace." This, as might be expected, harmonizes precisely with Christ's doctrine in Luke 12 After relieving the minds of His disciples in reference to present supplies and future treasure, He says, "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." That is, I am not to seek the kingdom with the latent thought in my mind that my wants will be supplied in consequence. That would not be true discipleship. A true disciple never thinks of aught but the Master and His kingdom; and the Master will assuredly think of him and his wants. Thus it stands, my beloved reader, between a faithful servant, and an All-powerful and All-gracious Master. That servant may, therefore, be free-perfectly free from care.

But there is another ground on which we are exhorted to be free from care, and that is, the utter worthlessness of that care. "Which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?" We gain nothing by our care; and by indulging therein, we only unfit ourselves for seeking the kingdom of God, and place a barrier, by our unbelief, in the way of His acting for us. It is always true in reference to us, "He could there do no mighty work, because of their unbelief." Unbelief is the great hindrance to the display of God's mighty works on our behalf. If we take our affairs into our own hands, it is clear we do not want God. Thus we are left to the depressing influence of our own perplexing thoughts, and, finally, we take refuge in some human resource, and make shipwreck of faith. It is important to understand that we are either leaning on God, or on circumstances. It will not do, by any means, to say we are leaning on God and circumstances. It must be God only, or not at all. It is all very well to talk of faith when our hearts are, in reality, leaning on the creature, in some shape or form. We should sift and try our ways closely as to this; for, inasmuch as absolute dependance upon God is one of the special characteristics of the divine life, and one of the fundamental principles of the kingdom, it surely becomes us to look well to it, that we are not presenting any barrier to our progress in that heavenly quality. True, it is most trying to flesh and blood to have no settled thing to lean upon. The heart will quiver as we stand upon the shore of circumstances, and look forth upon that unknown ocean-unknown to all but faith, and where naught but simple faith can live for an hour. We may feel disposed, like Lot, to cry out, "Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live." The heart longs for some shred of the creature, some plank from the raft of circumstances, anything but absolute dependance upon God. But, oh! let God only be known, and He must be trusted; let Him be trusted, and He must be known. Still the poor heart will yearn after something settled, something tangible. If it be a question of maintenance, it will earnestly desire some settled income, a certain sum in the funds, a certain amount of landed property, or a fixed jointure or annuity of some kind or other. Then, if it be a question of public testimony or ministry of any kind, it will be the same thing. If a man is going to preach or lecture, he will like to have something to lean upon: if not a written sermon, at least, some notes, or some kind of previous preparation; anything but unqualified, self-emptied dependance upon God. Hence it is that worldliness prevails to such a fearful extent amongst Christians. Faith alone can overcome the

world, and purify the heart. It brings the soul from under the influence of time, and keeps it habitually in the light of eternity. It is occupied not with now, but with then; not with here, but hereafter; not with earth, but with heaven. Thus it overcomes the world, and purifies the heart. It hears and believes Christ's word, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Now, if "the kingdom" fills my soul's vision, I have no room for aught beside. I can let go present shadows in the prospect of future realities. I can give up an evanescent now, in the prospect of an eternal then. Wherefore, the Lord immediately adds, "Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fadeth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If I have treasure on earth, no matter in what shape, my heart will be there also, and I shall be a downright worldly man. How shall I most effectually empty my heart of the world? By getting it filled with Christ. He is the true treasure which neither the world's "bags," nor its "storehouses" can contain. The world has its barns" and its "bags," in which it hoards its "goods"; but its barns will fall, and its bags will wax old; and then, what will become of the treasure? Truly, "they build too low that build beneath the skies." Yet, people will build and hoard up, if not for themselves, at least for their children; or in other words, their second selves. If I hoard for my children, I am hoarding for myself; and not only so, but in numberless cases, the hoard, in place of proving a blessing, proves a positive curse to the child, by taking him off the proper ground appointed for him, as well as for all, in God's moral government, namely, "working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have (not to hoard up for himself, or his second self, but) to give to him that needeth." This is God's appointed ground for every man; and, therefore, if I hoard for my child, I am taking both myself and him off the divine ground, and the consequence will be a forfeiture of blessing. Do I taste the surpassing sweetness of obedience to, and dependance upon, God, and shall I deprive my child thereof? Shall I not rob him, virtually, and so far as in me lies, of God, and give Him, as a substitute, a few "old bags," an insurance-policy, or some musty parchments? Would this be acting a father's part? Surely not. It would be selling then for now. It would be like the profane and sensual Esau, selling the birthright for a morsel of meat; it would be giving up God's future for man's present. But why need I hoard up for my children? If I can trust God for myself, why not trust Him for them likewise? Cannot the One who has fed and clothed me, feed and clothe them also? Is His hand shortened, or His treasury exhausted? Shall I make them idlers, or give them money instead of God? Ah! my reader, let us bear in mind this simple fact, that if we cannot trust God for our little ones, we do not trust Him for ourselves. The moment I begin to hoard up a sixpence I have, in principle, departed from the life of faith. I may call my hoard by all the fair names that were ever invented by worldly minds or unbelieving hearts; but the unvarnished truth of the matter is this, MY BOARD IS MY GOD. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Let not the truth be misunderstood or misinterpreted. I am bound, by the powerful obligations of the word and example of God, to provide for my own; for, "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8). This is plain enough. And, moreover, I am bound to fit my children so far as God's principles admit, and my province extends, for any service to which He may be graciously pleased to call them. But I am nowhere instructed in the Word of God to give my children a hoard in place of an honest occupation, with simple dependance upon a Heavenly Father. As a matter of actual fact, few children ever thank their fathers for inherited wealth; whereas they will ever remember, with gratitude and veneration, having been led, by parental care and management, into

a godly course of action for themselves.

I do not, however, forget a passage which has often been used, or rather abused, to defend the worldly, unbelieving practice of hoarding up. I allude to 2 Cor. 12:14. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children." How glad people are when they get a semblance of Scripture authority for their worldliness! In this passage it is but a semblance of authority; for the apostle is certainly not teaching Christians to hoard up—he is not teaching heavenly men to lay up treasure upon the earth, for any object. He simply refers to a common practice, in the world, and to a common feeling in nature, in order to illustrate his own mode of dealing with the Corinthians, who were his children in the faith. He had not burdened them, and he would not burden them, for he was the parent. Now, if the saints of God are satisfied to go back to the world and its maxims, to nature and its ways, then let them hoard up with all diligence—let them "heap treasure together for the last days;" but let them remember that the moth, the canker-worm, and the rust, will be the end of it all. Oh! for a heart to value those immortal "bags" in which faith lays up its "fading treasure" those heavenly storehouses where faith "bestows all its fruits and its goods." Then shall we pursue a holy and an elevated path through this present evil world—then, too, shall we be lifted upon faith's vigorous pinion above the dark atmosphere which enwraps this Christ-rejecting, God-hating world, and which is impregnated and polluted by those two elements, namely, hatred of God, and love of gold.

I shall only add, ere closing this paper, that the Lord Jesus—the Adorable, the Divine, the Heavenly Teacher, having sought to raise, by His unearthly principles, the thoughts and affections of His disciples to their proper center and level, gives them two things to do; and these two things may be expressed in the words of the Holy Ghost, "to serve the living and true God; and wait for His Son from heaven." The entire of the teaching of Luke 12 from verse 35 to the end, may be ranged under the above comprehensive heads, to which I call the Christian reader's prayerful attention. We have no one else to serve but "the living God;" and nothing to wait for—nothing worth waiting for, but "His Son." May the Holy Ghost clothe His own word with heavenly power, so that it may come home to the heart and conscience, and tell upon the life of every child of God, that the name of the Lord Christ may be magnified, and His truth vindicated in the conduct of those that belong to Him. May the grace of an honest heart, and a tender, upright, well-adjusted conscience, be largely ministered to each and all of us, so that we may be like a well-tuned instrument, yielding a true tone' when touched by the Master's hand, and harmonizing with His heavenly voice.

Finally, if this paper should fall into the hands of one who has not yet found rest of conscience in the perfected atonement of the Son of God, I would say to such a one, you will surely lay this paper down, and say, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" You may be disposed to ask, "What would the world come to, if such principles were universally dominant?" I reply, it would cease to be governed by Satan, and would be "the kingdom of God." But let me ask you, my friend, "To which kingdom do you belong? Which is it—now or then—with you? Are you living for time or eternity, earth or heaven, Satan or Christ?" Do, I affectionately implore of you, be thoroughly honest with yourself in the presence of God. Remember, "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed." The judgment-seat will bring all to light. Therefore, I say, be honest with yourself, and now ask your heart, "Where am I? How do I stand? What is the ground of my peace? What are my prospects for eternity?" "Do not imagine that God wants you to buy heaven with a

surrender of earth. No; He points you to Christ, who, by bearing sin in His own body on the cross, has opened a way for the believing sinner to come into the presence of God, in the power of divine righteousness. You are not asked to do or to be anything; but the Gospel tells you what Jesus is, and what He has done; and, if you believe this in your heart, and confess it with your mouth, you shall be saved. Christ-God's Eternal Son-God manifest in the flesh-co-equal with the Father, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of a woman, took upon Him a body prepared by the power of the Highest-and thus became A REAL MAN-very God, and very man-He, having lived a life of perfect obedience, died upon the cross, being made sin and a curse, and having exhausted the cup of Jehovah's righteous wrath, endured the sting of death, spoiled the grave of its victory, and destroyed him that had the power of death, He went up into heaven, and took His seat at the right hand of God. Such is the infinite merit of His perfect sacrifice, that all who believe are justified from ALL THINGS-yea, are accepted in Him-stand in His acceptableness before God, and can never come into condemnation, but have passed from death into life. This is the Gospel-the glad tidings of salvation which God the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to preach to every creature. My reader, let me exhort you, in this concluding line, to " behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." BELIEVE AND LIVE.

C. H. M.

## On Ordinances

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Ordinances spoken of with reference to the contrast between the state of the Jews in times past and the church now.

" Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances (*εν δογμασι*); for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2:15).

" Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." (Col. 2:14).

" The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances (*δικαι■μασι σαρκ■ς*), imposed on them until the time of reformation."

In the first and last of those passages two important statements about those ordinances are made. 1st. They separate those who have them from those who have them not; they were a middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile; but Christ took it down, and in Himself made one new man; not by ordinances, but in Himself. 2nd. They have no power as regards the conscience. Conscience is not exercised as to moral power when ordinances are rested in.

We have both these evils witnessed against in 1 Cor. 11. 1st. Where they came together and that all had not a common part in the supper, then there were divisions among them; and therefore it was "tarry one for another," for they being " many were one bread" and one body, for all were "partakers of that one bread." When their common participation was broken through, then division ensued. 2nd. When the Lord's body was not discerned, then it was not the Lord's supper at all; for this is not a dispensation of ordinances but of power. "We have the mind of Christ."

Whenever baptism is spoken of in the epistles, it is connected with power, not as an ordinance: in 1 Cor. 12.13. " For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one spirit." Our associations with the baptized here, are with those whom the Spirit of God has quickened into the body of Christ. In Rom. 6 the apostle speaks of baptism as connected with the power of our life. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. What shall we say then, shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." No one who knows the Lord will connect these great results with an ordinance; nor will they deny them to those who, as dead with Christ and risen with Him, are walking in newness of life. This is the power of obedience to the word of Christ, and to be maintained as such, rather than urging persons to be

rebaptized, and that in a dispensation that has failed, and in the days of the form of godliness without the power, when ordinances will easily be the way of obedience to the word of Christ.

In Col. 2 the saints are told of their circumcision with the circumcision not made with hands, but in Christ, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; "buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him"; but how is this, that in baptism they are buried with Christ and risen with Him? Not through an ordinance; but "THROUGH FAITH of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

In 1 Peter 3 we read, that in correspondence with the type of the ark, that "baptism saves us," but not by an ordinance, but by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.

In these passages-1st. Baptism is by the Spirit. 2nd. The obedience resulting from it is, "walking in newness of life." The liberty of salvation by it is, "the answer of a good conscience toward God." In all these the saints are led from the form to the power of godliness.

In Eph. 4:5. "There is one baptism." In this passage the saints are besought to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and the apostle leading them away from all that would divide, lays before them what should hold them together because of being one. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

All these are one, and we cannot divide them; and there is one baptism; we die with Christ once, and with none but Him, and we live with Him for evermore, and there is one baptism.

There is one passage, at least, in which he speaks of the form of baptism; "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say, that I had baptized in my own name." He here presses on the saints the power, not of their act in being baptized, but of the name they were baptized in; "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" When Paul is thankful to God that he baptized none of them, he does not mean that they were not baptized, but that his power from Christ was to preach the gospel; by this the power of baptism would be realized in them, and this was his ministry of power; and his association with the baptized afterward, was with those in whom the word of the truth of the gospel had entrance with power. To preach the gospel was a greater work for the apostle than to baptize. It has its place, but should not be put out of its place.

The passage in which the word "baptisms" occurs in Heb. 6 is a different word in the Greek.

## Partaking of Christ: Review of Rev. Maurice's Thoughts on Sacrifice

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On taking up Mr. Maurice's dedication of his Sermons on Sacrifice, one is tempted to say, "What next?" But though Mr. Maurice shows vivid marks, in some places of the Sermons, of great earnestness for purity towards God-our praise must stop here. There always seems something that is not fully expressed. If he is able to define and bring out distinctly what his doctrine is, let him; because on the material point of the value and character of the person of 'the Son of God, he is vague if not enigmatical, because there is something in reserve. This feeling is left on our minds. It might cover much worse than seems. The process by which he has thrown together the items of his creed is remarkable. The sects are generally the complements of one another's defects. He seems to have picked out all their defects and thrown them together for his special confession. The atonement of Irving which destroyed all ground of substitution-the inward light of the Friends which gave to the heathen as much share of this, as the possessor of Christ by faith; and curiously satisfies himself with the establishment, because it contains space for every shade of this light, in its varied measure of development. We remember a Roman Catholic Convert, who grew in intelligence beyond his first teachers, and owned that there was much contrary to the word of God in the establishment, into which he had recanted, but said that the articles claimed no man's belief, beyond what could be proved by Scripture, and therefore that he was not bound by what he found in his new home. We recollect' the answer given. "It is a pity the Roman Catholic had not such an article; you might have staid among them still." That Mr. Maurice's conclusions are on defective grounds of knowledge of what is proffered in Scripture is manifest. He had formed a moral system of his own, 'and to this Scripture was to bow. Not setting out with the word, or in subjection to it, he picks up the members of his creed here and there, and touches on the German line of subjective religion, and then Scripture is to walk in his train, and the forms of his Church Services, are to speak the same in its "motley" application; an account of it which nobody ever thought of before, and at which the compilers would wonder. The juxtaposition in which he puts the English and Scotch confessions is remarkable and gives occasion to the discovery of the ground-work of his theology, viz. that man only requires mending and not remaking. viz., system founded on this must re-adapt everything; and meaning to be religious he has much on his hands. May God make those who believe by grace come into quick apprehension of the truth, viz., that the house is leprous and must be pulled down, and that the building anew in the second Adam, in resurrection, is the mind of God, in the gospel of His grace, and that all His dispensations of truth wind up in this.

(\* These pages are hardly in accordance with the ordinary style and object of this work, but the position of Mr. Maurice, with the currency and popularity of the doctrine of which his works are the exponent, are the excuse. Such a paper may not be necessary as a safeguard to the ordinary readers of the Present Testimony, but it may let them know what is abroad, and become of some service by the blessing of God, in the contradiction of it.-Ed.)

This truth will always expose, as it does in Mr. Maurice's system, the whole weight of the evil of religion, and the notions of God, being subjective, instead of having Himself as necessarily the object of every creature (made to apprehend Him), as revealed by Himself. His character revealed

by Himself determines the offense in which the Sinner stands. It is not the comparison of the racy Scot and the frame of an article in the establishment. Truth presents two facts-the nature of God (and it is unavoidably perfect), and departure from that created position which had proceeded from the hands of God. With this original difference-one was from the first in creature fallibility, though not having failed; and the other unavoidably perfect as divine Creator. If failure comes in, there is no remedy in the way of recovery. The covenant whereby man is erect is broken; and we come to the saving truth, that there is none good but God. THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS is the saving confession of deliverance and stability. Partial views of divine truth must ever create confusion. Such men as Mr. Maurice must make up for what they do not see. They have, neither sense of the divine greatness nor of man's incapacity to meet it. But considering it as the defectiveness of view, we would liken it to a man approaching the periphery of a circle from which the alleys all run up to its center. He can see but one alley full home to the center at once, the next partially, but the greater number not at all. In like manner any man standing on the opposite side or facing any one of the alleys,- his conclusions are equally partial and all fallacious. The only person seeing all in proportion is he that stands at the center and in this case (i.e. of divine truth and its relations), the only center is God, and being at the center with God. So placed, he sees the divine counsels proceeding from the same center, even from God Himself, in just proportion, and just relationship to one another. Apparent contrarities always harmonize in the center from which they proceed. The righteousness of God and the goodness of God-mercy, truth-all that is divine, all that is divinely moral, all meet perfectly in God as manifested in Christ, to and for man, to the glory of God.

The truth is, as to Mr. Maurice-there is a seeking to accommodate that which is divine to man's corrupt reason and condition, rendering all revelation futile, by taking all direct intent from its declarations and statements. This wrong takes place under the correction of his use of revelation, and the correction of other men's partial knowledge of it. The working of the mystery of iniquity was seen by the spiritual eye of one apostle, and the persons of it by another. Their judgment did not separate the beginning from its results. Heathen warning is not enough-

"Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur

Cum mala per longas convaluere morass."

Falsified truth is more demoralizing, and eventually is fuller opposition to God than heathenism has reached. We will try one place. In describing Abraham's position and relation to God, he says: " A man who has waited long for some good which has seemed to him more blessed each day that has not brought it to him, and yet has seemed each day more improbable - who has been sure from the first, if ever came, it must be a gift from one who watched over him and cared for him, and who, for that very reason, has gone on trusting that he shall receive it, yet growing in trust as the natural difficulties grew more insurmountable-such a man, when the dream of his heart becomes a substantial reality, has a sense of grateful joy which turns to pain, which is actually oppressive till it finds some outlet. Yet what outlet can it find? what can it do for the giver more than rejoice and wonder at the gift -more than say, 'It is thine.'"

Nothing, perhaps; but how can he say that? How can he utter what he means to one who he knows is the source of all he has, and can need nothing from him? What can he offer? a mere sign and symbol. "A sheep, which he would slay for his own food, and which he would not miss out of

his own flock? Or a miserable sample of the fruits which the earth is pouring out to him? It must surely be something better, more precious than any of them. His own heart seems to scorn such presents: must not the heart of Him to whom He brings them?

" The description I have given is the description which in simpler, truer language, the book of Genesis has given of Abraham. He has waited, longed, feared, trusted, received. The child has come to him in his old age-a child to whom blessings are attached, which he cannot measure, which stretch into the farthest future. From him are to come as many as the stars or as the sands. It is indeed a child of laughter and joy. He has lived for this; as he looks upon it, it appears to him the pledge of an infinite interminable life. The child has brought him nearer to God; though he has believed in Him so long, it is now as if he believed in Him for the first time, so much is he carried out of himself; such a vision has he of One who orders ages past and to come, and yet is interested for him, is interested for the feeblest of those whom He has made. Out of such things comes the craving for the power to make some sacrifice, a sacrifice that shall not be nominal but real.

" Many strange and perplexing thoughts invaded men's minds as they invade men's minds now. When they became very tormenting, then as now, people betook themselves to some wise man. They asked what do these thoughts mean, whence do they come, and what are we to do in consequence of them? They got various answers. The answers in different places shaped themselves into different rules and maxims; forms and services of devotion were grounded upon them; above all, sacrifices were suggested which might satisfy the desire of the creature, perhaps might satisfy the demands of his ruler. The book of Genesis says, 'GOD did tempt Abraham.' It leads us back to the source from which the thoughts which were working in his mind were derived. It says broadly and distinctly-this seed did not drop by accident into the patriarch's mind-it was not self-sown. It was not put into him by the suggestions of some of his fellows. It was part of the discipline to which he was subjected that these questions should be excited in him. It was his Divine Teacher who led him to the terrible conclusion- 'The sacrifice that I must offer is that very gift which has caused all my joy.'" Enough! Let a common intelligent, unsophisticated mind, read the account in Genesis. It matters not what objection he may make, but could any such give the account of what is written in Genesis that Mr. Maurice has done? Was there ever such unaccountable trash? Is it worth pulling to pieces? We see no end in Mr. Maurice's paraphrase but the attempt to show that God was not in it at all. The Divine Teacher is the subjective faculty; that is, at the bottom of it. " GOD is not in all his thoughts."

Mr. Maurice has become famous by being dismissed a professorship-not for the confession of Christ, but for a most prolific spawning of his ideas of the perfectibility of man. He is only dangerous because he falls in with the current that is hurrying men away from God. I say to the unbelieving student of the bible (if there is need to say anything), was there ever more unhallowed fire offered as incense to God since the sons of Aaron died for that sin before the Lord? Will not Mr. Maurice leave one sacred feeling to hang about Abraham's offering up his son, whom also he received back in the figure of resurrection? God did tempt Abraham-put him to proof, as we should say, in easier terms of paraphrase according to the use of vulgar terms. "And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest; and get thee into the land of Moriah." We need not copy what immediately follows -it is well known. But we find

further on the angel of the Lord calling to him from heaven, who says: " Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing. thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." God here put Abraham to proof, and Abraham, by grace, stood good in the proof, namely in his obedience to God, and reliance on His word and promises as to Isaac. What puerile neology is Mr. Maurice's-" The divine teacher suggests"-the way of fulfilling his gratitude for the son given him, that Abraham was to offer up his son to death as a way of pleasing himself, in return for the grace of God in giving him the same son, in a perpetual purpose of futurity; not in confidence, that we hear from Mr. Maurice, that the WORD OF GOD ensured his being kept to him through death. What miserable driveling in order to avoid the plain intent and plain expression of the word handed down to us. Why does Mr. Maurice go by it at all? We are sure that the time will come when he will not, unless by his turning through grace to the obedience of faith, of which his entire work is an avoidance.

There is a page of Mr. Maurice's we did not note and cannot find again, in which he most touchingly exposes that corruption of heart and thought, in speaking which his eyes must have fallen to the ground, and asks if we are to hold the doctrine of sacrifice and satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ, and to leave all this untouched. It was a sentence for which every one who knows the plague of his own heart and its fruits, and confesses it, must love him as one would a poor Carmelite undertaking his penance and prayers, and likewise with the hope of purifying his heart thereby, and in true desire thereto. Mr. Maurice may be surprised at finding himself standing in this comparison. We believe him to be standing in the far worse predicament of the two. God loves them both in the intent. God loved Cornelius, who nevertheless had yet to hear words by which he might be saved. The Carmelite hardly stands as one departing from light; Mr. Maurice does-that is the difference between them. But what would interest us in Mr. Maurice is his desire after sanctity; but there was no need for his rejecting the corner stone of the faith, in the rejection of the substitution of Christ for the sinner in death; when there lay, a few steps further on, more than he seeks, in the partaking of Christ in life as risen. But will what he has fallen back upon bring him to the desired haven? Ah! no. Human perfectibility by a universal inward light, without being individually cleansed by the blood-without the, washing of regeneration in the faith of Jesus risen, and without the renewing of the Holy Ghost for failure, will find itself dying in its sins, and make the stream yet broader of human departure, to fall at last into the hands, power, and direction of the enemy.

We took his explanation of Abraham's sacrifice as a palpably offensive example of the faith of the Son of God dying for sinners (and raised again, which he seems to have forgotten) being explained away by strained and gross perversion of the word of revelation.

Let us now see what the sanctity of the new nature in Christ, according to Mr. Maurice, is to produce. " When St. Paul preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he preached, that in obedience, humiliation, and sacrifice dwelt the mighty conquering power, that power against which no other in heaven or earth could measure itself. And his words have not been confuted by the experience of ages; they have been confirmed by facts, which seem at first sight to be most at war with them. Do you ask why the soldiers of Islam in the first centuries after Mahomet or in any subsequent centuries, prevailed against those who had the sign of the cross on their banners? The only answer that can be given is; that there was more of this thought and mind of Christ, more of humiliation and obedience and sacrifice in them than there was in their opponents. They

prevailed not through their denial of Him, but through their implicit recognition of Him. So far as they had zeal, faith, and union-so far as they sought to magnify God's name and to give up themselves, they were His soldiers and not the prophet's; they succeeded because the incarnate Son of God was highly exalted, because there was a name given him above every name." To continue the quotation would be of no use, as I am convinced it would be unintelligible. But there is one sentence shortly following the above, inconceivable as it is for any possible purpose in the matter, we must give. Contradictions or contraries may elucidate something to somebody. It is this "The will that rules the universe, the will that has triumphed and does triumph, is all expressed and gathered up in the Lamb that was slain." We confess all our senses are turned topsy-turvy. He goes on:--, "The unconscious creation and all its energies and impulses, refer themselves to the name of Jesus." This last paragraph we must leave as a wonder to readers, unless we find in it the figurative language of the psalmist, who says that "The floods clap their hands, and the trees rejoice before Jehovah." As to "the will that has triumphed and does triumph," we humbly think that Mr. Maurice has mistaken the devil for God. It is the most fearfully rapid growth, and ripening to evil, of mistaken principles we ever witnessed in the mind of man. The willful king of Daniel cannot but come into our mind: " And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished."

"Adam was the head of the creation; he fell, and all fell in him and with him. Satan having the upper hand of Adam, all is fallen under the power of Satan, who fills the world with evil, and who governs by the passions of man."

Is not this a truer account of the state of things. But we must not lose sight of the oriental Christians and the followers of Islam. It would be dangerous to agree with Mr. Maurice in anything, but he will not differ from us when we say that the former were effeminate, immoral, and idolatrous; that they bore no testimony to Christ's name, and were judged of God in their evil. *Corruptio optima est pessima*. Perhaps Mr. Maurice does not know that the learned, Mede (quoted, we believe, by Foster in his *Mahometanism Unveiled*) judged the Mahometan to be duly considered a Christian sect; so he is not put to the shift of calling them followers of Islam, but of the Lamb slain! We certainly read of the judgment of the oriental Christians, whose worthlessness was come to the full. We read also of the end of Babylon, the mystic Babylon, " her sins had reached unto heaven, and in one hour her judgment came;" and we hear that the mighty angel cried, " Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird." In the case of Babylon, it is the empire and the ten kings that make the great city desolate. Now Babylon is not the oriental Christians, but the occidental ones sunk in corruption. " And strong is the Lord God that judgeth her, but His instruments, as the sword of His vengeance, what are they?" "They shall make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire;" and take possession too, and be bolder than the followers of Islam. When they have done this, they then shall make war with the Lamb. "What zeal, faith and union" will they manifest; " with all the energies and impulses of unconscious creatures." " The name of Jesus is the name to which all the intelligences of the earth refer themselves!" The only reason that Mr. Maurice would give, nay, has given to the question why the followers of Islam overcame the oriental Christians at one hour, or would give, whoever were the conquerors at another, is, " that there was more of this thought or mind of Christ, more of humiliation and

obedience and sacrifice in them than there was in their opponents."

What words can we use for such pestilential mockery of God? Would to God Mr. Maurice could see what comes of this mismatching of truth, this change of bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, and of those who persuade men so. Are the energies and impulses of unconsciousness, and humiliation and obedience and sacrifice to be found in the present followers of Islam-with the waning protestantism of England, and infidel catholic France; or otherwise in the Russian? Which have the most inward light by which they shall conquer; or are Mr. Maurice's sympathies with one side or the other in a war of opinion? We protest before God, we never heard anything so disgustingly dishonoring to the Spirit of God, and to the Holy Child Jesus, whose reign shall bring in on earth, (of heaven and its hope let us not here speak), peace and goodwill among men! Come Lord Jesus! may the soul well exclaim, if it were only for this.

We do feel called on to offer to Mr. Maurice, and others, who may have been his readers, some other thoughts, if by His grace God may deliver him or some one out of the snare of the Devil, into which his writings surely conduct any one that gives his ear to them. Is there nothing better than what he has brought forward, given us?

Whatever course we can trace in Mr. Maurice's mind, which would seem to excuse him, (as the fault of one person, is sometimes the palliation for the fault of another,) yet with the word of GOD in his hand, and an unchecked use of it, so perverse a departure from it is fearful. - " The words that I speak" says the Lord, " shall judge you."

Have you believed on the name of the Son of God? What is the salvation that he brings? We do feel greatly the guilt of those, who (to commend themselves and the ordinances, they would persuade people to be specially in their hands, as necessary to salvation instead of as secondary to its enjoyment), deaden and would forbid every lively sentiment to God, to put themselves and their solemnities in His place, yet can this excuse those who displace the Spirit of God, equally and as fatally, by introducing again the energies and the willfulness of the natural man, and call it of God?- God is not mocked by either. The first Adam having achieved his independence of his Creator, by the advice and suggestion of the enemy became as God; but a poor and sorry God! for death followed his sin. God in His abundant compassions undertook the re-creation of his fallen likeness and gave HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN not to us as incarnate now, (that would be " to know Him in the flesh") but as crucified and RISEN, the LIFE of those that believe on His name, and the least of those who join themselves to Christ thus known, who love Him shall shine in His glory. The believer is made partaker of Christ! of Christ risen-the NEW MAN. He is created anew in Christ Jesus. We cannot neologize we believe. -But wherein and what is the gift, and the fruits, and the manner of its exercise. I speak not now of what Christ is by imputation for righteousness to the forgiveness of sins, but the gift of Himself, as life and righteousness unto everlasting life. This is something different from " the energies and impulses of the unconscious creature." "I know Him whom, I have believed," says St. Paul, The Elysium and hour is of the followers of Islam find no place here. But sacrifice, humiliation, and the cross do find place. If life, as it does (and life brings consciousness to the creature), precedes, in the order of the gift of God, death, yet death again precedes the abounding of life, i.e., sacrifice, humiliation, and the cross, precede the abounding of life. " If ye through the SPIRIT (not unconsciously, or as an anchorite, either), do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live," i.e., the risen Christ shall abound in you; " Christ in you the hope of

glory." As far as the negative goes, we quote Peter.- "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God." Or as St. Paul, " I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, and be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Or the same apostle in his epistle to the Colossians, if ye then be dead with Christ, let all the ordinances that belonged to the covenant with the Jew, in the flesh cease to you, " If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, let your affections be set on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory-mortify therefore," etc. And, " Ye have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, (not in unconsciousness), in the image of Him who created him." Again, "Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith." We are unwilling to stop quoting till we reach the example of Christ "true in us and in Him." "If we have become planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also plants of the resurrection" (see Greek). We hear of Him, "who endured the cross, and despised the shame," as a witness to God for our example, "and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And we bring forward lastly, the place in Phil. 2 "Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took on Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father"! Now is there a conscience that allows the truth of Scripture, that can stand with Mr. Maurice and his idea of the nature of the exaltation of Jesus, or of those who walk in Him? If there is let them give up the word entirely.-Well! Sad indeed for them, but they cannot hold to Mr. Maurice and to the Bible too. We have the cross sacrifice humiliation in truth, and exaltation to follow; but the cross sacrifice and humiliation is to be applied to everything in man born of Adam, and exaltation, to its being brought low in grace at the coming of the Lord Jesus. We have said we might feel some excuse for Mr. Maurice, because of the neglect of doctrine of this kind by so many-with antinomian result, too, in some measure. The "works of faith" are such as humiliation and the cross, but Mr. Maurice had the Scripture as well as we.

But why should we, because we have all this fullness, throw away the substitution of Christ for the sinner on the cross before God; but it was too apparent in the word to be got rid of. "Here the case," says he, "of the old covenant is closed;" that is, that all the types given in the Old Testament are, when we come to the New, to go for nothing! Admirable neological logic! Let men be consistent and cast the word away, and then act with a will full of "triumph," or save their souls by the obedience of faith in receiving it. Grant it, O God!

We do not quarrel so much with the heavenly things to be purified with better sacrifices than the legal sacrifices are, those sanctified by the will of God; but he has taken an epistle written in a levitical sense, bringing in wonderful truth in its proper place, and we hear that by one sacrifice

they have been perfected forever. Deliverance it was from dead works, by Him who by the Holy Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, to purge our conscience from them to serve the living God. The typical substitution was put aside by the real substitution. He died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Judgment for sin was passed upon Him. We that believe are dead in Him. He that is dead hath been freed [justified, see Greek] from sin; we were dead with Him, and the judgment is past, and we are alive in the same Jesus, risen from the grave. " He loved me and gave Himself for me," says St. Paul. Death must precede, but rising again was more than the death.

All this thought, which puts us in God's presence free in Christ and unto life, even the life that is in resurrection truth and power, is lost to Mr. Maurice. He is in the culmen of his subject, in the mire of sunken humanity. We do hear of the empire that is to rise out of the bottomless pit, and to such will humanity come, unconscious of the bonds in which it is held, and unconscious of what "God has wrought in Christ for them that believe, when He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory."

Can we return to consider the subjects in Mr. Maurice's book that we in our last division started from? It is not possible; but we put before him and his readers in respect of those he has chosen for his heroes a few verses of the Revelation:-" And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God:.

And the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.... 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."

## Prayer and Fasting

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It is well when these words express the habit and condition of the soul, and not merely acts resorted to upon some sudden and pressing emergency. They characterize respectively a consciously weak and chastened soul: and in such case, whatever may be the strength of the enemy, or the difficulty of the circumstance, there is certain victory, for the battle is not ours, but the Lord's.

The tone and habit of the soul are of the greatest moment, practically, and with God. It is recorded of Daniel, that when he prayed three times a day, contrary to the king's decree, it was "as he did aforetime."- Dan. 6:10.

## The Present Testimony

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The thoughts of many, at the present moment, about the testimony of God, appear to me to savor rather of the personal considerations, as to where they have been, and what they have been doing, than to present a fair expression of what is true as to God and His present testimony.

The grace of God, in the last of these days, found us all, whom indeed it has found, dwelling in a moral Babylon; and there the cry was heard, "Come out of her, my people!" And who, that has replied to the call, "I come, Lord," has not found both the inextricable character of the labyrinth, out of which, through grace, he desired to escape, and his own complicity, alas! with the evil of the place?

To move from one street to another in that mystic city is readily allowed; and it is comparatively easy, if expensive, so to do. But none, except He who is stronger than the lord of that city, can bring clean out of it any of those who have been born there, and have thus become "dwellers upon the earth":- "dwellers upon the earth" in avowed obedience to the name of Christ, and holders of citizenship "where Satan's seat is," professedly in the fear of the Lord.

Speaking as a man, I might say, the Roman circus-the Grecian quadrangle-the Seven-dials of Protestantism - the colleges, schools, and triangle of Non-conformity -the model buildings of Separatism - the All-Saints Hall of the Evangelical Alliance, which goes not beyond "a Pandect;" present not one of them a "Pella," or a "Zoar," in regard to Babylon. What outward place does? True: and yet, if a man has heard a cry, "Come out of her, my people"; and that by a voice whose call is never in vain; he must be cautious, and get out, lest he be lost in the confusions of the place. And the more caution will be needed, with minds like ours, so prone to self-deception in the things of God. Alas! when one has been roused to action, how frequently does the heart confound the thought, "I have done something," with "I have done thy will, O God." But who needs be told that these are often far from being equivalent?

I do not press the applicability of the doctrine of the Babylon of "Revelation;" yet I note the fact, that the Spirit of God has commonly used it on consciences, when he has been leading His people to reform themselves. See, for example, in the days of Luther, and of the Nonconformists, and the movement of to-day.

But a word as to the so-called present testimony. I will state in simplicity, for myself individually, what I mean by the present testimony, in which, and of which, I desire grace to be found; and, at the same time I must say, I deeply deplore that many beloved children of God either do not see its existence, or make light of it altogether.

No better introduction of my subject occurs to me than the well-known but much abused catechismal term -"THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH."

While God was teaching earthly truths and government, the Jew was His subject: but, when heavenly truth became the theme, Christ and His grace in the church became the subject.

God established upon earth the counterpart and witness of what was in his counsel for the heavens-a church; and the word of God's grace was about that church; see Paul's conversion. In connection with the church, the individual believer found his position, his privileges, and his responsibilities. It was to be on earth as a widow, Christ-expectant, and serving the living and true God until the Savior and Lord came back.

I do not go into the question, what is the church? All I assert is, God did establish one; and I ask, Where is it?

Chef d'ouvre of God's workmanship, it came out to light when the Son of man, rejected by all from earth, had found His seat at the right hand of the Father. His God and Father has not changed His truth, nor recalled it yet to give it another form; nor has He changed the place of the Son of man upon the Father's throne.

The "chaste virgin" on earth, espoused to a Heavenly Lord, as a widow waiting-where is she? Nay; all is changed here, in her appearance, from what once it was; and because of man's utter unfaithfulness we were found, if found by grace at all, in Babylon. But found by whom, except by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who retains Him still as Son of man upon the Father's throne. The position and revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are not changed; nor will change (blessed be God) to please us and our narrow thoughts. Divine and heavenly truth about the Son and His church, is still the standing form of God's present display of Himself.

Now what I want is, to be broken clown in myself, and in all that I have and am, by this divine and fatherly love, and to be made to realize, and to exhibit, in the midst of the ruin and wreck of the church here below; that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is still acting down here upon earth as the God and Father of the Son of man, who is at His right hand in the glory which He had with Him before the world was, and who has a body down here. The claims of God, and the blessing of my own soul, require this.

It is clear I cannot, if I would, break up the truth given to me as one here below;-I cannot, because I cannot change God's revelation of Himself, nor the position which His Christ holds, until the church is all gathered at the Father's right hand.

The discovery of this truth tells me where I am not, and what I am not. It tells of man's utter failure, and of circumstances so changed down here, partly the effects of our wickedness, and partly the effects of the moral judgment of God thereon,-that one finds it is God alone can soften one down to the platform of His grace;--a platform where all the heavenly divine light of the Son of man, upon the Father's throne, meets the conscience of a member of His body in a place where all is confusion and sin.

"The obedience of faith" how precious in such a position! The knowledge of which involves that God and His truth are not changed; and if the circumstances down here proper to it are changed, God will accept the integrity which seeks to find and to do His will, and He will give guidance to such; though He may leave to their own wisdom those who, because they have failed themselves want to make out, either that He is also changed; or that, if not changed in Himself or in His truth, He is not, as the living God, acting upon that truth now. No measure short of Christ and the church is our gospel; and God is acting upon that truth, and I do most simply, therefore, ask that I may find grace in his sight, not only to know Himself and His truth, but to know myself livingly associated

with Him as the living God in His present action. Blessed also is the truth to such a one of the Lordship of Jesus: i.e. that He is not Savior only, but Lord of All also.

I believe it to be a very great sin, and a grief and a dishonor to the Holy Ghost, to deny the church of the living God, and a corrupting of the gospel. To make little of what God is doing, as the living God, is a sin too; and this is what they are guilty of who make little of present association with Him as the God so acting. Who would turn back from "the Father," and " the Son of man upon the Father's throne;" the Father acting for the members of the body of that Son-to grace and mercy as fitted for a soul itself in its dangers and needs? Blessed is the gospel which calls a sinner, and the grace which suits a saint; but I am speaking of the responsibility of unexampled infinite grace.

I believe it to be horrid dishonor put upon oneself to be thinking merely of one's own soul, or even of the souls of poor sinners and saints around one, if it be to the forgetting of the central truth; GOD'S central truth-of His delight in Christ and His church.

I need hardly say, I do not sanction any disparagement of any babe's attainment in thus speaking. I speak not of such; but I speak of those who, professing to be "somewhat," and to be making progress into a fuller light and liberty, would set the gospel as their more excellent employment; or who would put aside the thought of a " present testimony" for the gospel's sake.

Now my assertion is clear-the man of God, who has to do individually with the living God in His gospel, knows that gospel to be about Christ and the church; and that, much as man has failed, God, as the living God, holds to that gospel; and holds men of God to see their failure; and if walking with Him as the living God, to own the scope of the truth first given, and to seek from God power to live out, amid all the wreck and ruin, as integral parts of that body, the Head of which is in heaven, and so to be associated, and consistently associated, with God's present testimony for Himself. And all I would say is, that if God is ready to vindicate Himself against man and Satan in upholding a few individuals after that sort-may I be one!

## Remarks on Revelation 1:1-2

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The name by which many, if not most, commonly designate this book is that of "The Revelations." That there are several revelations in the book may be true enough; but the use of the term in the plural (The Revelations) as the name of the book, is calculated to mislead, and seems unhappy, seeing that Divine Wisdom has judged it right to begin the book with the words, if not designation, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, (1:1) which God gave unto Him, to skew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," etc.

There is something very definite and distinct in this expression: "The revelation of Jesus Christ" (which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass), which is lost and veiled by the use of the other more vague name of "The Revelations."

The expression, "The revelation of Jesus Christ," whether in English or in Greek, may mean either of two things, viz.: The revelation of (in the sense of "about, concerning") Jesus Christ-the manifestation of the person of Christ somewhere; or (if of is taken in such a sense as "belonging to, made through, connected with ") the revelation which belongs to Jesus Christ.

I am not aware that anything can be built upon the meaning of the word as found in Greek, apokalupsis, or of the word apokalupto, to the which apokalupsis is related. Both are used to express the showing forth plainly, or, in an uncovered way-in a way in which there is no veil-doctrine, truth, thoughts, events, righteousness, glory, wrath, persons, etc. Taking the cover from, uncovering, discovering being the primary idea.

The question arises as to the expression, "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass," (as much in the English as in the Greek,) what is the revelation "or" "uncovering"? 1stly. Is it an uncovering or discovering of some position, or of some service of the person of the Lord Himself, which God gave Him to make known to His servants? 2ndly. Or, Is it the revelation of certain things which God gave Him to communicate? 3rdly. Or, As the whole unraveling of things to come, which are not known, hangs upon the positions and services of the person of the Lord, is it both the one and the other? The statement contained in the last suggestion, is at all events I conceive true, and there is an absolute connection of all the things which must shortly come to pass with certain positions and certain services of the Lord Himself, the presenting without a veil of which positions and services, as being held by the Lord Jesus, enters very largely into that which is distinctively peculiar to this book.

Whether it be the uncovering (presenting without a veil) of His person, in certain positions and services, which God gave to Him to show; or, whether it be the uncovering (presenting without a veil) of certain things connected with certain positions and services He is found in, in this book-two things seem to me clear. First, the expression, "which God gave to Him to show," is a most remarkable one-one which is hardly consistent with the quiet assumption that this book (however much it may have in common with the Old Testament prophecies, or with revelations made in the

New Testament Epistles) has nothing distinctively peculiar to itself, and new as its matter. Second, the tenor of the book does present much altogether peculiar, and which I think I may safely say was unknown previously.

Who knew, for instance, of the Savior Jah, the Anointed (Jesus Christ), as walking amid the candle-sticks? Who knew Him (the churches ready to be spewed out of His mouth) seated in heaven, and all that was God's secure in Him there, as Himself the center, spring and regulator of the arrangements both for Israel's preparation, trials, and finding again, and for the breaking up of Gentilism, etc. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, and God's ways are not as our ways.

The law was not the Gospel; and yet the Giver of the Law had, as it were, the Gospel ever in His mind, and before Him in His conduct. And every fragment of the law and its testimony confirms to him who knows the gospel the gospel's Divine origin and our need of it. So again, the revelation of the mystery through Paul, was a putting into our hands of a key which had a gap here, and a gap there—a wall here and a wall there—which found their corresponding counter walls and gaps in the Old Testament scriptures; though the mystery itself had never been revealed previously; but as there is a glory terrestrial and a glory celestial, so both of these having but one center, viz., the person of the Lord, they answer the one to the other; and the more recently revealed part in no way sets aside the other. New it is in revelation, yet, by revelation, found to be old; for without it the earthly glory never could be set up.

I cannot but think the Revelation, in somewhat similar manner, contains matter (its own distinctive, peculiar matter), which was altogether new to John in Patmos. And I conceive it needs but little attention, under divine teaching, to see that while certain things were most clearly announced in the epistles as coming to pass, "the how these things were to be" was left in enigma, until

John was in Patmos. Samson's abstractedly put " Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness,"—was received by the Philistines as a truth—but who of them could say, " What is sweeter than honey, what stronger than a lion?" until they had plowed with his heifer. Who of us could have traced from epistles or from previously given scripture, the truths revealed in the Revelation.

Let any one examine Rom. 11, for instance, and 1 Cor. 1:1, and he will find that he is debtor to the Lord, through another than Paul, for the power to trace out the order in which things spoken of in these two portions would come to pass. And where, in Paul's writings, would any of us find the display of the person of Christ in services and offices connected with the transition from one state of things to another as in the Revelation?

No; this unveiling, this uncovering, as we have it here, God gave unto Jesus Christ that He might show unto His servants things which must quickly come to pass. At the time of communicating, through Paul, things were not ripe for the revelation which we have here given to us through John. Not only, as I judge, was Paul chosen for another testimony, but also the time was not come for the testimony in Paul's day. The word could still flow forth fresh, addressed " to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus," but the time would come when (all that Paul has written being still left for the obedience of faith and for the church of Christ, which should never fail, but would be manifested in its parts here below, through the whole progress of time), churches, as such, would come into judgment, and would even be set aside; and then a fresh-given word might take this

form, as addressed through "a servant" (His servant John) to "servants," - "To him that hath an ear to hear," etc. Those that were called out to be saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, might, in Paul's day, form churches in various places; churches which had a responsibility in testimony and light-giving, of which they could not divest themselves. Clearly, to be one of such a place, a part of such a thing, while God was holding it responsible and was present to help it, was a very different position from that of one whose lot might be cast in a day when the churches were looked upon as falling or fallen, and when, consequently, instead of the shelter of a formed church, owned of God, each of the servants, each one that had an ear to hear must withdraw himself from all evil, and realize what measure of communion he could with those who still really served God. Now it is just with the calling in question of the churches as churches that the book opens; and the visit of the Lord to His suffering servant John, in Patmos, seems to me something new, over and above what we find in the epistles.

And mark it, separation, through the faith, was at the first unto obedience. God revealed what would separate unto Himself and produce fruits of obedience. When a large mass has taken up the profession of being so separated through faith, but their works denied it-the pressing of this serving the living and true God-the raising the questions, " Who is a servant?" "Who hath an ear to hear?" became a test. And it was a very solemn one, as to the churches themselves, for it was urged, not merely upon individuals merely inside a church, but in connection with the churches still standing as candlesticks but about to be removed.

The possession of eternal life; the occupation of a position of testimony, to the which position many a privilege attached, and the serving of God, the living and true God, were three things which, though unhappily possible to separate, were most naturally and happily united in one in the early Christians. When the churches were failing, and in principle failed, Christ in whom were the spring and claims, as to these three things, came in afresh. As having set up a testimony for God, he was responsible to judge. A sort of analytical process follows. He was what He ever had been for his people. The springs in Him were unchoked-the claims for a return to God of what He gave were as sure, in Him, as was His zeal towards God, as His love to His people.

At the end of the book, we see his announced return bearing, alas! then differently on the holder of the warning (Rev. 22:6,7), on the place of profession (ver. 10-16), and on his own bride (ver. 17). At the beginning, the holder of His word, the professing people, and the privileged ones, were but three epithets for one and the same class. The privileges and responsibilities of each quality flowed from what was in Him, and could never fail. Alas! man fails in all that is committed to him, and when tried he is found to have failed. But Christ would not fail, even amid man's failure, to prove His competency and to keep unto eternal life His people. But where eternal life dwells, there there is the spirit of obedience; and where Christ preserves a people to Himself, He does so by giving them the hearing ear, that they may receive the word which is a quickening word. It is this which gives the peculiar force of the address being to servants, to readers, to treasurers up of the word in this book; enforced as, of course, it is by judgment being now at the very door on account of entire failure. The question is not about taking forth " the vile from the precious," which was the ultimate step of sanative discipline, in the church; it was too late for that: it is not, either, the question of taking forth " the precious from the vile" which connects itself with restorations and with final dooms; it is rather the question as to a mass standing in outward privilege and profession (but which did not meet the claims of divine glory), as to what part in it had at least a heart and mind to

respond to God; while all around had failed, yet was spared in mercy, and its doom mercifully postponed, who below could yet be a channel for the Lord of testimony? What a God is ours! Because He is God and not man, we are not consumed. Oh, for more of the hearing ear, and the power to appreciate and hold fast the word of His testimony. His faithful love and gracious forethought has, in this book, traced before his servants the whole outline of the wilderness path from John's day down to the close. Thus has He shown His sympathy towards His servants, and, while preventing them from being taken unawares by difficulties, thus has He given to them the power of connecting each difficulty of the way with the God who had premonished them of it, and the Lord Jesus, whose positions in service are connected with things that pass in the wilderness, God would skew to His servants what must shortly come. The "must" in the verse is also to be noticed as emphatic; all was under divine guidance, and the end was quickly to be brought in.

Another has remarked upon the peculiar character of the mode of revealing in this book. This is not according to the mode found in the rest of the New Testament, but more in harmony with the mode of Old Testament times. This is just; and it may be well to consider the full bearing of the remark. It would seem to me to be more extensive in application than at first sight we might think.

Thus, when the testimony was in a candlestick upon earth connected with outside things, as in Jewish circumstances,- the divine mode of communicating truth was from outside: there was a vision, a communication from God above, and the prophets had to search what and what manner of time, etc., etc.

At Pentecost, the testimony was through the renewed man in the servant; but it was of those who had kept company with the Lord all through his course here below, and were eye-witnesses of all these things (see John 15 and Acts 1 and 2) The candlestick had its corresponding peculiarity, as also had the place of its standing.

Paul's testimony was from an ascended Lord; and the candlesticks were set up in the truth and responsibility of his place on high. The testimony flowed through Paul; and, according to what Christ was up there, they should have been heavenly and divine, though as such seen upon earth and a testimony.

The church could not fail as the body of which Christ was the Head. If the churches ceased to be that, they sank to the level of what was merely an earthly witness, and as such must sink. And a voice calling John to write things that he saw became an adequate and divinely suitable mode of testimony.

I suggest this for consideration.

"Which must shortly come to pass." It may be well to pause and try the state of one's heart, by seeing how far that which to God is "shortly," "quickly," "a little while-how little, how little," is so likewise to us. If we are living near Him and walking in His light it will be so; alas if dwelling in Sodom or walking carelessly; it will not be so. If heart and mind are where the Spirit would have them, this world is a desert in which God's presence refreshes, and which by contrast enhances the preciousness of a glory close at hand. If heart and mind are divided, one above and the other below, there must be inward conflict and mental doubts or disappointed affections. If we are lower still, and walk as men, we shall find ourselves, as did Lot, in the presence of judgment and not without fears.

To God, the while is little, and so is it to those who dwell near Him.

The challenge to our hearts is evidently fair, in that the things which must come to pass shortly are all the things written in the book, and not merely the judgment of the churches as recorded in chaps. 3 and 4. It as much applies to the contents of chaps. 19 or 20, or 21 and 22, as to the contents of chaps. 2 and 3. The "quickly" is quickly to God, and felt to be quickly too to those that walk in the secret of His presence.

In the second part of Rev. 1:1 there are several expressions which suggest inquiry: inquiry, too, which connects itself with the whole contents of the book and their interpretation, and not merely with the words in the sentence or with its grammatical construction.

Κα■ ■σ■μανεν ■ποστε■λας δι■ το■ ■γγ■λου, κ.τ.λ. "And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."

It might be asked, 1st, Who sent? and 2nd, Which is the angel referred to?

The word angel being a word signifying the office of "bearing" a message (anqelia 1 John 3:11) it is not necessarily or properly limited in its use to any order or class of beings. It is true, that there is an order of beings called angels (created, perhaps, to be messengers of the throne of God), some of whom are now fallen from their first estate (Jude 6), as having sinned (2 Peter 2:4), and some are elect (1 Tim. 5:21). But the word is not limited in its use to them. The mighty angel of Rev. 10:1 and 5 is evidently Christ, who is the angel of the covenant also; and who else but He (1 Tim. 2:5) is that other "angel" of Rev. 8:3 who offers up to God the prayers of all saints. It is used also of John Baptist (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2); as also of his messengers (Luke 7:24); of Christ's messengers (Luke 9:52); of Paul's thorn, a messenger of Satan (2 Cor. 12:7); of the spies (James 2:25), etc., etc.

The description of the communication in chap. 1 gives us these details, "I John was in the isle that is called Patmos (ver. 9). I was in the spirit on the Lord's-day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega,...What thou seest write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia (ver. 11). And I turned to see the voice that spake with me" (ver. 12), etc. The scene is laid in Patmos. Christ comes down there, as the Revelation was given to Him that he might show, etc., he is here displayed in servant character. When John saw Him he fell at His feet as dead, and then tasted the Divine fullness of the grace and power of this messenger of God who visited him.

Differing from this, in chap. 4 John is caught up into heaven. Is it thence, or is the scene shifted; and is he (John) again on earth when, in chap. 10, he sees a mighty angel, the description of whose personal glory and actings mark Him off as Christ alone, who is here again, to John, the medium from God of communication of things to come.

In chap. 21:9, we read, "there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," etc. This angel is not the Lord, and avows he is not in chap. 22, ver. 8. But this angel, while he is the means of leading John into a more intimate acquaintance with that which had been revealed, to what extent is he the medium of any new revelation? He shows John, it is true, not only the details of the bride the Lamb's wife, but (most precious to us) her connection with

the millennium; for, when she is first revealed (chap. 20:1-8) it is in connection with the final post-millennial glory the revelation presents her. So that one could quite admit, that there was here, also, in a sense, an uncovering of things shortly coming to pass. Yet, perhaps, to skew unto his servants "things which must shortly come to pass." ■ δε■ γεν■σθαι ■ν τ■χει would mean "to show what must come to pass," rather than "to show either in detail, or in application, coming things." Still, the making known what is internal to the heavenly glory is most clearly found here.

Where the Lord Himself is the angel He is sent by God-comes in the power of what God had given to Him to show, and is, in servant character, though hidden to sense, and glorified: the chiefest of God's messengers holding a place in the book which again brings angelic agency into unveiled prominency - prominency out of which it had dropped when Christ, as the center of heavenly plans (and the Church), had become the topic but which is resumed directly, the church's judgment recorded, Christ as the center of all God's providential plans for the earth, for Israel, and for the Gentile is taken up again as in this book. The angel who shows John the bride, etc., seems to be a subordinate messenger connected with the execution of that which is God's judgment in favor of Christ: first, in judgment on what opposes, and then in blessing, on what is subject to Christ. As to the mere translation of chap. 1 ver. 1, the word God is that to which he in "he sent" most naturally refers. "God gave to him, and signified, having sent through his angel to his servant John."

## Summary of the Changes of SCENE Which Take Place in the Revelation

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In the first chapter John is in Patmos, and the Lord Jesus comes in there.

In the fourth chapter, John is caught up into heaven, where he finds the Lord Jesus as the Lamb in the midst of the throne. From whom, as being there, certain actions flow, and in connection with whom various scenes are shown as about to take place both in heaven and on earth.

In the tenth chapter, the Lord, as the Mighty Angel, comes down from heaven, and He sets His right foot upon the sea, and His left upon the earth. The work is for John, viz., to prophesy again before men; and in the next chapter the scene is in Jerusalem; although the chapter ends with the opening of the temple of God in heaven, and the ark of His covenant; which connects itself, probably, with what follows, for-

In the twelfth chapter, counsels in heaven lead to war in the heavenlies, and to the ejection therefrom of Satan and his angels, whose labor is now and henceforth limited to the earth.

But the Lord is not brought forward in person again until the fourteenth chapter; and then, in the heavenlies, as a Lamb on the Mount Sion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

So, again (ver. 6), the scene is not above; but the angel flies through the midst of heaven, "having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying,..... Fear God," etc.

So again (ver. 8), another angel announces Babylon is fallen.

Then again (ver. 9), a third angel warns as to what is upon earth, and the locality is marked (ver. 13), a voice from heaven declaring the blessedness of those that die in the Lord.

But in the fourteenth verse, the Son of Man is seen upon a cloud, and a voice out of the temple cries to Him to thrust in His sickle (ver. 15) and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

So in verses 17-20 we have an angel coming out of the temple which is in heaven, and another coming out from the altar: the latter of whom invokes the vintage of the earth.

Chapter 15 gives scenes in heaven, which issue in heaven-sent judgments recorded in chaps. 16-18.

In chapter 19 we first get a scene perfectly heavenly and in heaven-the marriage of the Lamb; and this is followed, secondly, by the Lord coming forth to take vengeance on His enemies, to bind Satan and to establish His reign.

Thus, in brief, we have-1st. ON EARTH, Christ and John, and the Churches (in chaps. 1-3). 2nd. IN HEAVEN, Christ and John, and actings of Divine Providence from springs hidden, and for

motives and objects known only in heaven, chap. 4-9. The Lamb being still on the throne, and the scene of testimony in heaven. 3rd. More open actings in the heavenly and earthly places, Christ connecting Himself therewith, and showing Himself therein, 10-19.

Rev. 1:2. "John who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

Wyclif, 1380.-"Iohn, whiche bare witnessynge to the word of God: witnessynge of Ihesus Crist in thes thingis what euer thingis he saie."

Tyndale, 1534.-" Iohn, which bare recorde of the worde of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christe, and of all thinges that he sawe.."

Cranmer, 1539.-"Iohn, I which bare recorde of the worde of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all thynges that he sawe."

Geneva, 1557.-" John who bare recorde of the worde of God, and of the testimonie of IESUS Christ, and of all thinges that he sawe."

Rheims, 1582.-" Iohn, who hath given testimonie to the word of God, and the testimonie of IESUS Christ, vwhat things soever he hath seen.")

The more literal rendering would be-" John who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ," etc.

John is here presented more as a servant in testimony of revealed truth than (as in his gospel and epistles) as a quiet communicator of revelation. There are at least two subjects of testimony also here given, viz., the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The former is much more comprehensive in its range than the latter. It includes creation, providence, etc., subjects which were displays of the glory of Him who is Jesus Christ, even God the Son; though not necessarily in the position of, or revealed as, Jesus Christ. He testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

The word "testified" - "bare record of"-ought not to be passed over without notice. It is the verb of the word "martyr," and certainly has a distinctive force of its own. We read of "confessing Christ,"-" professing the faith,"-" holding forth the word of life,"-" preaching the gospel," etc., etc.; but none of these acts have the same strength or force as this word for being a witness of or to. Our English word martyr is of too narrow a meaning, being, in its common use, limited to those who lay down their lives for the faith's sake: "bearing record of," "being a witness to," are also expressions too wanting in energy to represent it "Solemnly testified and recorded" might give the sense.

Of the six English translations that of Wickliffe alone leaves out the disputed "τε" rendered "and," in the expression, " and of all things that he saw." The critics do so also.

In considering this verse, however, it is not a critical apparatus which decides the sense after all. For, first, one has to weigh how far the expression, " Bare record of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," was said of John, as descriptive of his general service, at this date; or, on the contrary, as distinctively limited to this present service of giving forth the Revelation. That the bearing record was a peculiar service, I conceive would be admitted by most. Another question,

also, may be weighed, and that is, how far it is true or not, that the book before us contained nothing but that which John saw:-his visions.

But, secondly; the peculiarly abstract character of mind and manner of the communication is remarkable, and must be observed; it leads me myself to take the verse as giving a characteristic description of John; and it seems to me to predicate these three things of his solemn testimony: viz., the word of God-the testimony of Jesus -visions.

## The Seven Churches

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The depths of that which was indited of God is always affording something further for the heart and life before God. Having found the bitter waters made sweet by the tree on which Jesus hung, we pass on to the twelve wells of God and the shade of His instructions in the desert. We learn both new and old; and if what is last fills up the measure of the revelations of God towards us, we shall certainly be unstable if we bring not with us our early steps, or, rather the early steps of God in the path by which He leads us. Some have taught us much on the truth of the Seven Churches, and there remains yet something to observe; and we hardly ever enter on such a subject with others but that what we have substantiated opens a vista of further learning. So with the momentous truths of the second and third chapters of the Revelation.

It is exceedingly necessary to distinguish between the apostasy of dispensation, and the failure of testimony, and confession in the churches. The apostasy of the dispensation carries with it the failure of confession and of testimony, but the last is in the Seven Churches; at least in six, if not necessary in all, but is not spued out till it fails to serve Christ nothing; and that which is rejected is thrown out into the world to be judged with it in the judgments of God, while the warning given in the successive phases of the churches will, if taken, be the avoidance of those things coming on the earth whatever time, and specially at the last. God's judgments are manifest in a germinating fulfillment; from the last of which, i.e. on the apostasy, there is neither recovery nor evasion.

To apprehend the point of failure is most needful. Its moral characteristics would apply to its conduct and sufficiency of testimony as such; but there is ever an under-stratum manifest, to the mind that is touched, in the harmony of God's ways that is full of warning. An observation made in a former number has fallen in, in a striking manner, with these considerations; but still is beside of the aim of these remarks; what agrees with it is, that "the testimony was connected...with outside things" (page 196, of No. XXVIII). What is here said is intended to bring the truth of this to bear on the failure of being a true witness to heavenly things; for what is outside to heavenly things need not be outside to a present necessary position, and conscience as to God, and without which the higher testimony must greatly fail.

What I desire to bring to the hearts of brethren is this, that the failure of the churches was grounded on the non-apprehension of the kingdom, and a failure in the mass of professing Christians of walking in it as rejected. I am sure many will be surprised at hearing that it is that unto which we have been called, and unto its glory-and its glory is never apart from rejection and suffering. Paul enumerates, in the twentieth of Acts, the grace of God-the kingdom of God - and the church of God, as the whole counsel of God. Paul's peculiar revelation was the church and its privileges: he writes the Epistle to the Hebrews, perhaps, out of his province, and we have not his name. It was Peter's province, and we have his name, and not the doctrine of the church. The church, or the assembly, is not gathered on this ground, but in heavenly places in Christ, baptized by one spirit into one body; and the weakness of non-apprehension of this is disastrous to internal blessing, and highly injurious to their confession. We observe, however, that even in the passage

(John 17:21), that separation to God is the ground-work, as may be seen in the preceding verses of the chapter.

It is very likely to have happened, that, in the recovery of the truth of the church in the heavenlies and its hope, that a truth, such as the truth of the kingdom should have been passed by too rapidly, and the mind been solely directed to the church, and the gift left with it, as the union also of the members in the body was less thrown on the divine life than on the peculiarity of the unity of the church by the Holy Ghost, as beyond the question of simply divine life.

In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, the church of God, the Father, and of Jesus Christ, is said to be called unto the kingdom and glory. If it is, it must be of it now, not in the method of Israel who are cast out for the time, nor as partaking of its restoration in glory with them, but embraced in the glory of that which shall belong to Christ, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance as co-heirs-but suffering and glory is the title of the heirship-in fact, confession of the rejected Head. Christ did not suffer as the head of the church, but as head of the kingdom which He claimed as Son of the Father. They killed, and we own, Him, for while on earth we walk in all the earthly things that become His authority in the world, and we walk in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Not to have done so I believe to be the manifest failure of six of the churches, and must be of the seven. It is palpably so in Pergamos. The Balaam teachers had begun to seduce on this very ground. Smyrna was meant to be saved from this in finding such bitterness in the thought of ease and enlargement, met by persecution from the Lord of the world.\* The evil went on, and being where Satan's throne was, it had also its faithful martyr. The kingdom of this world and its spirit, and union with it in many marred its testimony. The mass was not yet corrupt, individuals (for the kingdom is so confessed), were seduced to give up the confession of the rejected kingdom and head, and thus the testimony of THE CHURCH was marred. We have here, too, the reward of the kingdom-the hidden manna- Christ in glory and unseen; and intimacy of personal communion is added to faithfulness.

As I thought, till the other day, that, "but thou art rich " was " rich before God " in the midst of poverty and hardship; but the interpretation, given in the sense of reproof, is fully carried out by the best reading, ἀλλὰ πλουσιος ει -πλουσιος δε ει would have signified their richness with God (ἀλλὰ) the reverse.

In Thyatira, the evil, as to the word, is not brought forward in its accusation by the Lord, but false worship, even to the worship of false Gods. Romish idolatry cannot but be present to our minds. It is on the surface to observe to a student that the character of the judge is according to the evil, and the reward according to the nature of the departure overcome. Well, we find the evil in the reward, though not in the accusation-with corruption of worship in Rome, we find side by side, the claim of power over the nations. Now the reward of perseverance unto the end (and what perseverance is can be well understood), is the very thing confessed against, which is authority in the things of this world, nay, over the world, deposing of kings, etc. This at once unveils the secret working of more than denial of the rejected kingdom. It claims to rule that which rejected Christ. Their testimony is, therefore rejected, though they are not spued out of the Lord's mouth. The other reward is the Lord promised, as the morning star, the church's hope. In fact, it seems that there is a reserved reward according to a higher communion in both these churches.

Sardis is quiet settlement in the world with a name to live while dead; it might have been presently Laodicea, but the Lord graciously interposes Philadelphia. But what is the whitener of the undefiled garment? Garments undefiled of the evil, and in such circumstances how rare. The warning is, that the Lord will come on the unfaithful servant as a thief in the night. Philadelphia can be described as a people conscious of what the church is and appreciated of the Lord, the testimony, in His grace valued, a door kept for its testimony-His word, His name-but little strength-great weakness but no denial-the word of expectation too;-why little strength? The church is all that is confessed and the kingdom forgotten. Is not there a sense of much complacency as shown in the Lord's mind in the description of His regard for Philadelphia. Is not, however, the description in accordance with the absence of a confession of the kingdom? The church and its truth, its union with its Head, its hope and joy confessed, is lovely in all moral loveliness, but it is not all the Lord left.

The want of the force of the lowly frame keeps in no strength. The proper earthly confession is wanting; nay, it is too fine a thing for its rough dwelling-place, and how can it master rough spirits within? Has not there been manifestly failure here? They have gone out, and if put out how often have they come in again? The church could well manage suffering strangers. It is weak. Ah! too, if I am anxious to know the power of Christ's resurrection, it is not built on conformity to His death. How ready I am to take reproof even from an enemy, though I may say, "let not their precious balms break my head." Church motive is sweet; but does not obedience to it in the drawings of the Spirit come more sweetly and more rightly in with the confession of a kingdom not of this world. The church is above, so far it agrees, but its proper character is more positive than negative. The assembly of the church is not in the kingdom, it is beyond it. It is the place of the rest of its spirit. It is the place of its praises-of its worship. Its strength for all that is arduous in confession amidst rejection, is found from the sources known there in the presence of the Father, whose children are not of this world by the life they have received of Him. It is a different confession, though in blessed harmony. Who then are those that overcame? The Jachins and Boazes of the new Jerusalem. Surely, they are stronger than the weak, and support the temple. As to Laodicea, little need be said. It is rich and glorious in the world. The confession of the kingdom is quite lost, and the world, for a while, content with it; but its fate is the fate of the fruitless branch. It is cut off, and its judgment begins. The connection between this and the subsequent parts of the Revelation is evident. Laodicea is now become part of the world without, and dealt with accordingly, not chastened but judged. The reward of those who open to the Lord's knocking is much the same in character as in the case of the confession against Thyatira.

That the failure has the bearing I have shown, is much manifested by the application to the conscience of individuals. "He that hath an ear."

The condition of the church as a witness that Jesus is of the Father, depends on a oneness in divine life by communion with God. It is their divine oneness. Shaken together by one grace is no connection of the body. There is, indeed, a oneness in the death by which every class stands together, but church oneness is in the Holy Ghost, and they look to God in His ways, while waiting for their Head as Head of the body from heaven, to gather them to Himself. I beseech the Lord to make this thought more felt, leaving however the purpose of this paper on the conscience of each one, being assured that the beloved disciple would not have been directed to describe himself in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, if his subject had not been in accordance.

## Thoughts on Divine Guidance

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THE subject of divine guidance, in its application to the details of our every-day life and conduct, is evidently one of great importance; and it is one on which the minds of many saints are often greatly exercised. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps"; but there is One of whom it is written, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." There are important epochs in the life of each, when the need of divine guidance cannot but be felt. But the word is not, "acknowledge Him at such times as these," but, "in all thy ways, acknowledge Him." Habitual reference to the Lord in all the details of life, makes it easy to confide in Him when any great crisis arrives; whereas, if in general we pass on without acknowledging Him, though the heart may feel, when in straits and difficulties, the need of light from above not being practiced in consulting God, or familiar with His ways of guiding His people, it little knows how to cast itself upon Him, or even to avail itself of such guidance as He vouchsafes. And though the Lord may, and often does, exceed His promise, and guide when in extremities those who do not habitually acknowledge Him, the promise is, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and then, when difficulties occur, "He shall direct thy paths." It is not that we need always be asking, "What must I do?" There are things in which we know the Lord would have us to be engaged; but He is to be acknowledged in these things as well as in inquiring of Him when uncertain as to our path. "It is God that worketh in you to will and to do." "For Thou also hast wrought all our works in us." "Without me ye can do nothing."

One thing we must never forget—that if we are to have practical guidance from God, it must be in a path which is itself according to His mind and will. A vast deal of the uncertainty felt by Christians as to the details of their path arises from the fact, that they look for guidance as to details, when their entire position is such as God cannot own. It is contrary to His word. Suppose my child to be bent on a course which he knows, or ought to know, to be contrary to his father's wishes; if in the prosecution of his design he meets with difficulties which are quite insuperable, and asks me for instruction how to extricate himself therefrom, what am I to do? Should his father's interposition be requisite for his safety, that would be another case. Any father would then exert himself for his child, though the child's willfulness alone had involved him in the danger from which he had to be rescued. But what father would help his child to disobey him? Can we expect God to help and guide us in a path which is throughout contrary to His revealed will? The difficulties which we meet in such a path, are the thorns by which God is hedging up our way, in order that we may relinquish it altogether; and the first step towards the enjoyment of divine guidance in such a case, is to forsake the position and manner of life out of which, not in which, the Lord would lead us. It is our privilege to know that our position and manner of life as a whole are according to God. There may still be difficulties, and there doubtless will be; but we may then, in simple confidence, reckon on the Lord's wisdom to guide us through them all.

David's path, at the time to which our chapters refer, was one of extreme difficulty. His circumstances were scarcely two days together alike. He had to conceal himself first in one fastness, then in another. But the path he trod was one in which the Lord had set him. His position

was according to God's mind. It was the path of faith; and in all simplicity of faith, he reckoned on God's guidance in that path.

"Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors." Here was a new circumstance in David's path.

He was at the moment concealing himself from the envy and rage of Saul; but his position had respect to the Philistines as well as Saul. The Lord had raised up Saul, and anointed him captain over His people Israel, that he might save His people out of the hands of the Philistines (see 9:16). Saul had entirely failed in this. He had proved himself faithless and disobedient, and hence, when arrayed against the Philistines (14, 17), he had shrunk from the unequal contest. David, having been anointed in his stead (16), had really in faith taken the place of Israel's shepherd; and while the ostensible shepherd proved himself a hireling, who, when the wolf cometh, flees, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep, David stood in the gap, and delivered the trembling affrighted flock out of the jaws of the destroyer. That was a day of triumph and of glory for Israel; a day on which it was seen, "that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear," but that His people's battle is His own. It was a day of renown for David too, the daughters of Israel singing with tabrets and dances, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Affairs had changed since that day, and David was now an outcast and a wanderer-hunted by Saul, like a partridge on the mountains. But has this alienated his heart from Israel, or rendered him indifferent to their sufferings? When he hears of the Philistines having plundered Keilah, does he say, "Well, if I am to suffer thus at the hands of Israel's king, he and his people may defend themselves against the Philistines-what have I to do with their affairs? No, he is as ready to gird on his weapons and hasten to the conflict, as though Saul had appreciated and rewarded all his previous services. But though ready to go thus to the rescue of the men of Keilah, does he, on the other hand, rush on the undertaking in the energy of his own will-the mere natural impetuosity of a man of war? No, he inquires of the Lord, "Shall I go and smite these Philistines?" He does not use many words, as we so often do in our prayers. With the simplicity of a child, he asks a question of Him whom he knows to be alone able to answer it. And the answer is as direct and simple as the inquiry.

"Shall I go?" "And the Lord said, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah."

A new difficulty, however, now presents itself. David is not alone, but at the head of a band of men who had from various motives attached themselves to his person, but who do not walk in the same simplicity of faith as himself. Spiritually, they are far behind him. "Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" Feeling themselves unable to cope with the lesser difficulties, they shrink from encountering the greater. What now is David's course? Does he, on the one side, despise the check he has received by the remonstrances of his men? or does he, on the other, blindly follow their timid counsels, and give up the light he had received from God? No; finding himself in new circumstances, he inquires afresh of the Lord. When he first inquired, he evidently had no doubt as to the allegiance of his men• but now, when the Lord has said "Go," and his men hold back, David applies to his former resource, and inquires again of the Lord. To David's faith, the command to go was, no doubt, equivalent to a promise that the Philistines should be delivered into his hand; but now, in consideration of his timid followers, inquiring a second time of the Lord, the Lord repeats to him the direction to go, and accompanies it with the express promise, "for I will deliver the Philistines into

thy hand." This overcomes the reluctance of his men; they go down to Keilah; and a great slaughter of the Philistines ensues. " So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah."

Verses 6-13 suggest considerations of the deepest interest. " And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand." Now the ephod was that part of the priests' garments in which the Urim and Thummim, by which guidance from the Lord was obtained, were placed. This was the appointed, established mode of seeking counsel from God. What claims attention here is, that when the ephod is to be had, David uses it; when it is not there, he can consult God without it. He despises not the ordered way when it is available; nor is he so dependent upon the ordered means as to be unable, when they are out of his reach, to consult God without them. When the ephod is not there, he inquires directly of God, as we have seen; when Abiathar is there with the ephod he says, " Bring hither the ephod." Surely there is instruction here for us all. We have means, advantages, helps, afforded us of God; and when He does afford them, they are not to be despised, but diligently and faithfully used. But neither are we so dependent on these, as in their absence to be unable to have to do immediately with God Himself. What a precious boon is God's written word! How impossible, if we neglect it, to receive guidance from the Lord! Who that believes it to be God's word, and is conversant with it, can find language in which to express its value. But suppose we should lose our sight, or be imprisoned for the truth, and refused the use of the Bible, should we necessarily be deprived of instruction or counsel from the Lord? God forbid. Its effect, when we have it and use it, is to place us in His presence, and declare to us His mind. Deprived of it, as has been supposed, we should find Him better to us than the book. Diligent in the use of means when vouchsafed, faith can reckon upon God Himself when they are withheld, well knowing that He never withdraws the means, except when He would cause the soul to know His sufficiency above and beyond, and, when it pleases Him, even apart from them all.

David's inquiries of the Lord served him better than any number of scouts and spies, to watch the movements of his enemy and pursuer. "Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?" "And the Lord said, He will come down." "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" "And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up." Thus he escapes, as a bird from the snare of the fowler.

Verses 14-18 may not strictly bear on the subject before us, that of Divine Guidance; but they are too touching and instructive to pass without notice. David was aware that Saul sought him every day; he needed comfort and encouragement; the Lord also knew his need, and sent Jonathan, Saul's son, to supply it. A messenger from Saul's own house strengthens David's hand in God. " Fear not," says Jonathan, " for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth." Alas for Jonathan! He was correct in all his anticipations save one. Saul's hand never did find David, David did become king over Israel; but he himself, instead of being next to David, fell ingloriously with Saul on the mountains of Gilboa! Nothing could be more beautiful than Jonathan's love to David; but it never broke the links which actually united him to his father's house. It never led him away from his kindred and his home to be the companion of David's exile; and adhering thus to Saul, with Saul he perished by the hand of the Philistines.

Verses 19-29 disclose to us the plotting of the Ziphites to deliver David into Saul's hand. When they offer to do this, Saul says, " Blessed be ye of the Lord; for ye have compassion on me." Saul could use the name of the Lord as well as David; and when this is the case, very simple faith is needed-faith which looks directly to the Lord. In the present day you will often hear it said-" There are so many parties, all claiming the sanction of the Lord's name, and of God's word, while differing among themselves, that we know not which path to take." What is the remedy in such a case? Nothing but the faith which puts the conscience in the Lord's presence, as having to do immediately with Himself. Saul may talk about the Lord; but David had to do with Him. And when the plots and treachery of his enemies seemed ripe for success,-Saul on one side of the mountain, David on the other, and David fleeing for fear of Saul,-just at this juncture a message is brought to Saul, that the Philistines have invaded the land, and he is obliged to let go his prey. This was not divine guidance of David's course; but it was divine interposition on behalf of the one who had sought divine guidance as to each detail of his path-a path in which we are thus led of the Lord may seem to terminate in difficulties from which nothing can extricate us. But it is in appearance only. If there be no way through the circumstances, the Lord can act in providence and remove the circumstances altogether. Happy indeed to be under His care!

But while it is for our comfort to see how God can thus use providential circumstances, let us beware of taking providence for our guide. A most important lesson as to this is afforded by chap. xxiv. Providence places Saul completely in David's power. David's men would have had him regard this as guidance from the Lord -" Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee." How often is this argument employed! How often do Satan, worldly-minded friends, and our own worldly-minded hearts say-" See, the Lord has now given you the opportunity to do so and so." But let us beware. Providence had given David the opportunity to destroy Saul, as his men thought; but what was the estimate David's faith formed of the circumstances? He read them aright. He saw in them the opportunity for faith to forego the opportunity of fighting his own battle, or delivering himself by his own hand. Precious and solemn lesson for us! The opportunity to do anything is no indication of its being the Lord's will that we should do it. It may, or may not, be the Lord's will. His word, understood by His Spirit's aid and teaching, must settle that. The opportunity of doing it may be, and often is, the opportunity for Faith to say-" No; it is not my Lord's will; it would not be for my Lord's glory; and no opportunity shall tempt me away from the path of simple obedience to Him."

The Lord make us wiser in all His ways! And let us not forget His word-" If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." Amen.

## The Three Vines

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It is among the varied ways of divine teaching to set things before us in the way of contrast. The believer in Christ is " a doer of truth;" he " comes to the light " himself, and brings everything to the light; and it is by knowing the truth that he is alone kept from falling into the most fearful errors and delusions. Men trust to natural sagacity to discover and keep themselves from imposture. But they reckon not on the sagacity of Satan. He has his " devices," and he knows how so to dress up error in the garb of truth, that those alone who not only know but also " love the truth," will be kept from his capital delusion. The believer finds his need of " the whole armor of God to enable him to stand against the wiles of the devil."

The characteristic of the vine is fruitfulness (Psa. 128:3), other trees may be valuable for their timber, but if the vine be not fruitful it is worthless. " What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work? Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned?" (Ezek. 15:2-5).

The vine first in order to notice is Israel. The whole history of Israel, from their deliverance out of Egypt to the coming of the Messiah among them, is presented to us under this emblem. Let us turn to Psa. 80: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river." Beautiful picture, but speedily to pass away. " Israel was holiness unto the Lord, the first-fruits of His increase " (Jer. 2:3). The nations trembled at the manifested presence of Jehovah in the midst of Israel. " And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for Israel " (Josh. 24:31). But the Book of Judges tells us of Israel's declension, corruption and idolatry, and that this corruption increased from generation to generation (Judg. 2:19). There were revivals through God's pitiful mercy, and a bright gleam when God so remarkably visited His people as to fill the house which Solomon had built for Him with His glory. But if God had profaned Israel's priesthood in the days of Samuel, it was soon followed by corruption in the kings, who either tolerated idolatry or took the lead in it, till " the whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint;" and the continuous strain of prophetic testimony was against the Vine, " till there was no remedy," but it must be rooted up and burned. To return to Psa. 80. The Holy Ghost leads at once from the fruitfulness of the vine to its burning and destruction; as if the moment it ceased to be fruitful it was destroyed. "Why hast Thou broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine, and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted, and the branch which thou madest strong for Thyself. It is burned with

fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance." But what is the answer to this pleading? What is the remedy for this "wasted" vine? Shall they "dig about it and dung it," and re-fence it? Nothing shall be wanting in this way-the patient grace of God shall try every remedy; but the Holy Ghost points to something beyond this - another vine-" the true vine," as that alone which would be a suited answer to the complaint. "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself. So will we not go back from Thee: quicken us and we will call upon Thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved."

But let us listen to the Lord's own complaint against the vine, which he had brought out of Egypt. The godly among men might see its wasted appearance, and that it lacked a fence against the inroads of the beasts of the field; but the Lord shows the cause of its deplorable condition. "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry" (Isa. 5:1-7). The Lord looked for grapes; but He only found sour grapes. The multitude of sacrifices and burnt offerings, the blood of bullocks and rams, the observance of new moons and sabbaths (Isa. 1:10-15), the very ordinances He had prescribed, to them were but as sour grapes to Him, "a weariness," "an abomination" used by them to veil over the iniquity of their hearts in which there was neither the fear of God, nor just regard for men. They were covetously adding field to field, giving themselves up to strong drink, whiling away their time by the viol and tabret in their feasts," but they regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of his hands." They rejected the knowledge of the Lord, were "wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight." "They put darkness for light, and light for darkness," and, therefore, was the Lord's anger kindled against them. The Lord had given them statutes, and ordinances, and judgments, that all nations might know that the nation whose 'God was Jehovah, was a wise and understanding nation. But they corrupted themselves, and through their corruption the very name of Jehovah was blasphemed among the Gentiles.

But even after the ministry of the prophets, by which the Lord had showed them" (Hos. 6:5), but to no purpose, it pleased him again to visit this vine and the vineyard, which his right hand had planted." "Having yet, therefore, one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son Mark 12:1-12. The vineyard to all 'appearance was well fenced, and the vine apparently flourishing. Never; in Israel's 'history, were the ordinances more regularly observed-never was there more activity displayed 'by doctors of the law. Jehosaphat, in days of old, had sent " his princes, and with them the Levites and the priests. And they taught 'in Judah,

and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people" (2 Chron. 17:7-9). But in the days when God sent His Well-beloved Son to visit His vineyard, religious teachers abounded; "there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea and Jerusalem" (Luke 5:17). But they taught not out of the law, although they professed to be teachers of the law, because they ".taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and

Made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions." It was against the accredited religious teachers that our Lord uttered the most withering woes. They were the great hindrance to divine truth. They had taken away the key of knowledge, they entered not themselves into the kingdom of God, and hindered those who were entering. Religious corruption had made rapid advance since the days of the prophets, notwithstanding the fair show and religious decorum at the time our Lord came seeking for fruit. Their fathers had persecuted the prophets; they were about to cast the Son out of the vineyard, and to slay Him. For "three years" the Lord Himself, had patiently sought fruit from "the fig tree planted in his vineyard, and found none" (Luke 13:6-9). A brief respite was given, another year's trial accorded but still fruit there was none. There were leaves in abundance so as to promise fruit, but none was to be found-" there was no remedy"-the sentence can be no longer deferred, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever" (Matt. 21:17-22).

The above is a faint outline of the vine of God's planting, which He had brought out of Egypt, so carefully fenced, and so patiently watched over. It was fruitless. It was fit for no use; but only to be burned. "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself" (Hos. 10:1). There is deep instruction to be gathered from this history. Israel, a holy nation, by reason of the ordinances God Himself had given it-Israel, a nation which Jehovah Himself owned as His nation, of which He was the God and King-Israel, which had the oracles of God committed to their keeping-Israel, whose early history had been a series of most astonishing miracles, whose later history had been marked by the raising up of a succession of prophets-brought forth no fruit to God. No nation had before, or has since, been placed under such advantages, but these advantages instead of being used for the glory of God, had been misused for their own glory; and the evil was, that "through the means of this highly-favored people the name of Jehovah was blasphemed among the Gentiles." What must we say to these things? "The flesh profiteth nothing;" the flesh, under the greatest advantages, given by God Himself, fails of bringing forth fruit to God. (Compare Rom. 7:5.)

From this consideration, it is easy and natural to turn to "the true vine." It was after Judas had left the Lord and His other disciples, that the Lord opens out His heart and thoughts to them, as if relieved by the departure of the traitor, in that memorable discourse which commencing John 13:31, terminates with one slight break at the close of chap. 17. But this slight break it is well to notice. It occurs at the end of chap. 14: "Arise, let us go hence." In chap. 14, the Lord makes provision for the sustainment of the souls of His disciples, on the announcement that He would remain with them but a little while longer; and He adds, "Whither I go ye cannot come " (8:33), His two chief topics of sustainment are His promise to come to receive them unto Himself, into the mansions He would prepare WI them; and the promise of the other Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who should abide with them forever, and in virtue of whose indwelling the Father and the Son would take up their mansion with them (14:23). Thus far we are left in perfect repose of soul. There is no intimation of failure, because it is not the responsibility of disciples which is the point, but the gracious provision of the Lord for His disciples during His personal absence from them. But

the moment the Lord has announced Himself as the true Vine, the question of responsibility comes in as to fruit-bearing. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:1,2). Hence the importance of the break; although as to time the Lord gave this instruction within a brief interval to that which is recorded in chap. xiv., yet the place was different. "Arise, let us go hence." The fourteenth chapter of John is one to which weak, tried, and sick Christians constantly turn. They may not be aware of the reason, but it is very plain; it is because the Lord is there, regarding their case as one of desolateness, and meeting them in their desolation not only in the most suited but also in the most gracious and affectionate manner.

But he must needs speak of fruitfulness-of the real power of fruit-bearing unto God. He had rejected Israel, He had withered up that vine, and now He speaks of another vine-even Himself. "I am the true Vine," in contradistinction to Israel "the empty vine." Fruitfulness entirely depended on abiding in Him. Under the law the order was, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10). But now there might be due attention to the ordinances of Christ Himself, and even the performance of sundry duties prescribed by Christ, and yet no fruit-bearing unto God. Nothing is fruit to God which does not manifestly show the stock from which it is produced, in other words, when Christ and not man is prominent. The object of God is the glory of His Son Jesus Christ, and He is "glorified" in His real disciples. They make mention of His name, even His only: "Blessed indeed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For Thou art the glory of their strength: and in Thy favor our horn shall be exalted" (Psa. 89:15-17). There is the element of "continuance" in the ways of God. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways: behold, Thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf" (Isa. 64:5,6). But if in God's ways there is "continuance," it is because with "Him alone there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Hence the importance of the word of the Lord, "Abide in me." Jesus presents Himself to us as "the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending." And the apostles' doctrine runs much on this point. In that beautiful picture of the early Christians, which so convicts us of our degeneracy (Acts 2), it is noticed of the disciples, that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." They abode as branches in the True Vine, and glorified the Father by bearing much fruit. There is another sample of fruit-bearing in the Church of Philippi. They continued "in the fellowship of the gospel" (Phil. 1:5). They had obeyed not only in the presence of the apostle, but much more in his absence (ii. 12). The apostle looked to fruit-bearing from them, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (1:11; 4:17).

The apostolic writings abundantly prove the constant tendency in the disciples to depart from Christ, instead of abiding in Him. Indeed we may say that all error is departure from Christ either in doctrine or affection. The error of the Galatians is very glaring, they were "removed from Him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another: but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." There was a peculiar fascination in a system of ordinances, not only respectable for their antiquity, but which could rightfully claim a divine origin; but the observance of these ordinances not only "frustrated the grace of God," and

"subverted their souls," but hindered their bearing any fruit to God. There was no savor of Christ unto God in them; there was no fellowship with the Father in His delight in the Son. Before the manifestation of the Son in the flesh, and the actual accomplishment of the work He came to do, those very ordinances served a most important end—they were " shadows of good things to come "-they were the shadow, but Jesus Himself the substance. But since the substance had displaced the shadow, and the good things to come were present realities to be known and enjoyed by the Spirit, the apostle was forced to use very reprehensive language, addressing his own converts as "foolish," and terming the very ordinances of God "weak and beggarly." He saw departure from Christ, he saw both the work of Christ on the cross, and the work of the Spirit in the believer, as the fundamental principles of fruit-bearing, cast into the shade in order to " make a fair show in the flesh," which abiding in Christ effectually hinders. At the same time he shows his own continuance in that doctrine of Christ, which he had been taught by the Lord Himself, and had taught others, which must be carried into everything from the outset of the Christian course to its end here, to be illustriously displayed in heaven. " God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." There is no fruit-bearing unto God without abiding in the doctrine of the Cross.

The Epistle to the Colossians may well be regarded as a treatise on abiding in Christ. The arduous labor of the apostle was, "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." They could not be higher than they were in the sight of God, reconciled to him by Christ, "in the body of his flesh through death, to present them holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight." The labor of the apostle was to show them that the highest objects of human ambition, " power" or "philosophy," would really lower them, and intercept their direct contact with their living Head, and all the supplies flowing to them from holding the Head, and bring them down to living in the world, instead of realizing that they had died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, and were risen with Him, so that the interests of their life were in things above. " The word of the truth of the Gospel had come unto them, and brought forth fruit since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth ' (Col. 1:5,6). Upon this ground the Apostle prays for them, " that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (ver. 10). But everything depended on their continuing in the faith, grounded and settled, and not being moved away from the hope of the Gospel (ver. 23): He joyed at "beholding the steadfastness of their faith in Christ;" and then adds the word of exhortation—" As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 2:5-7). This would almost appear a commentary on the Lord's words, "Abide in me," - "Apart from me ye can do nothing," whilst the warning against being " spoiled or beguiled" plainly points out the sources of the corruption of the truth, by which " branches in Christ" became fruitless, and fit only to be burned.

But not to pursue this to too great a length, it may be well to notice the same thread of teaching pervading the 1st Epistle of John: " Let that, therefore, abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father.... But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you...And now, little children, abide in him" (1 John 2:24-28).

" Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for severed from me ye can do nothing."

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He is the same in His love; hence He says, "Continue ye in my love." Obedience to Him, and continuance in His love, are inseparably connected. If His love to His disciples becomes clouded, their obedience to Him becomes forced and burdensome. It is only happy and cheerful, when springing from a sense of His love toward us. Jesus knew the depth and unchangeableness of the love of the Father towards Him; and He had the sense and enjoyment of that love even in the midst of the most trying circumstances, by keeping His Father's commandments. Even so is it with His disciples with respect to Jesus Himself. His commandments are not legal enactments, but the very things which He in His infinite wisdom knows to be most suitable for us, and most conducive to our blessing. It is His commandment, that we abide in Him. It is an act of disobedience to the truth to question His love. " He loves His own in the world, and loves them unto the end."

" Abide in me." There is a peculiarity of hardness of heart which attaches to the disciples of Christ. The leper questioned the will but not the power of the Lord to heal him. So is it with ourselves, we own the ability, and question the readiness of the Lord to come in at the very time of need; and expose ourselves to the same gracious rebuke, as the disciples in the boat, when He appeared for their help, " Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. And he went up unto them...and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracles of the loaves: for their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:50-52). Oh! that our hearts may not be hardened against the thought that He careth for us-" sees us toiling," when we see Him not; and waits to be gracious. "Abide in Him" as the ever watchful Shepherd of His sheep.

In our most arduous conflict, our strength is to "abide in Him." " Be of good cheer," He says to His disciples in their struggles, " I have overcome the world." And one who knew well the arduousness of the conflict, and also where real strength was to be found, thus speaks, " Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." If our bow is to abide in its strength, and the arrow of our hand be made strong, it must be by the Mighty One of Jacob (Gen. 49:24,25). And to those who abide in Him, it may most strictly be said, " The battle is not yours, but God's."

" Abide in me." The latest exhortation of Paul the aged, to his son in the faith, is, " Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It was by abiding in Him, that the apostle had found all his supplies in outward and inward conflict. He who by the depth of his experience was led to know that in the flesh good did not dwell, and to have all expectations from it entirely cut off, was also led to know the unfailing grace which was in the Lord Jesus Christ. His weakness became his strength; because, never reckoning on any sufficiency in himself, he was led to reckon only on the real sufficiency which there was in the Lord Jesus Christ. He would have Timothy and all other disciples to reckon on the same. He knew that the branch must wither severed from the vine. May we so abide in Jesus as to know both what we are, and what we have in Him; and this, in the increasing consciousness of what we are in ourselves, and that all human resources not only speedily fail, but conduce not to fruit-bearing.

Abiding in Christ, as the alone power of fruitfulness, presents one of the strongest contrasts between grace and law. " Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace: for the law

was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:16,17). This consideration gave very great force to the teaching of our Lord respecting the vine and the branches, and opens to us very clearly the character of the branch severed from the vine. And more than this, it makes way for the transition from "the true vine" to "the vine of the earth." The law was given by Moses? He was the Mediator of the law. He faithfully communicated to the people of Israel all that He had received in charge to give to them. Israel received, indeed, the law by the hands of the mediator Moses; but they received nothing from Moses himself-no strength to keep it; Moses was not the embodiment of the law. The law was not "hid in his heart." When he had faithfully given the law to the people, his work was done-he might retire, but the law remain in full force. Moses, the mediator of the law, showed by his significant act of casting the tables out of his hand when he saw the golden calf, not only that the law was most distinct from its mediator, but that it was broken; and, instead of ministering blessing, brought those under it under a curse. And besides this, the mediator of the law learned in his wondrous intimacy with Jehovah, that blessing was to come from a source quite opposite to the law of which he was the mediator. "For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Rom. 9:15; Ex. 33:19). Moses died, and the Lord buried him; but the law continued, and the people were constituted under it, and they acknowledged that "God spake by Moses," and that their law was the law of God; it was their true boast that it was so; although, by breaking it they dishonored God. Moses had, from time to time during his lifetime, stood in the place of intercession and averted the wrath of God, but his dying testimony to Israel was, "Behold while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; how much more after my death" (Deut. 31:27). The words of Moses and the prophets fastened on Israel, but neither the one nor the other were any present help in time of trouble.

Now Christianity exists. It is acknowledged with more or less precision as a divine institution-that its Founder was not only divinely commissioned, but also a divine person. The appeal is most legitimately made to the stupendous miracles which He wrought, His ability to read what was passing in the hearts of others, the purity of His precepts, and His remarkable prophecies, that the Christian religion has a claim on the conscience, understanding, and affection of men, which no other religion can pretend to have. But all this may be acknowledged by branches not abiding in the vine, by fruitless branches. Christ Himself, not Christianity, is the true Vine. Christianity severed from Christ Himself becomes the vine of the earth. The law of which Moses was the mediator, was a divine institution, as truly as Christianity is a divine institution. But the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. If Moses be taken away the law still remains; but if Christ be not risen and at the right hand of God, our preaching is vain.

Christ is the truth; all fullness dwells in Him. "Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." It is not the point whether we believe Christianity to be divine, but whether we are actually receiving out of the fullness of Christ. A branch not abiding in the vine-it is an alarming emblem. How many things which are true respecting Christ Himself may be honestly held, without that habitual dependance on Him, and drawing from Him that which not only meets our need as sinners, but satisfies the craving of our souls as creatures. "He that findeth me," says Jesus, as the wisdom of God, "shall inherit substance."

Jesus in presenting Himself as "the True Vine," being in Himself the one grand comprehensive doctrine of God, saw prophetically that which we now see before us actually-Christendom., He

saw the men of the civilized world as much glorying in Christianity, as the Jews boasted in the law; at the very time they were actually dishonoring God by breaking the law. Even so now Christ Himself is displaced, overlooked, or disregarded by reason of wide-spread Christianity. The branches are severed from the Vine; men observe Christian ordinances and perform Christian duties without abiding in Christ. The great bulk of those who call themselves Christians, care not to hear of the work and worth of Jesus, of His interest in His sheep, His sympathy in their trials, His making known His perfect strength in their weakness. It is not Himself which is the object before them. Their life is not a life of faith on the Son of God. The uppermost thought is rather what they do than what He has done-what He requires rather than what they receive. Fruit is estimated by the thought of what is useful for man, rather than what is for the glory of God. May we abide in Him and His words abide in us, that we may ask what we will, with the assurance that it shall be done for us.

" Every plant," says Jesus, " which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Jesus, in the eyes of men, grew up as a root out of a dry ground, and men still see no beauty in Jesus; and God, instead of seeing fruitful branches in the True Vine, sees in widespread Christianity "a degenerate plant of a strange vine" - "the vine of the earth." For while Christianity boasts a heavenly origin, its actual resources are all from beneath; it is, as professed by the majority, as much a religion of the flesh as Judaism itself. What has been found by experience to work well for a professedly worldly object, has been adopted by nominal and even real Christians for the promotion of Christianity. Men combine together; they organize their combinations, and delegate to a committee the working out of their plans for the attainment of their object. Nominal and even real Christians have done the same. But a combination of Christians even for the most laudable object, is in the estimate of God, "a confederacy," and traverses the great oracle announced by God, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Cultivated human talents, multiplied. Silver and gold, are resources of great influence, and may greatly help to the spreading out of the branches of "the vine of the earth," but contribute not to the fruitfulness of the branches of "the True Vine." The kings of the earth who gave her the glory she has, "may make desolate the harlot, and make her naked, and eat her flesh " (Rev. 17:16) but the united power of the kings of the earth cannot- take away, because they never gave, "the true riches" of the Bride of Christ. They cannot make her naked, because "to her was given of the Lord Himself to be arrayed in fine linen; clean and white" (Rev. 19:8). But if the resources of wide-spread Christianity are earthly, the object which it proposes is equally earthly, it is Christian civilization.

That marvelous effects have been produced in the world by the outward profession of Christianity is undeniable. The Christian religion overthrew idolatry in the Roman empire. The energy of love in real Christians towards their fellow-sinners, has produced such practical results in mitigating human misery, that nominal Christians have sought by the same means to produce the same result, or to associate themselves with real Christians in order to attain them, but not from the same motives. "There be many that say, Who will show us any good?" who do not recognize that "every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights." Good is estimated by them by the present beneficial effect produced; and much present blessing has resulted even to the world by the gospel itself, although it be rejected by the world. For the saving grace of God teaches those who know it, to " live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

Sobriety and righteousness are virtues in the estimation of man, and they are enforced with the most cogent motives of the saving grace of God. But many value sobriety and righteousness who are strangers to that grace, and would join in a common cause with those who do know that grace, in order to promote so desirable an end. But then the low ground is immediately assumed that the Son of Man came into this world to better the condition of man, instead of coming into this world to save sinners, which is a far higher end.

The salvation of a sinner is so wonderful a work, that Christ must necessarily appear as the prominent object; but the amelioration of man's condition as the object and end of Christ's coming into the world, displaces Him from His proper place of Savior, and towers Him to the standard of a human Benefactor. Where man's convenience or exaltation is the object proposed, we may reasonably expect that such a system will widely spread. Such is the fact. "The vine of the earth" has become a great protecting power; a large tree, under which the fowls of the heaven may roost. The Christianity of nations of the earth is actually in authority, not in suffering; it is in relation to the real church of God, as the stately forest of Lebanon is to the rod which came forth out of the stem of Jesse (comp. Isa. 10:34; 11:1). "The Vine of the Earth" has indeed sent "forth her boughs unto the sea," yea, and brings forth fruit, too; but, like Ephraim, "bringeth forth fruit unto himself," and is, therefore, regarded by God as "an empty vine." The object of the Christianity of the nations is not to make known the savor of the name of Christ, but to exalt themselves by the very light which they have borrowed from Christ. It is by this means they hope to promote a comity of nations whilst the object of God is to "take out from the nations a people for His name." If the Christianity of the nations realize its object in a comity of nations, will it not be identical with the last confederacy of the nations against the Lamb and His armies (Rev. 17:12-14).

The character of "the vine of the earth," has been in measure anticipated in noticing "the True Vine." Christianity exists. It is beneficial to man. It commends itself to men's consciences as divine. The legislator, the philanthropist, the moralist, alike appeal to it, as owning its value, and claiming its help. As a fact, that portion of the habitable world which professes Christianity is the most intelligent, the most active, the most civilized. "Christian civilization" is the compendious expression by which the leading minds of the day present the object which is before them. It is undeniable, that the advantages of those who are born and brought up where Christianity is the professed religion, are "much every way." If to the Jews it was a great privilege to have "the oracles of God committed to them," what must it be to be entrusted not only with the same oracles, but with the further history of Him to whom those oracles pointed, and the very oracles He Himself uttered? The apostle denied not, but most strongly asserted the privileges of the Jews, but he would not allow them to plead the privilege of their "light" as a cover for their sins. "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" The Christian nations may now also boast of their light, and of their true knowledge of God. They may point to themselves and their institutions as examples of the advantage "of the form of knowledge and of the truth" in the gospel. What then? Shall they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness? making the knowledge of it a cloak for their own willfulness. Shall they deny "the Lord that bought them," as if they were their own and could do as they liked? Shall they pretend to a pure spiritual worship, and present a system of ordinances? Surely "the light is become darkness, and how great is that darkness" I For have not men derived light from the revelation of Jesus, and used their derived light to turn their backs on I-lim who is essentially "the Light"? A result has been produced, and is

being produced, from this borrowed light; and let the Scripture of truth tell us what that result is in the judgment of God. " And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire, and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:18,19).

It is readily acknowledged that war, pestilence, famine, blasting, mildew, and the caterpillar, are the sore judgments of God. But the sorest of all judgments is unperceived, the peaceful ripening of the grapes of the vine of the earth. It is when men say, " Peace and safety, that sudden destruction comes upon them." It will be in the moment of their rejoicing in the attainment of their object, that judgment will come on them. "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plaques come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

The fruit of the True Vine will be manifested in the heavenly glory of the risen saints with their exalted Head. The fruit of the vine of the earth finds its due place in the winepress of the wrath of God. "A branch severed from the True Vine"-what a faithful yet solemn picture of wide-spread Christianity! Had not the Son of God come into the world, had He not accomplished the work He came to do, had not Christ been preached to the Gentiles, it were impossible for such a thing to exist. But it does exist, a witness to the very truth it despises, and a witness to its own righteous judgment.

A branch abiding in the True Vine. The whole truth of redemption is crowded into the thought-" From me," says Jesus, "is thy fruit found." The heavenly Husbandman is looking for fruit. He purges the vine. He prunes off much that appears comely. He cuts deeply into the old wood, that the new may bud forth and be fruitful. And what is fruit? anything that carries with it a savor of Christ? Fruit may abound to God in an action trivial in itself (Matt. 10:42). Fruit may be discovered by the eye of the Husbandman, which appears not to another eye (Matt. 26.13). "As unknown, yet well known," will be a general characteristic of the Lord's people; and those who are really most occupied with the words of Jesus, and learn most deeply the prevailing power of His name will be most fruitful to His " God and our God, His Father and our Father." " If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Presbutes.

## A Word in Season

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This is the time of the world's manhood. All its elements are putting on strength, and taking their full form. The civil and the ecclesiastical thing is asserting its manhood or full age. Vigor marks the progress of the Church of Rome, and of the commercial spirit; governments linking themselves with the one for their support, and the people imbibing and breathing the other for their advancement.

The world is thus stirring itself and playing the man. But Christ is still the rejected Christ, and faith has to own a weak cause in the presence of an advancing world, and of strengthened apostasies.

Thus is it, I judge, at this moment, and thus will it be. But judgment is to fall on the strong thing in the hour of its pride and vigor, and a glory (still hidden, but trusted and waited for) is to receive, to enshrine, and beautify, and gladden, that which now walks on as the despised and feeble companion of a rejected Lord.

All this may be serious to the thoughts of our natural hearts; but it is plain in the judgment of faith. It is the will of the Lord to let these apostasies grow up to manhood strength. The Revelation presents them to the eye in that form and condition, just when judgment overtakes them. The woman, or the ecclesiastical apostasy, is riding, just at the moment of her overthrow; and the beast is holding and managing the whole world, just as he is met in the day of the Lord. The Revelation in no wise shows us a weakened or depreciated condition of these great agents of the course of this world; but exhibits them in surpassing strength, and bloom, and honor, just at the end. We are not in the days of the Revelation, it is true, but we witness the energies (which play their part there in all this vigor and pride of manhood) getting themselves ready, and preparing to take their appointed place.

The heart of the children of men is not aware of the true character of all this. Progress is desirable, as they judge. Man in his social place is advanced; and all his welfare in the human system around, with its securities, and peace, and refinement, and morals, and religion, is served. But what is there of God in all this? Were I to adopt the world's boast, and go on with its expectations, I should be strengthening my securities; but I should, with that, be losing my companionship with the heart and mind of Christ, which is our only true dignity this side the manifested glory of the kingdom. God gives all spiritual blessings now, peace, and joy, and liberty, with promise upon promise. But He is not re-gaining the earth to its circumstances for our enjoyment. Judgment must do that. Judgment is to make way for glory in the world, and peace on earth.

This tries our hearts. We cannot but feel that it does. All things are not now disposed by Christ, though He is in the place and title of all power and authority. He does not affect so to speak, to have all that the heart or nature values at His present disposal. His present kingdom does not actually reach so far, though in title His authority is over all things. He does not speak of making us happy in circumstances; and it is for us to count the cost of this. It is for us to acquaint ourselves with what He is dispensing, and then to ask ourselves, Can we value it? And it is faith only that

values it. Nature cannot; the heart cannot. What Jesus now dispenses is exactly what faith, but what faith alone, can understand and appreciate.

May we lay this to heart; and, in the midst of all the alarms and forebodings of this serious solemn moment in the history of the world, say to our souls, The Lord is gathering out His elect, and leaving the great material around us for judgment-this is the way of His wisdom,. and it promises us no security in present things, but will work out, for faith and hope, all their brightest thoughts and expectations. \_ \_

Might we, in the real power of our souls, say with another-

"His wisdom ever waketh;

His sight is never dim;

He knows the path He taketh,

And I will walk with Him."

I call this "A Word in Season," not through presumption; but desiring that it should be found to be so, and believing that it is fitted to be so. The force of it is, alas! feebly felt in one's own soul.

## The Word of Exhortation; or Acceptance Through Grace Before Work

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The Book of Hebrews is called by the apostle "the word of exhortation." Now, as the harmonious adaptation of the chords of an instrument elicit that peculiar sensation which makes music at once so exhilarating and attractive, so shall we find that it is the true adjustment of truth, as recorded in this epistle, which entitle it to the designation of "the word of exhortation or comfort"; and it depends on our lending our ear attentively to all the notes or sentiments in this piece of divine teaching, whether or not we shall feel rightly or fully the peculiar consolation which flows from them. And in addition, perhaps, one may say that at no time was the truth in this word so needed as now, when a systematic effort is made by men-enlightened men-to impose on the conscience the need of certain bodily exercises, to ensure its acceptance with God, of which the word of exhortation or comfort takes no notice; and hence we may argue A priori, that if the word or account of consolation detailed in this epistle makes no reference to such acts, then consolation can be secured without them, for in the word or account of consolation there is not the remotest allusion to them. In the first chapter we get in one verse the whole of Christ's service summed up-"When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." In those words are concentrated all the blessings He achieved for us; and as we rightly and fully understand them, do we comprehend the extent and fullness of the blessing? It is how He effected what is thus so succinctly described that supplies materials for the word of exhortation, and which in order is brought before us in this epistle. The sins are purged, and by Himself; and, purged, He is no longer in the circumstances of them or of their influence-He is above all principality and power, and in full acceptable association with the Majesty on high, by which He has been declared the Son of God with power. Now, as Jesus Christ the righteous, though once bearing sins for us, yet He by Himself has purged them, and in the righteousness of God, having accomplished this wonderful service, and unaffected by it, save as manifesting forth more especial glory, He sits down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. It is, I might say, the text of the Book, dividing itself into two heads-1st. His work, and the perfectness of it; and 2ndly, Where He is, and where He maintains the perfectness of this work.

In chap. 2:3 "salvation," not the hope of it, is what we are warned not to neglect; and this cannot be too much insisted on, for it secures the perfectness of Christ's work, as well as the only basis for true peace to our souls. But He is now crowned with glory and honor, perfect through sufferings that is, exalted above them, though passing through them. And this touches a point deeply interesting to us, that forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Death was the penalty of our sin. He submitted to it, and challenged its power when in it, exhausting it when under it, entering the prison-house to burst all its bolts and bars, hitherto detaining in bondage the sons of men; but, fatal to the devil's power, He is imprisoned there; and He not only delivers Himself, for He could not be holden, but destroys him who had the power, and

henceforth retains Himself the keys of hades and the grave. But not only so, but as a Man He has gone above, a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He has presented Himself as the spotless lamb to God, having shed His blood in bearing our judgment, and wresting us from the bondage of death, in which till now we were righteously held. This is one cheering note in the word of exhortation, which the apostle' beseeches us to suffer. Christ is now above, having liberated us from the bondage we were judicially subject to here, and thither we follow Him, as fellows or partakers of the heavenly calling; for all our hopes are staked in Him, who of Himself has undertaken all for us. And we are His house (3:6), if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. Not if we attain to anything, or manifest any act, but if we retain the sense of emancipation, the rejoicing of the hope which His work has secured and confirmed, then we are His house; that is, He dwells where and with whom the simple fact of His work is the ground of their liberty and rejoicing of hope. How could He dwell where the effect of His work, the joy of God, could not be acknowledged - where His victory over all enemies could not be proclaimed with unerring certainty and joy-where His reception at the right hand was only at best but a wish and a doubt? Christ could have no house there! The question of morals is not spoken of here, the foundation of them and the characteristics of Christ's house are first insisted on; and a little lower in the chapter we are told that we are fellows or partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. There is nothing here of good works or services of any kind. It is demanded of me to ensure the highest blessing, even to be a partaker of Christ, that I hold the beginning of my confidence-in whom or in what?-surely in Christ's work, firm unto the end; that is, as I retain the foundation for my soul in the work of Christ, I shall know the sustainment of Himself. As I honor in the first step, so will He enlarge me on the truth acknowledged. His work is owned, and He will maintain before my soul the proof of His power, seeing that I own that He is the Redeemer and the Guardian of it.

And here Israel failed. They refused to go up and possess the land, not on the ground of their moral unfitness, but they did not retain any confidence in the sufficiency of God to lead them- and here Caleb excelled them, and could say of God "He will surely bring us in." The word of God with them was not mixed with faith.

It was God and His power they disparaged, and thus forfeited blessing! It was not that they sinned in this or that; immoral ways may have led to this unbelief; but still it was distrust of God's resources, and not their own proper unfitness, which closed Canaan against them. The word of God surely tests us, and is the measure of our confidence in Him; and while doing so, exposes the multiplied hindrances in us to the reception of it or submission to it.

But all this has its blessing for us; for thus, to the exercised soul, the obstacles are discovered. We ourselves are brought to light by it; but though convicted of many an unbelieving spirit, we are not condemned to turn again into the wilderness, like Israel in the moment of their unbelief; but we are exhorted to look up, as having a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens-Jesus, the Son of God: let us hold fast our profession. Christ has surmounted all the difficulties, why should we be discouraged? and if we doubt, it is not our own ability but His we call in question! for if anything has to be overcome therein, Christ has not triumphed; but if in everything He has overcome, then there is nothing for us; and if we doubt, it is not in our own person we doubt, but the fact of the extent of His. But He is in this exalted place, not only as we have seen a priest making reconciliation for the sins of the people, which He has done; and in the power and grace by which

He was sustained on the way to it, does He succor all now on the same road. As He was tempted in His course, He is able to succor those who are following in the same course. But not only so, as we see in the passage before us; but He is a High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who was tempted in all points, like as we are, apart from sin. He knows our difficulties; and though He was exposed to them, He passed sinless through them; and now above the reach of them, and beside the throne of grace, dispensing the benefits of His own work, He awaits us to come in boldly (the same word as is translated "confidence" in chap. 3), in order that we may obtain the fruits of His service in our behalf.

There is nothing here said of supplication or prayer; nay, rather, the exhortation is, that we should, in the sense of liberty-the effect of emancipation, come to the throne of grace, the present order of power, to obtain and find what our need requires, that we may secure seasonable assistance. The real point brought before us here is the full provision that is with Christ for us, and no act required on our part to secure it, but coming in the sense of what His work has already entitled us to. Still more enforcing, that our blessing depends not on our actings in any respect, but on our sense and acknowledgment of His. We are to come with a sense of title confessed, and to a throne or source of power where favor is dispensed-not to merit, but according to the purpose of His own love, which is grace. Thus we have Him not only a High Priest going up to God for us, having destroyed the power of bondage in which we were held, and succoring us as we follow and know the difficulties of His path, but also He is a great High Priest for us, as touched with our infirmities, because He passed through the trials, but untouched by sin. Where a throne of grace is for us, when we come in boldly in the happy sense of His work, to supply us with both mercy and grace for seasonable assistance; that is, that Christ is not only succoring those who are following on in the path He has trod Himself, but also He is a Priest above for us, to minister suited mercy and grace to us needy and infirm ones, if we but admit His right to be such a minister to us. To come in this spirit is all that is required; the moral fitness, when we come, He supplies.

We pass on now to the end of chap. 6, where we find the assurance of hope in God's promise confirmed, on the ground that Jesus has entered within the veil. Christ, a forerunner, has passed all the obstacles-He has opened the way-cleared the course-and is at the right hand of God, a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Not only Christ's work on earth, but His service and use to us at the right hand of God, is declared to us; but there as such, the promises of God are secured to us by Him after the Melchizedek order.

First being by interpretation King of Righteousness. This is the first point: Christ has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, not only as having purged our sins, but as King of Righteousness, and called to this of God-from the scene too of His sorrowing service down here. It is the first point, and is the more distinctively of, the order of priesthood, in which Jesus is now-a comforter with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; therefore it is rather by interpretation than as an official King-that is, one finds it out as belonging to Him, rather than as one exercising rule because of it. But next, or after that, He is a King, manifesting and exercising rule in a kingdom, and that kingdom is PEACE - He brought in peace-He made peace-He announces peace as the first fruits of His resurrection. His first salutation to His disciples after His resurrection was, "Peace be unto you;" enemies are all vanquished -hostilities are at an end. God has no longer any strife with man-the debt has been discharged-the judgment executed; God has been satisfied, and with Him there is peace, and He preaches it by Jesus Christ, who has sat down at His right hand as

King of Peace, priestly exercising the government of it; that is, that it is still as a Priest He is King of Peace, because our infirmity so needs it. Now again, here the confidence of our hope does not depend on anything we can attain to, but on the simplicity with which we acknowledge the wondrous doings of Christ Himself; and this is all our difficulty, because it is our unbelief in the love and power which accomplished them. This whole passage only tells of what He has done and what He is-a forerunner attaining the highest point, and then by interpretation King of Righteousness, and again exercising rule as King of Peace, and yet both in priestly office, because suited to our infirmity.

The sum of all (see chap. 8) is, that 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 holy things (see marginal reading), and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man. Not merely that having purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty "on high," or "in the highest," but as there for us the word "throne" now is introduced, as also "the heavens," as descriptive of the power and place to which He is gone-and where He is a Minister of holy things. How many and varied notes thrill our hearts, as we run over the different yet harmonious chords of His love; surely His love is better than wine; it cheers indeed, and we may well "suffer the word of exhortation," which is only a copiously flowing stream of it. But it is His love does all. Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end. And it is equal to our need -for Christ is not above merely as having accomplished redemption, but He is there preparing a place for us -preparing us for the place-for His love has given Him a direct interest in us; and hence it is not merely, nor in one sense at all, as the high priest under the law offering for sin. He has purged our sins, and becomes as such the channel through which God supplies mercy and grace for us, for seasonable assistance; but He is leading us on and up to yet future things; we have not only present boldness, but we have rejoicing of hope also; hence He is a High Priest of good things to come. He will yet present us to Himself a glorious church, and thus give a character to the testament; that is, that not only are the transgressions under the first redeemed, but eternal inheritance is now secured for us in the presence of God. Therefore Christ is in heaven itself, and thus the heavenly places are purified by better sacrifices than the figures of the true; and as He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and having done so instead of judgment awaiting man, He will appear to them who wait for Him without sin unto salvation; that is, salvation and not the consequence of sin in judgment awaits us, when Christ appears the second time. Thus are confidence and rejoicing of hope assured-the latter confirmed, as the former, our present position, is established.

Confidence (which is the same as boldness) and the rejoicing of the hope, are the two great results flowing to us from a true appreciation of what Christ's services, past and present, have accomplished for us. In chap. 10, the insufficiency of the law to purge the conscience is insisted on; for if there had been purgation, would there not have been a cessation of offerings? for if the offerings continue, the remembrance of sin is also continued; and, moreover, they could not take away sin, but Christ in a prepared body comes to do the will of God, and which will done, we are sanctified through the once offering of the body of Christ. He offered one sacrifice for sins forever (as referring to the limit of the benefits of the sacrifice), and having done so, sat down at the right hand of God; and as there is but one sacrifice, and as its benefits continue forever, so also he that is sanctified is perfected forever; that is, the perfection lasts as long as the sacrifice. The sanctifying describes the mode in which we are placed to appropriate these blessings-as drawn of

the Father unto Jesus-and as within His reach, because Jesus has done His will.

But there being a remission of sins, there is no more offering for sin. Christ having effected what the Holy Ghost is witness of, that our sins and iniquities God will remember no more. Therefore, as a necessary consequence, we have boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; our title is established-our self-possessed assumption of it proves we believe so! we only adopt the manner of one who is assured of the great and glorious fact. It is not expecting or requiring anything to be done, or as feeling our need of it, but imbued with a sense of the efficacy of Christ's work, as one would enter the house of an assured friend, not cautiously to discover what your reception would be, but boldly, because your confidence in him puts you above even questioning the manner of it; and still more satisfied, that according to his means everything would be suitable for you-all the result of the large conception you had formed of your friend, and which of course his character entitled you to entertain; no credit to you nor no demand on you either, but simply to own and ascribe to him his desert, and as doing so to act on it.

I have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus-by the open and living way which he has made for me through the veil, that is, His flesh. I pass into the holiest by the blood; but that flowed from the broken body-the rent veil-which, when broken, not only discharged the sin lying against me, but disclosed to me the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; for then the darkness was dislodged, and the true light then shone abroad. In this light we are never distressed, for there is there a great Priest over the house of God. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin; there is One there who sustains us in all comfort of being faultless before the presence of His glory. Thus His love takes care, for He loves His own which are in the world unto the end; and therefore we may draw nigh, and as prodigals now in the Father's presence, have a true heart, in full assurance of faith-that is, no misgiving in His acceptance, for our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our hopes without wavering, for He is faithful that promised. So that boldness, or the sense of liberty, because of Christ's work, leads us not only into all the blessed fruits of it, but promotes and feeds us with an unwavering hope; not only is Christ our life, but Christ in us the hope of glory-we pass from one to know and enjoy the other. Faith in Him-leads me into confidence, as owning my title on account of Him, and in confidence my soul is enlarged into the rejoicing of the hope, because properly we rejoice in hope of the glory of God-and also we are of His own goodness to the praise of His glory.

The highest point of blessing is now reached by the soul, but we have to fulfill our course here; having done the will of God, we have need of patience, but the patience is only during the expectancy of Christ's coming, for He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. And while waiting for Him who is the center of our hope, we are sustained here by the very same faith which has realized to us the saving of our soul; a great moral truth that the faith that assures of justification by the work of another, even God's dear Son, is so divine and suitable to us, that it transacts through us all the activities which our course demands, and which Christ has already traversed; for "when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them and the sheep follow Him" -He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. In believing in Jesus, I not only apprehend how truly and fully His work has set me with God, touching all that was against me, so that it, that is, my sins, no longer engage me, but the uprising of the hope in the full display of God's love as yet to come, and that this is now my proper occupation, so that one can say, this one thing I do, "

forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This faith sustains me in the race-but it is the faith of Jesus. By the same principle of life by which I apprehend acceptance, am I sustained in power to walk acceptably; the heart having learned the preciousness of Jesus for its own solid and eternal comfort-set in an evil world, finds out its place of testimony for Him by going forth unto Him without the camp-bearing His reproach. Having once found out our living and perfect union with Him, because of His love, displace us by distance or difficulty as much as possible, the tendency is to re-unite; and this tendency the more vigorous the better, declares our identity with Him, and is our testimony for Him passing from the distance, and thus the difficulties. Here works and all self-sacrifices find their place-running in the race, it is looking for Him who loved us; our love for Him is the only mettle, and we love Him as we know He first loved us-we work not, we serve not as Martha, to gain the notice or sympathy of our Lord; if we do, our service will be a wearisome one-we serve because we have sat at His feet and heard His word, and hence know the service which will please Him. Unless the soul is established in the perfectness and value of Christ's love, our service will be always reluctant and unsatisfactory, and therefore the word of exhortation first traces for you in the most touching way, the greatness, value and extent of His love, and then calls on you to tread on patiently through this evil scene till He shall come again-not to see you and enter into death for you, but for you to see Him, and to enter into glory and be like Him.

"Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

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